

YEO Frontline News

Officials take initiative through new YEO Immigration Task Force

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, state legislators are considering a record number of immigration-related proposals this year. At least 1,169 bills have been introduced in all 50 states - twice as many as last year. Eighteen states have already enacted at least 57 bills.

The issue of Immigration, one of the workshops offered at the 2007 YEO National Convening in March, quickly became a key issue of discussion for YEOs. There was an outcry about the lack of action at the national level and a need to develop an effective education and messaging campaign about the issue. The network decided to engage YEOs to create the YEO Immigration Task Force.

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YEOs dealing with Immigration:

California

School Board Member Felipe Agredano

“The biggest challenge my community faces is full funding for our own future. My community has some of the brightest valedictorians, class presidents, star athletes and science whiz kids who qualify to the top-ranked national universities, such as UC Berkeley and UCLA. Sadly, they are not receiving the full funding necessary to pay for college. Financial aid is being denied to extremely intelligent students because they are undocumented, most of them brought to this country by their parents as children without a choice in the matter. We need to fund their education because this is now their country. They aren't going anywhere else.”



Arizona

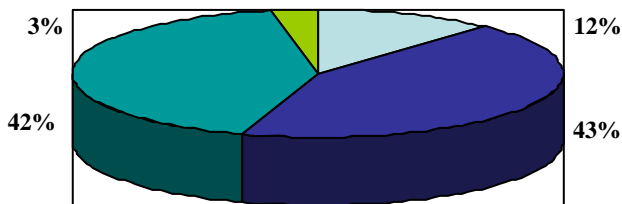
State Representative Kyrsten Sinema

“The biggest challenge we face stems from the very real frustrations that all Arizonans experience as a result of our nation's failed immigration policy. Fifty percent of all people entering the country without proper documentation enter through Arizona, and half of those individuals stay in Arizona. As such, our growth is explosive and our state is not equipped to handle the rapid growth. Because of this, the voters feel frustrated and vote yes on any initiative that is put in front of them. We know that the voters prefer a humane, rational, and economic solution to this problem, but the State Legislature is offering only gimmicky, hateful measures. Some of these measures include: denying undocumented college students academic scholarships, denying undocumented immigrants the right to bail when arrested, outlawing day laborers, denying citizen children with undocumented parents child care assistance, abolishing state-funded English classes for adults, and forcing local law enforcement officers to act as federal immigration authorities.”



National Poll: (USA Today/Gallup Poll 4-15-07)

“Do you think the US has made progress or lost ground in dealing with illegal immigration in the past year? Or has there been no change?”



Legend: ■ Made Progress ■ Lost Ground ■ No Change ■ Unsure

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Immigration

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The task force held its first meeting last month, chaired by School Board Member Felipe Agredano (CA) and State Representative Tony Payton (PA). The group learned a substantial amount about the needs and resources for YEOs. From targeted messaging to access to local immigration organizations, YEOs are ready to deal with immigrant rights in their cities and states.

The immediate next step is to develop messaging for YEOs as a resource, and connect them with contacts at national, state, and local organizations. If you are interested in joining the task force or can provide resources to the group, please contact Raquel Simon at rsimon@pfaw.org.

The logo features the words "TAKE BACK" in a bold, dark blue font above "AMERICA 2007" in a larger, bold, red font. A stylized American flag graphic is positioned behind the word "AMERICA".

Scholarships available for a limited time!

From June 18th - 20th, 2007 thousands of progressive activists, thinkers, bloggers, and leaders will convene in Washington, DC to begin transforming the historic victories of 2006 into concrete and lasting change for the common good at Take Back America 2007.

Hosted by the Campaign for America's Future and the Institute for America's Future, Take Back America 2007 will bring together a wide range of progressive movement participants, including grassroots and netroots activists, labor leaders, presidential candidates, and organizers from the women's, civil rights, and environmental movements.

During this three-day conference, Progressive Majority will present its 5th Annual Candidate Development and Leadership Track- specifically designed to provide candidates, activists and staff a crash course on the "ins and outs" of political campaigns.

