

The Maryland Voter



Published by the League of Women Voters of Maryland
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Spring 2011
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Immigration in Maryland

Commission to Study the Impact of Immigrants in Maryland

Immigrants in Maryland tend to be better educated and earn a higher wage when compared to other regions of the country, according to a preliminary report from the Commission to Study the Impact of Immigrants in Maryland.

The commission's January 2011 report to the Governor also noted that immigrants provide a better than average contribution to the state's economic vitality and the state attracts a high proportion of the highest skilled immigrants, specifically in the science and technical areas.

"I was most impressed with the facts that we have a highly educated immigrant population," said Theresa Alfaro Daytner, President, Daytner Corporation in Mount Airy, and a member of the commission. She also noted that with that education comes a much higher salary, which contributes to the state's economy.

Nevertheless, the report held that there might be measurable negative economic impacts of immigration on certain persons or groups, especially those that compete with Immigrant labor in certain occupations and industries.

Immigration policy is of interest for many people throughout the nation. With comprehensive immigration reform stalled at the federal level, state and local officials are being asked to address various issues relating to immigration and, in particular, the perceived effects of unauthorized immigration. To gain a broader understanding of the economic and

The Commission to Study the Impact of Immigrants in Maryland was authorized in June 2008. The study considered the growth rate and national origins of Maryland's immigrant population; its geographic, size and age distribution; and whether Maryland's immigrants are similar in demographic profile to the national immigrant profile. The Commission submitted its report to the Governor and General Assembly on January 21, 2011. Authorization for the Commission extends through May 31, 2011. However, since the committee did not begin meeting until May of 2010, it has requested an extension to continue its operations through the 2011 calendar year. A final report will be prepared by January 1, 2012.

To see the report from the Commission to Study the Impact of Immigration you can go to:

<http://www.msa.md.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5300/sc5339/000113/013000/013636/unrestricted/20110464e.pdf>

fiscal issues surrounding immigration, the 2008 General Assembly passed a bill authorizing the Commission to Study the Impact of Immigrants in Maryland.

Considerable research has been conducted over the past two decades relating to the fiscal impact that immigration has on various units of government, according to the report. Authorized immigrants pay for and receive (with some limitations) government services at roughly the same rates as natives with similar income levels, occupations and family status. The Congressional Budget Office released a report in 2007 concluding that, in aggregate and over the long term, immigrants pay more in taxes (federal, state, and local) than they use in government services.

So far, the Maryland Commission has analyzed the demographic and socioeconomic profile of the State's immigrant community. To varying degrees, it has also examined the economics of immigration including the education of immigrant children and youth, workforce development, federal and state immigration enforcement programs, local law enforcement policies, and compliance efforts with the federal REAL ID Act.

As part of the discussion, the Commission was to consider the benefits and costs of unauthorized immigration, including the impacts on income distribution, crime, education, and health care. Of related importance, the methods used to reduce the number of unauthorized immigrants also have economic, fiscal and social dimensions.

The Commission noted that there is not a lot of data to provide a definitive picture of the net impact of unauthorized

immigrants on federal, state, and local government accounts. Unauthorized immigrants are ineligible for most federal programs such as public cash assistance, food stamps, Medicaid (other than emergency services), and Social Security. State and local governments, however, are limited in their ability to deny services to immigrants, including those who are unauthorized. State and local governments must provide certain services (i.e., public K-12 education, emergency health care, and law enforcement) to individuals regardless of their immigration status. Consequently, according to the Commission's report, while the federal government receives a net revenue inflow from unauthorized immigrants, state and local governments usually realize a net revenue loss because unauthorized immigrants pay less in state and local taxes than the cost to provide services to that population. This is due partly to the fact that unauthorized immigrants typically earn less than native-born residents and thus pay a smaller portion of their income in taxes.

The Commission sees as its mission to provide fact-based and objective information concerning immigration to state delegates and senators. As also outlined in its authorizing act, the Commission intends to provide policy analysis and recommendations to the legislature.

The Commission, however, believes it needs additional time to consider these topics more thoroughly. Research relating to the fiscal impact of immigrants on Maryland exists, but it is sparse. The Commission intends to assess further the potential fiscal implications that immigration, and particularly unauthorized immigration, poses at both the State and local levels.

