

# The LWV and Immigration: State and National Advocacy



LWVC Convention, May 20, 2023

Presented by CA Immigration Interest Group

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# Outline for Caucus

Background on LWV position and interest groups

National policy and border management issues

State level action on immigration

What can you or the LWV do?

Discussion

# Why immigration matters to the League

10.5 million US residents cannot vote and  
are an underclass which can be exploited.

The voice of the League is valuable on highly politicized issue.

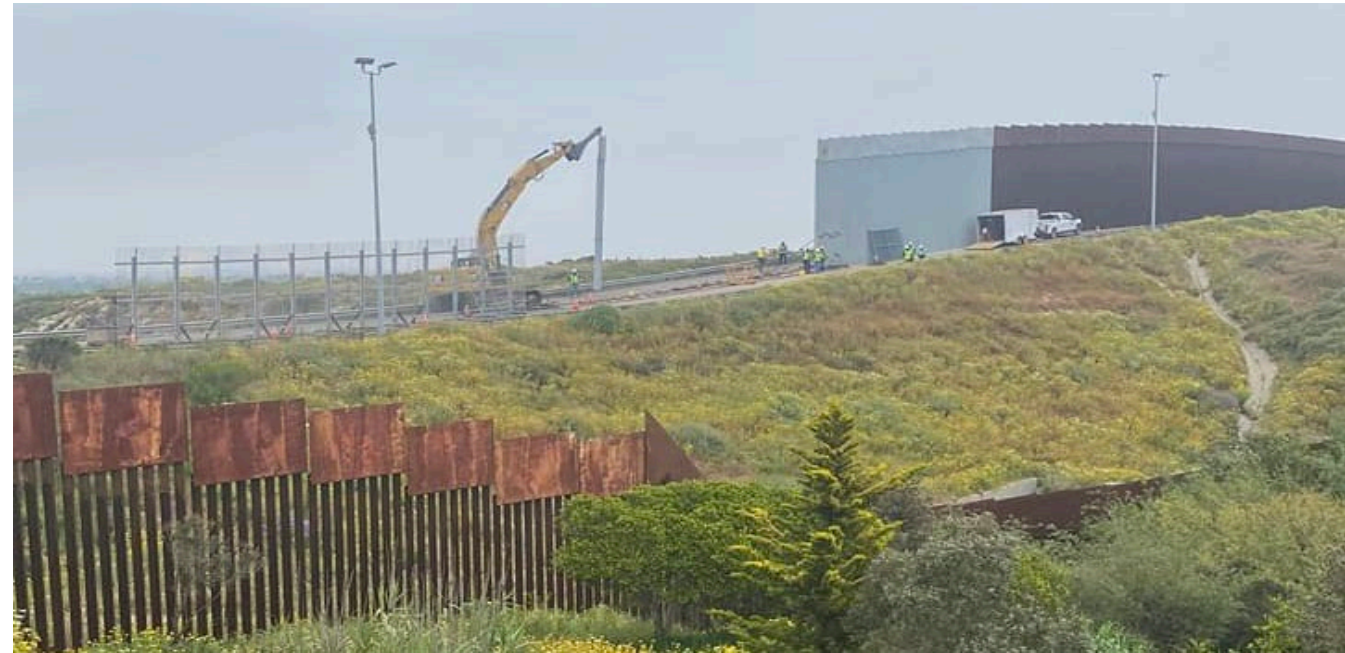
The League values diversity, equity and inclusion.

# Images from the San Diego-Tijuana border

Migrants in a Tijuana shelter



Expanded high wall construction at Friendship Park  
(May 2023)



# LWV Immigration Position (2008)

- Promote reunification of immediate families
- Meet the economic business and employment needs of the US
- Be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises
- Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons
- In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status
- Support for efficient, expeditious system for legal entry of immigrants

# LWV Immigration Interest Groups

Interest groups - participation enabled by Zoom meetings

The LWVC Immigration Interest Group  
following 2021 LWVC convention caucus  
contact with LWVC Advocacy Team

The LWVUS Immigration Interest Group  
before the 2022 LWVUS Convention

- members from: IL, TX, NM, NJ, WA among others
- presented resolution at 2022 LWV Convention
- contact with LWVUS Advocacy Team

