



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW JERSEY

League Announces Position on Immigration Reform

Trenton, NJ – The League of Women Voters of New Jersey made it known today that the national League (the League of Women Voters) has announced its official position on immigration reform policy.

“After a lengthy and comprehensive study of this complex issue by our grassroots members,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson, “the League’s position calls for a path to citizenship for current unauthorized immigrants.”

“As part of overall immigration reform, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria,” Wilson stated. “We oppose deportations of current unauthorized immigrants who have no history of serious criminal activity,” she said.

The full immigration policy approved by the national League’s Board of Directors in March was studied by the organization’s membership for more than eighteen months. The policy achieved member consensus through a survey of the nearly 850 local Leagues. Thirty Leagues throughout New Jersey participated in the study and consensus process, and Deborah Macmillan, immediate past president of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey served on the national committee that helped lead this process.

“It is significant that the members of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey agreed on this position, given New Jersey’s top ten ranking among all states in the number of immigrants,” stated LWVNJ President Anne Maiese. “The LWVNJ supports active participation in government and our position encourages current unauthorized New Jersey immigrants to earn citizenship,” Maiese added.

Other elements of the League’s position include support for increased enforcement personnel at borders, more effective tracking of individuals who enter the U.S., and significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers. Furthermore, the League will champion due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment. The League position sets criteria for legal admission to the U.S., including family reunification of spouses or minor children; economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.; political persecution or humanitarian crises; and studying in the U.S.