

**Immigration**  
2008 Issues Briefing  
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**LWVUS Immigration Study** – Consensus reports were due February 1, 2008.

**In Springfield:**

**Driver's Certificate Bill** – Passed in the IL State House in spring of 2007, and while technically the bill is still alive, there is little prospect of it moving forward in the state Senate.

**Funding for ESL**-- Public Act 095-0638 – “We Want to Learn English Initiative”: To provide resources for immigrants and refugees in this state to learn English in order to move towards becoming full members of American society. (Effective 6/1/08)

Note: The ICIRR (Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights) is pushing for funding to include \$5 million for a pilot project of “We Want to Learn English Initiative.” WWLE would expand funding for ESL classes with at least half of the money going to community sites like workplaces, houses of worship and community centers. The ICIRR is also seeking small increases for their New Americans Initiative and Outreach and Interpretation Project. The New Americans Initiative is a partnership with the State of Illinois and the ICIRR in order to assist and encourage eligible immigrants and refugees in becoming U.S. Citizens.

**Elsewhere in Illinois:**

**-- Local Enforcement of Federal Immigration Laws (deputization of local police):**

**Waukegan** applied to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for 287(g) status for federal training to start deportation proceedings against undocumented immigrants arrested on criminal charges. According to a Jan. 15, 2008, article in the *Chicago Suburban News (Sun)*, Waukegan officials expect their certification approval to take about two years. (Fred Tsao, Policy Director of the ICIRR, reported that a group of Latino and other community leaders have been meeting to organize actions to counteract the negativity in the Waukegan area.)

**The Lake County Sheriff** applied to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to seek 287(g) status for six correctional officers in the county jail. Status is not being sought for patrol officers. If and when granted, this would allow those six designees to collect data and begin paperwork to deport undocumented inmates convicted of serious offenses. Some members of the Lake County Board expressed concern for the impact this program would have on the community in regard to immigrant assimilation and cooperation with the police. Lake County is the first county in Illinois to seek this designation.

**Carpentersville** was the first Illinois community to apply for 287(g) status and is still waiting to receive certification and training. Its City Council has been considering ordinances targeting undocumented immigrants in the Carpentersville community.

**Elgin** is weighing its options for assistance by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Note: ICE has not granted any of the 287(g) status requests in Illinois as of this time.

**-- Sanctuary Cities:**

**Evanston** is proposing an ordinance to become a sanctuary city:

"Evanston is the only Chicago suburb to take up the matter as a proposed ordinance, according to data from the National Immigration Law Center, though many police departments, including those in Skokie, Cicero and Oak Park, have directed officers not to inquire about immigration status unless there is an indictment or conviction." (Chicago Tribune, 2/9/08)

**Chicago** became a sanctuary city in March 2006 by an Executive Mayoral Order -- one of an estimated 32 across the country, including New York, Seattle and the oldest, (1979) Los Angeles. This was approved by the City Council as well.

According to Monique Bond, spokeswoman for Chicago Police Department, officers can only contact INS during the course of an investigation when an offender declares illegal immigration status. "Under federal law, enforcement of immigration law rests with the INS and not with local police. Chicago Police do not stop-and-question, detain or arrest any person that is not suspected of committing a crime or based solely on the grounds that the person may be an illegal immigrant. Chicago Police provide police service to all persons in the City of Chicago, regardless of their citizenship status."

### **LWVIL Position Statement on Immigration**

As approved by the delegates to the LWVIL State Convention, June 2007

- *The League of Women Voters of Illinois believes that the State of Illinois should promote local community efforts to provide orientation and counseling services for immigrants regardless of documentation status. The State of Illinois should support funding efforts for these services by encouraging federal funding and by the use of funds from the state and local governments as well as from the private sector.*
- *The League of Women Voters of Illinois believes the State of Illinois should promote and fund educational programs and materials that seek to inform all workers, including documented and undocumented immigrants, of their rights in the workplace.*
- *The League of Women Voters of Illinois believes the State of Illinois should provide "driving certificates" or some other form of proof of driving validation to undocumented drivers, allowing those drivers to drive legally and ensuring that they would have passed a state driving test. The LWVIL also believes the State of Illinois should permit and encourage auto insurance providers to issue insurance coverage to holders of such driving certificates.*
- *The League of Women Voters of Illinois opposes the deputization of state and local police to enforce immigration laws in Illinois.*
- *The League of Women Voters of Illinois opposes legislation or ordinances at the state and local level that would penalize landlords for renting to undocumented immigrants.*
- *The League of Women Voters of Illinois opposes legislation or ordinances at the state and local level that would prohibit the issuance of business permits to undocumented immigrants.*
- *The League of Women Voters of Illinois does not support extending the right to vote to undocumented immigrants.*

Resources: *Suburban Chicago News / Chicago Tribune / Chicago Sun Times / Daily Herald / ICIRR (special thanks to Fred Tsao) / Helene Gabelnick / www.ilga.gov*