# Resolution at LWVUS Convention 2022

*Whereas the League of Women Voters has had a long-standing immigration position since 2008 and a strong commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI);*

*Be it resolved that LWVUS actively advocates and supports Immigration Reform at all levels of LWV.*

Approved by convention delegates: 767-32

# National Policy and Key Issues



# Current administration

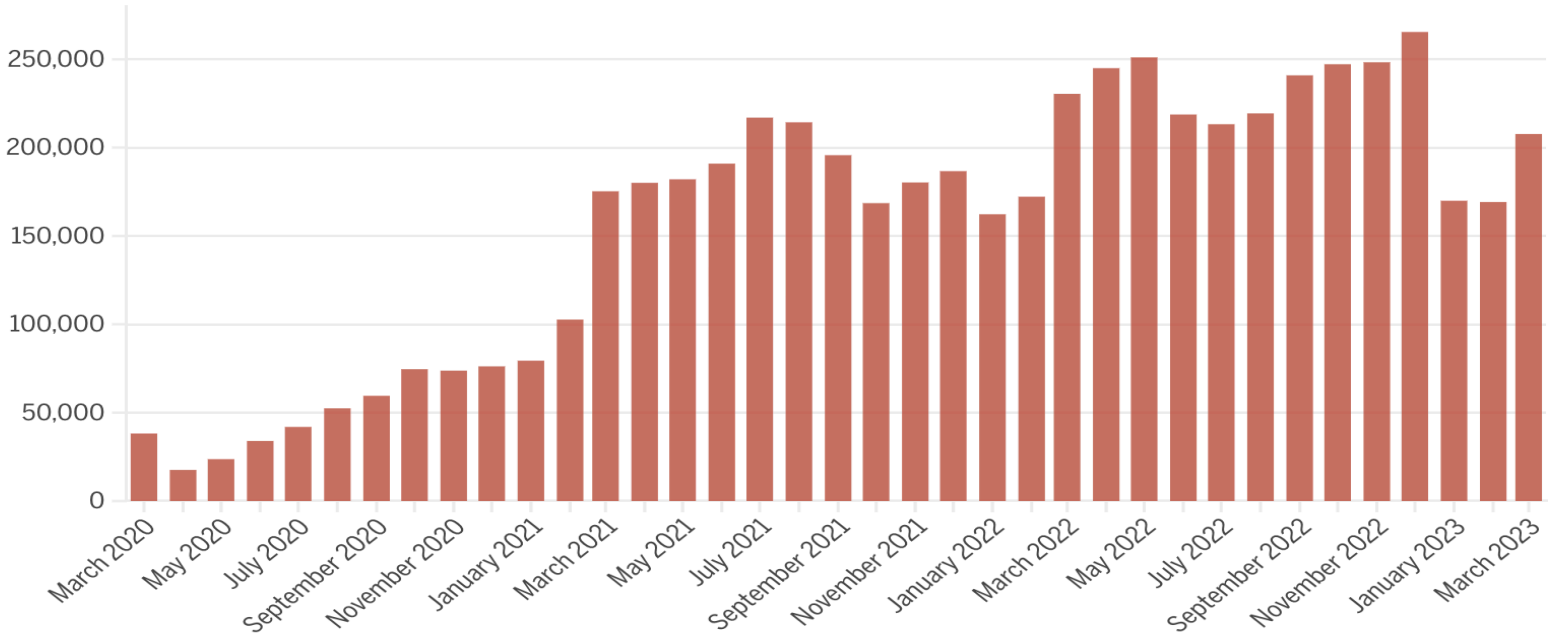
- Initial legislation for path to citizenship
- Extensive executive actions to address immigration and border issues in light of lack of legislative action
- Dramatic increase in border encounters & global rise in migration
- End of Title 42 on May 11th and new asylum rule

# Data on Border encounters

## Attempted US border crossings have reached record levels in the past two years

This chart shows the total number of encounters by month between border officials and migrants who were expelled under Title 42, detained under US immigration law, or determined to be ineligible to enter the US

■ Number of encounters



SOURCE: [US Customs and Border Protection](#)