Interested in attending? A limited number of scholarships are available for interested YEOs. Please contact Raquel Simon at rsimon@pfaw.org ASAP.

**Jun 18-20, 2007
Washington Hilton Hotel
1919 Connecticut Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20009**

For more information about TBA 2007, [click here](#).

YEOs IN THE NEWS

GRAND RAPIDS, MI— A group of Democratic state lawmakers is reviving efforts to try and remove barriers to embryonic stem cell research in Michigan. **State Representative Andy Meisner** introduced similar bills in the last session of the Legislature, but they did not advance in a chamber that then was under Republican control and opposed to such measures. Meisner has changed the bills this year in the hopes of attracting broader support.

<http://www.woodtv.com/Global/story.asp?S=6394215>

SPRINGFIELD, IL— **Representative Susana Mendoza** wants to make it easier for cell phone customers to cancel their contracts with wireless providers if their phones malfunction. She is sponsoring a law to allow wireless customers to cancel their contracts without termination fees if a phone must be replaced or repaired at least three times within a contract period. The National Conference of State Legislatures says no other state has such a cell-phone "lemon law" on the books.

<http://www.wqad.com/Global/story.asp?S=6410724&nav=1sW7>

PHOENIX, AZ - About 50 students marched at the Arizona State Capitol to rally support for state financial aid to colleges and universities.



Several lawmakers spoke out at the event, including **Rep. David Schapira**. A former Arizona State University and Northern Arizona University student, Schapira also brought a megaphone to help students chant.

"Financial aid is extremely important," Schapira said. "I see it as one of my biggest jobs down here to fight for affordable higher education."

The event was organized by the Arizona Students' Association in hope of reaching a \$13.4 million goal toward the Arizona Financial Aid Trust, the only form of state financial aid.

<http://media.wildcat.arizona.edu/media/storage/paper997/news/2007/04/05/News/Students.March.In.Phoenix.To.Fight.For.More.State.Aid-2825256.shtml>



YEO Network Updates

This month, the YEO Network salutes some very special Network members that are leaving our Host Committee. State Representative Connie Johnson (MO), Alderman Austin King (WI), and New Paltz Mayor Jason West (NY) have stepped down from the Host Committee after incredibly dedicated service to the YEO Network.

These elected officials are innovative, progressive, and highly motivated. They stand firm to their values and have made waves in their communities. Not only have they served their constituents with the utmost determination, but they have helped build and form the YEO Network into the organization it is today. Involved since the very beginning, they have shaped the issues at YEO Convenings, and have inspired a generation of young leaders to continue in their stead.

Connie, Austin, and Jason- we will miss you!

Connie Johnson

- Missouri State Representative
- B.A. Bradley University, 1991; J.D., M.A. St. Louis University, 1996
- First Elected in 2000
- Honors:
 - Given Outstanding Legislator Award from the St. Louis Chapter of the National Association for Mental Illness in 2003
 - Honored as one of the Who's Who in American Politics, 2005-2006
 - Given the 2006 Missouri Bar Legislative Award for contributions to legislation affecting the administration and the Integrity of the Judiciary
 - Given the 2006 Regional Commerce and Growth Association Lewis & Clark Statesman Award.



Jason West

- Mayor of New Paltz, NY
- First Elected in 2003
- Accomplishments:
 - Risked criminal prosecution to marry 25 same sex couples in 2004.
 - Secured a \$100,000 grant to finance a solar power array for the Village of New Paltz
 - Implemented nearly \$6 million worth of infrastructure and public works improvements.
 - Authored a book entitled Dare to Hope: Saving American Democracy, offering an accessible blueprint for everyday activism and engagement communities.
 - Named the Best New Mayor of 2003 by Hudson Valley Magazine, twice named one of the most powerful people in the Hudson Valley by the Times Herald Record newspaper, and one of five "Young Environmental Leaders to Watch" by Plenty Magazine.