*Carol Blackburn
Voter Editor*

JUDITH HEIMANN
EDITOR OF REPORT FROM STATE CIRCLE

Beginning with this issue of the Maryland Voter, we will be telling you about a member who has played an important role in the League of Women Voters of Maryland. Since the legislative session is about to conclude, and publishing Report from State Circle is one of the important services that the League provides during this period, the series will start with a feature on Judith Heimann, editor of RSC.



Judith Heimann joined the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County in 1962 and has been a member of that League ever since. The same method that led to her total engagement in League activities 49 years ago is still promoted today. She was invited to join by a friend, and then received regular phone calls encouraging her to attend meetings, events, and activities sponsored by the League. She was quickly given a job to do – managing the sale of League calendars; a fundraising activity that continues in Montgomery County today. In 1966, she chaired a study on the local courts and in 1967 became vice-president. Following four years as president of the Montgomery County League, she became a member of the board of the League of Women Voters of Maryland. However, her time on the state board didn't last long, as she was soon elected to the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of the United States. She served for four years on the National board.

While still active in the Montgomery County League, in 1977 Heimann became the Legislative Aide to the Montgomery County Board of Education. In this capacity she monitored and lobbied on bills, especially the budget bill, which would impact Montgomery County Public Schools. Other positions that followed included vice-chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board, commissioner of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and chair of the Montgomery County Board of Appeals.

When she retired in 1996, Heimann took on the job of editing Report from State Circle. The task has changed considerably since then as it is no longer necessary to travel to Annapolis to pick up schedules and copies of bills. In her early days as editor, reporters would FAX articles to her that she would mark-up and then FAX to the office in Annapolis to be typed. The internet has certainly simplified that process. She receives articles from 12 volunteers who cover 18 areas of legislation. These include everything from the budget, to the courts, to air quality and election law. Heimann makes sure that the articles clearly explain the bills and where they are in the legislative process. She edits six issues which come out approximately every two weeks during the 90-day session.

Although she is engaged in a number of other community service organizations, Heimann says that the League of Women Voters is her favorite because it has a reputation for being knowledgeable about public policy issues and because it does not get involved in advocacy unless there is member consensus to do so. She thinks this is what gives the League enormous respect and influence and why she is proud to be a member.

Nancy Soreng
President LWVMD

Overview of the 2010 Elections

Maryland State Election

Administrator Linda Lamone presented an overview of the 2010 Elections in late January to the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee and to the House of Delegates Ways and Means Committee. The staff of the SBE has also presented specifics on various aspects of the election at the February and March meetings of the State Board of Elections.

How we voted

Early voting, implemented for the first time in 2010, accounted for 12 percent or one out of every eight ballots cast in the general election. It grew in popularity during the primary, with an average of 11,000 voters the first three days, and 15,000 the last three days. In the general election, these same periods averaged 32,000 voters, then more than 50,000 voters. The early voting participants were older (57 vs. 49) and more regular voters than the average registrant. They accurately predicted the final outcome in 96 percent of all races.

Based on history in other states, early voting is expected to grow in future elections, as people become aware of this alternative to Election Day voting. It may reach as high as 25 percent in the presidential election.

On General Election Day, nearly 82 percent of voters cast their ballots on the Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting system at their local precincts.

Another 2 percent of voters cast provisional ballots, because of registration issues. More than 71 percent of those ballots were accepted in full after research, another fifth were accepted in part, and less than 9 percent were rejected. The overwhelming reason for rejection (76.8 percent) was the voter was not registered, but over 11 percent (363 ballots) were not counted because there was no signature on the application, something that should have been caught at the precinct.

In the primary election, provisional voting had a higher rejection rate of nearly one-third, with nearly 40 percent of those rejections due to not using the primary ballot for which they were qualified and another nearly 40 percent not eligible to vote provisionally.

Absentee ballots accounted for just fewer than 5 percent of the votes cast (88,359) in the general election. The returned ballots accounted for slightly less than 80 percent of ballots distributed. Most absentee ballots were both sent and returned by mail. Electronic delivery accounted for over 10 percent sent and 8 percent received, and requires extensive staff time to duplicate on countable ballot stock. New procedures are under consideration for reducing this time and effort.

Absentee voting peaked in 2006 at nearly 9 percent, declining to 8 percent in 2008 and under 6 percent for both 2010 elections, and the overall return rate has also declined in that same period from 84 percent to under 80 percent. Military and overseas voters requesting ballots in 2008 were sent ballots to the same address in 2010, unless they had updated it. Since a specific request for 2010 was not needed, the address might have changed since 2008. Maryland continued to honor a two-election absentee cycle request, although the federal law requiring this provision was repealed.