# Immigration Court Asylum Decisions

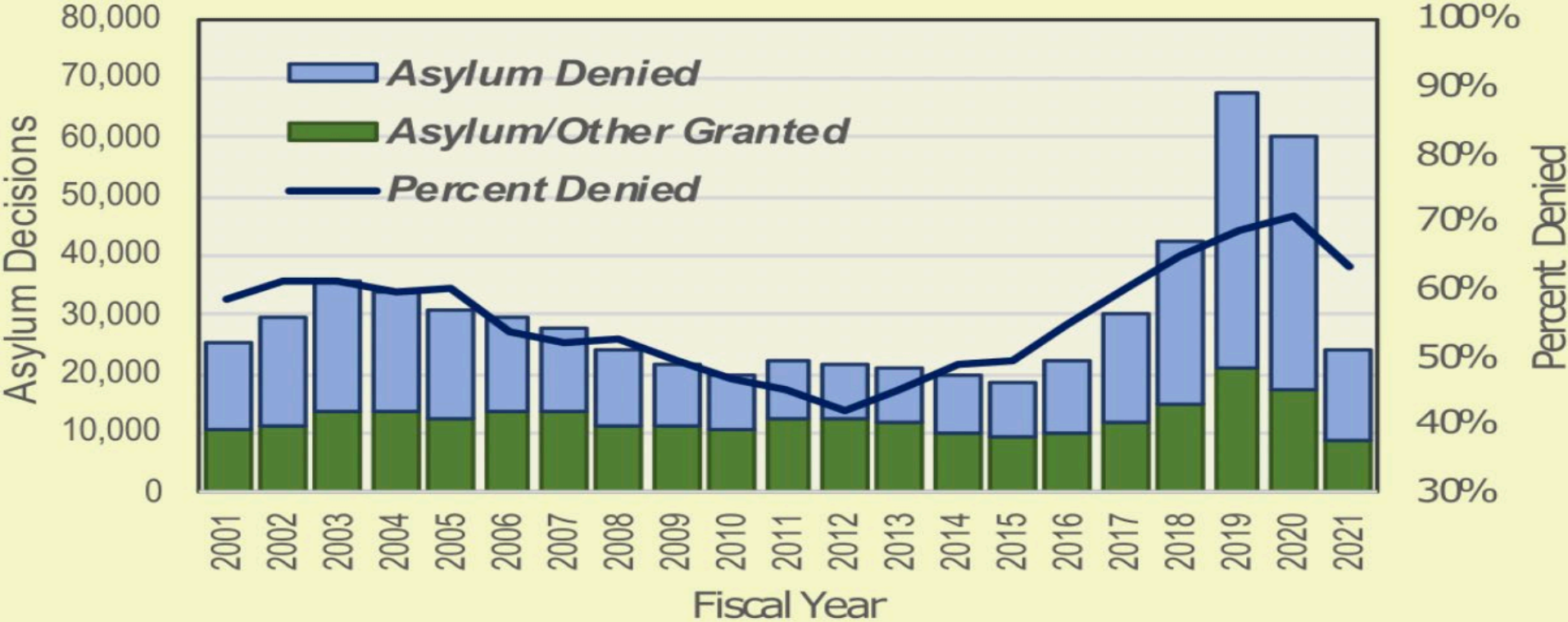


Figure 1. Immigration Court Asylum Decisions, FY 2001 - FY 2021

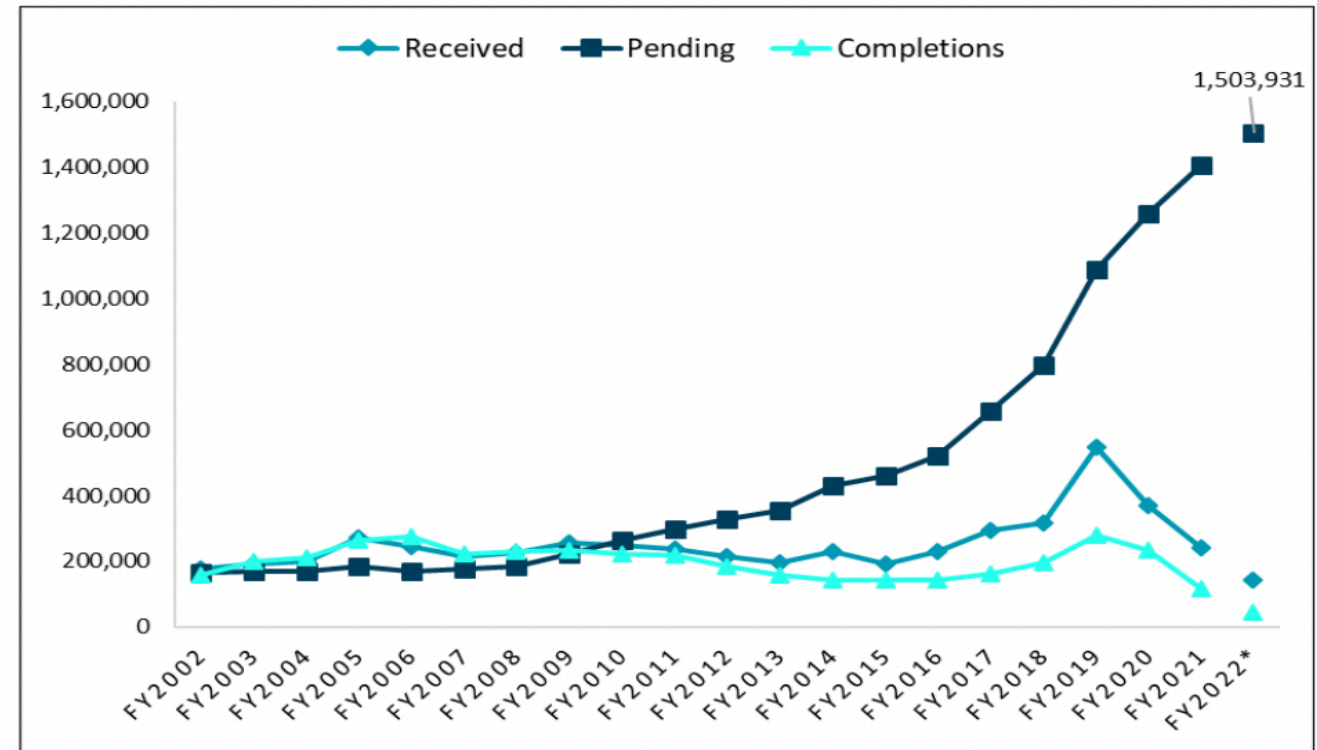
[\(Click for larger image\)](#)

# Asylum: backlog

Wait for case to be heard  
and resolved can be many  
years

pending cases (Figure 4). Since FY2000, the number of pending cases has increased every year.

**Figure 4. Initial Cases Received, Completed, and Pending (Backlog),  
FY2002-FY2022(Q1)**



**Source:** Cases received and completed: EOIR, "New Cases and Total Completions – Historical," Adjudication Statistics, October 19, 2021. Cases pending (FY2008-FY2022): EOIR, "Pending Cases, New Cases, and Total Completions," Adjudication Statistics, January 19, 2022; cases pending (FY2001-FY2007): TRAC, "Immigration Court Backlog Tool," at [https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/court\\_backlog/](https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/court_backlog/).

**Note:** \*FY2022 current through first quarter only.

# Biden Administration: post Title 42 strategy

## Goals:

- (1) identifying more of those with humanitarian protection needs before they reach the border
- (2) expanding access to lawful pathways for legal entry
- (3) creating a more orderly process at the border that over time restores credibility in the immigration system

# Key Elements

New humanitarian parole for 4 countries  
sponsorship, 2-year work permit

Expedited removal for illegal crossing  
5-year ban on re-entry

External processing:  
regional processing centers  
in Columbia, Guatemala

Biden 2024 budget proposal: additional funding for border and immigration courts

# Asylum: new rule and processes

DHS: “Circumvention of Lawful Pathways Rule”

legal challenges: Florida judge, ACLU

Requirements:

- appointment at port of entry through CBP One app (1,000 per day)
- apply for asylum in a country along the way (“transit ban”)

New rules: higher asylum standard: “rebuttable presumption of ineligibility”

