

Immigration
2009 Issues Briefing
Kim Reed, LWVIL Issue Specialist

In the past month, there have been many articles concerning the treatment of non-documented immigrants, laws changing status of guest workers, and delays in administering the oath of citizenship to those who have finished the process. Thousands were denied the vote because judges delayed the swearing in.

- Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund president has hopes the new president will appoint a new Homeland Security Chief who will suspend raids in 2010 while the census counting is in progress to ensure a more accurate accounting.
- Both Senator Reid and Senator McCain are eager to revive immigration legislation that would provide a path to citizenship for millions living in the U.S illegally. The huge numbers of Latinos who were vocal in the last election make this seem possible.
- There have been needless delays in the swearing in of thousands of immigrants who have completed the process of citizenship because judges did not schedule the oath ceremony, thus denying these people the right to vote last November.
- In December, there was bad news for the 80,000 plus farm workers working under the H-2A guestworker program. The Bush administration pushed through Dept. of Labor and Homeland Security changes that further reduced the rights of farm workers, lowered wages, no supervision by government for housing, etc. In order to return, the farmer has to request them for the next year. This makes it almost impossible to complain about the condition of the situation.
- One bright note: The Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act Of 2008. This gives protections for unaccompanied immigrant children and victims of trafficking. Pres. Bush was expected to sign.