

Jacqueline Rioja Velarde. "The League Looks at Immigration: Forum Addresses Immigration Issues." *The Oxford Press*. 24 Jan. 2016: A4

"What does immigration mean for our democracy?" The League of Women Voters of Oxford will hold a public forum on this question Tuesday, January 26th, at 7: 30 pm, in the LCNB Community Room, Park Place, Oxford. This event is part of the League's annual civic education program. The panel of speakers will include Hannah Noel, PhD, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Global and Intercultural studies (Latin American, Latino and Caribbean studies program), Miami University.

The speakers will examine some aspects of the two most polarizing issues in politics today: immigration reform and undocumented migration. According to Dr. Noel, "how we choose to approach immigration reform will impact our global image and national democratic legacy."

A majority of Americans support immigration policy reform. A newly released Pew Research Center public opinion survey reveals that "eight-in-ten Americans (82%) say the U.S. immigration system either needs major changes or it needs to be completely rebuilt."

According to new Pew research, "By 2065, the U.S. will have 78 million immigrants" and "81 million people born in the U.S. to immigrant parents" in a projected total population of 441 million. Thus, our nation will continue to be characterized by diversity as well as challenged to make immigration laws that serve our nation well.

In this current context, there is no doubt about why the League of Women Voters, at the local, state and national levels, advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. The League position is that "the United States of America is a nation of immigrants, and the League of Women Voters has a long history of encouraging their participation in American society. Immigrants have helped weave the fabric and identity of our nation, and we believe that it is critical for the U.S. to encourage their participation in our democracy."

A democratic society requires well-informed citizens on key issues that matter to our country. Becoming well informed can change people's views about immigration in the United States and, more importantly, can create the support needed to rebuild our immigration system. Becoming knowledgeable can help voters avoid being influenced by inaccurate information spread by polarized media or by biased political views.

The public forum on Tuesday, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Oxford, is free and open to the public. This event will provide an opportunity for the community to

become better informed about the current debate on immigration laws by reflecting on the causes and consequences of proposed changes, and their impact in our democracy.

For more information about the LWV US position, visit the League's website at <http://lww.org/issues/reforming-immigration>. For updates regarding the Oxford event and additional resources visit the League of Women Voters of Oxford Facebook site - Calendar of events at <https://www.facebook.com/lwvxford/events>.

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