Expedited credible fear determinations

more rapid adjudication by trained asylum officers while in CBP custody

# Refugees

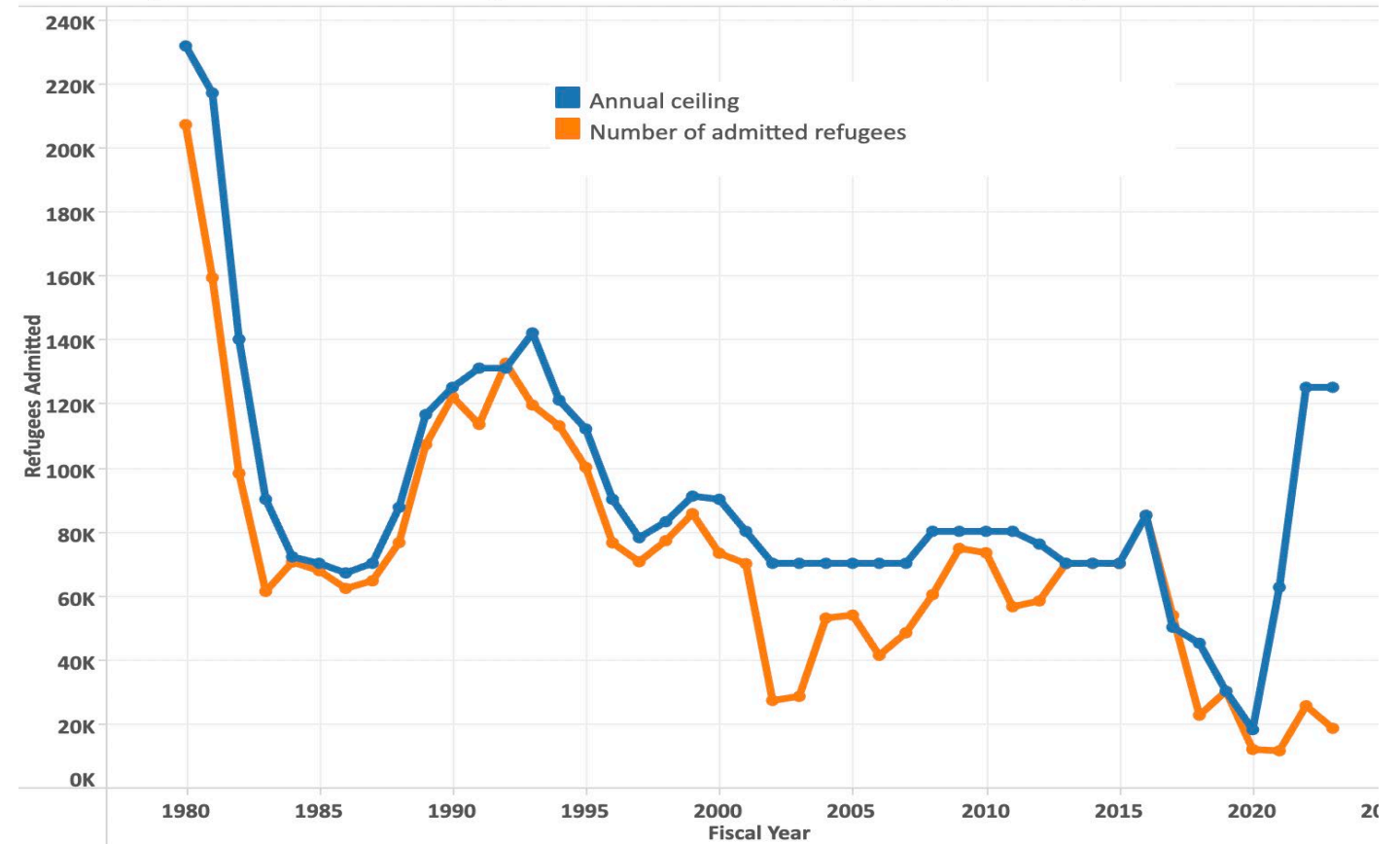
Biden: increased annual number of refugees to 125,000 per year

2022: 25,000 admitted

The Welcome Corps:

Expand ability of private groups of Americans to sponsor refugees

U.S. Refugee Admissions & Refugee Resettlement Ceilings, FY 1980-2023 YTD\*



Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub  
<http://migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub>