Petition Signatures

A September 2010 decision of the Maryland Court of Appeals changed the criteria used to verify and accept petition signatures, and ordered a previously rejected Montgomery County local law referendum to appear on the November ballot. However, the reasoning behind the decision, which will affect all petitions statewide, was only issued in late March 2011. It allows illegible signatures to be approved if the petition has sufficient other information to determine the identity of the

signer. Local and state election officials described the ruling as making the decision process more subjective and less precise. The recent Court of Appeals ruling is under review by State Board of Elections legal staff. Further interpretation may be forthcoming, to specify the minimum amount of information required for signature approval.

Outlook for Future Elections

Primary date changes are in legislation moving through the General Assembly, to meet the requirements of the Federal MOVE Act and to maximum the voting power of state residents in both the Democratic and Republican Presidential primaries.

The 2012 and future Presidential primaries will probably be the first Tuesday in April, and the 2014 and subsequent gubernatorial primaries will be the fourth Tuesday in June. Internal filing and processing deadlines on the election calendar are also being adjusted by the pending legislation. Watch for the post session Report from State Circle to verify legislative action on this and other electoral issues.

Voter registration, and especially updating, at the MVA continues to be an issue because a new registration form, with party preference and signature, is still

required. Updating MVA information does not cover both functions. The SBE has compared its voter registration list against the MVA addresses and contacted voters with discrepancies. Currently, the SBE Administrator and the MVA Director are working together to implement new procedures that have been effective in the state of Delaware.

Reduced budgets, at both the State and County levels probably mean we will continue to use the DREs in the 2012 elections and not purchase optical scan machines as the General Assembly had directed in prior sessions. Also, reductions in funds for personnel, overtime and temporary staffing will probably carry consequences in future elections, especially in processing time of registration and absentee ballot applications, the number of election judges assigned to polling places, and the speed in completing absentee and provisional ballot canvases. We all may need to be a little more patient so that the many electoral tasks are still completed with the same degree of accuracy to ensure all qualified residents have the opportunity to vote and have their opinions correctly counted and reported.

*Barbara Sanders
Voters' Service*



League to hold Convention in Solomons

From May 20-22, 2011, League members from around the state will gather at the Holiday Inn in Solomons to elect officers, vote on a budget, and adopt a program. They will attend workshops and other training sessions as well as have a chance to tour the area.

A highlight of the event, the banquet to be held on Saturday, May 21 from 6 to 9:30, is open to the public. **The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller**, president of the Maryland Senate, will be the keynote speaker. The public is welcome to attend the banquet.

To make a reservation go to:

<http://www.lwvmd.org/n/node/3386> or call the League office at 410-269-0232.



**JOIN
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND
AT**



Saturday, April 30, 2011 11:30am - 3:00pm \$40.00 per person



Our outing to the Ladew Topiary Gardens will include a docent-led tour of the circa 1747 Manor House, filled with English antiques, fox hunting memorabilia and the oval library, listed as one of the "most beautiful rooms in America."

After our box lunch, we will explore the Gardens, considered "the most outstanding topiary garden in America" by the Garden Club of America. Our garden tour is self-guided - see as much of the 15 thematic gardens on Ladew's 22 acres as you wish!

DIRECTIONS TO LADEW GARDENS - 3535 JARRETTSVILLE PIKE, MONKTON, MD

From the South and West Via the Baltimore Beltway

Take the Baltimore Beltway (I-695) toward Towson to Exit 27B (North). Go North on MD Route 146 (Dulaney Valley Rd.). After the Loch Raven Reservoir Bridge, bear left onto Jarrettsville Pike (MD Rte. 146). Ladew Gardens is located on your right, 5 miles north of the stoplight in Jacksonville on MD Rte. 146.

From the North or South Via I-95

Take Exit 74 to MD Route 152. Follow MD Route 152 northwest to the dead end at MD Route 146 (Jarrettsville Pike) and go left. Ladew Gardens is approximately 1 mile ahead on your left.

Please note: Because we must pre-order lunches, we cannot accommodate anyone who has not pre-registered. Final date for registration is April 20.

Name(s) _____

Phone _____ Email _____

- My lunch choice is: _____ Harvest salad
 _____ Chicken salad sandwich
 _____ Mozzarella & tomato sandwich
 _____ Turkey sandwich

Mail your check for \$40 per person made out to LWVMD to:
 LWVMD, 111 Cathedral St., Ste. 201, Annapolis, MD 21401