# Worker shortage and immigration

Documented needs: 9.6 million job openings

especially in agriculture, hospitality, health care and the military

Business leaders across the country support expanded immigration

PhD talent trained in US – going to Canada, China

Increase in number of work visas – Utah governor

# Potential for Bipartisan Legislation: slim, but not impossible

117<sup>th</sup> Congress: Late action in December 2022 lame duck period

Dream Act

Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021 (passed House 247-174)

Sinema-Tillis framework suggested potential for future compromise

New 118<sup>th</sup> Congress:

Dream Act of 2023 (S 365) by Durbin & Graham

US Citizenship Act of 2023 (HR 3194) by Linda Sanchez (CA):

Path to citizenship; green card eligibility; work visas pilot

# GOP Border Security and Enforcement Act of 2023 (HR 2)

- Passed House 5/11/13, 219-213
- Limit asylum: raise screening standards; narrow qualifications around interpersonal violence, gang action or crime
- Expand detention and limit release from detention
- Narrow executive branch parole powers re humanitarian parole
- Require E-Verify
- Criminalize visa overstay
- “operational control” of the border

# LWVUS Action on Immigration

Types of action:

- Letters to Congress, White House, sometimes as part of a coalition
- Lobbying in person
- Call to action, broad publicity on social media
- Litigation, amicus briefs

The Dream Act – examples of LWV action

LWVUS website

STATE LEVEL ACTIONS  
and  
STATE LEAGUES ADVOCACY

# WHERE CAN STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE IMPACT ?

States have jurisdiction to achieve immigration reform in these areas :

- Basic Human Needs : immigrant access to health care, tenant protection, public benefits, unemployment insurance
  - Eligibility for in-state tuition, drivers licenses, identification cards, professional licenses
  - Equal protection in the criminal justice system; limit state and local law enforcement cooperation with ICE
- \* California is a leader in immigration reform; Illinois and New Jersey also active

# LWVC Action on Immigration

Types of action – similar to LWWUS :

- - Sign letters - sometimes as part of coalition; lobby; calls to action
- Who within LWVC takes action -- The Advocacy Team :
- - LWVC leadership: VP Advocacy - Area Directors Social Policy :  
Criminal Justice, Health Care, Immigration
- - With input from grassroots members : Interest Groups

# LWVC Action on Immigration

- Advocacy resources are constrained. League's first priority is always Making Democracy Work
- Since 2015 LWVC has supported 12 immigration-focused bills in CA Senate and Assembly
  - 50% : criminal justice and law enforcement, fair treatment for immigrants, non-cooperation with ICE
  - 50% : equal access to social services, medical care and food



# LWVC Action on Immigration

- May 2023, LWVC supports two identical pending bills : **SB 245** and **AB311**
  - “**Food for All**” – to make government food assistance available to all who are needs-qualified, regardless of immigration status
- What happens now :
  - Both bills seem to have good chance of passing

# Recent Noteworthy State Action in other states

## Arizona: Proposition 308

Ballot measure to provide in-state tuition to undocumented passed in November 2022

## Florida: New Legislation (May 2023)

Felony to transport migrants

Require E-Verify

despite FL labor shortages in agriculture, construction, and health

# What can the LWV support?

- **Incremental steps toward citizenship** for the 10.5 million undocumented – Dreamers, farmworkers, essential workers
- **Expansion of legal immigration** – increased number of refugees, asylees and work visas
- **Funding** for appropriate border processing and staff to reduce asylum backlog
- **State-level expansion of human services and basic needs** for the undocumented

# What can you or your local LWV do ?

Individual action or respond to LWV calls to action

Join an Immigration Interest Group

share information and strategy, speakers on immigration

Join an Immigration Google group

receive email updates on key issues

Start a local League immigration committee

educate League members and community on immigration

Reach out to non-profits active on immigration

# How to join either Immigration Interest Group

LWVUS Immigration Interest Group:

Email Jane Andrews or Katherine Gavzy to join:

[janea@lwvsandiego.org](mailto:janea@lwvsandiego.org) or [katherineg@lwv-pa.org](mailto:katherineg@lwv-pa.org)

LWVC Immigration Interest Group

Email Beryl Flom to join: [berylflom@gmail.com](mailto:berylflom@gmail.com)

Handout has contact information

## DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

What can we do  
as individuals and/or League members?  
What is aspirational?  
What is realistic?