Austin King

- Alderman and Common Council President
- B.A. University of Wisconsin-Madison
- First Elected in 2003
- Accomplishments:
 - Elected Common Council President at the age of 24, the youngest in the city's history.
 - Authored and shepherded to passage a municipal minimum wage ordinance, establishing a \$7.75 per hour wage in Madison, Wisconsin.
 - Authored an ordinance guaranteeing paid sick days for all workers in Madison, the first such proposal in any American city.
 - Served as director of the Madison office of the Young Voter Alliance, and is currently employed as a lobbyist for SEIU.



Right Wing Watch

Supreme Court Upholds Federal Abortion Ban

The U.S. Supreme Court last month upheld the federal "partial birth" abortion ban, rendering a 5-4 decision in *Gonzales v. Carhart* and *Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood Federation of America*. The federal abortion ban, passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush in 2003, criminalizes some abortions in the second trimester of pregnancy.

The decision was the first abortion decision from the Roberts court, and abortion rights advocates say it is sure to further undermine the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that recognized a woman's constitutional right to an abortion.

Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, and Samuel Alito voted with the majority. Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, John Paul Stevens, David Souter and Stephen Breyer dissented.

"Today's 5-4 decision is further proof that the confirmation of right-wing nominees to the Supreme Court has disastrous consequences for Americans' rights and liberties," said People For the American Way President Ralph G. Neas.

Meanwhile, the Religious Right praised the decision, saying that it would boost efforts to restrict women's choice at the state level.

"We have a court now that has correctly yielded to the Congress and the legislative branch," said Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council. "This will bolster state legislators who are reflecting the views of their constituents on abortion."

The decision may have implications in the 2008 presidential race, where GOP frontrunner and former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani has favored abortion rights, but expressed his support for the ruling in a statement.

"The Supreme Court reached the correct conclusion in upholding the congressional ban on partial birth abortion," he said in a statement.

In response to Giuliani's support of the decision upholding the federal partial birth abortion ban, NARAL Pro-Choice America President Nancy Keenan expressed disappointment that Giuliani abandoned his "belief in limited government and personal freedom... just to win a primary."

This Right Wing Watch was provided by People For the American Way.

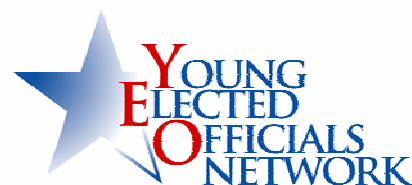
TIPS: PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL

Fundraising Tips

As every elected official knows, half the battle of getting elected is raising the funds to make a campaign happen. The following excerpt is by Carol Hess, president of Political Resources, Inc. She shares ideas for fundraising sources below.

1. As a candidate, you need to raise money early and raise money often. This advice holds true for the incumbent as well as the challenger. The best contributors are those who have already contributed to your campaign. Don't be afraid to ask them again.
2. First you must examine your own reserves. If you are not willing to make a contribution toward your own campaign, you can't realistically ask others to contribute. Next you should ask your family and friends. While this may seem awkward, your family and friends are your early seed money, to get you started.
3. Next you should compile a list of your acquaintances, your business associates, your high school and college friends, etc. They should be called or sent a personal letter from you. What you say and how you say it is important. Once you have a commitment from your friend, they can write letters on your behalf, call their friends, hold fundraising parties, etc.
4. Here's the next long list of contacts: college class, any civic or professional or religious association you are member of, your local, county or state party organization, every person who contributed to you in any past campaigns, former candidates or officeholders, and if applicable, your opponents' enemies.
5. Do your research and see what you can tap into. Go to the Board of Elections and check on their filing reports of past candidates for local and state elections. Consider approaching a List Broker, able to find lists of likely donors who fit your criteria. Research PAC money available. This requires planning and should only be considered once you are a viable candidate.
6. The best fundraising advice - raise money early and raise it often. Best wishes in your campaign.

Source: Carol Hess, <http://politicalresources.com/>



Bringing Labor Peace to Madison

**A Special Feature by YEO Member,
Dane County Supervisor Ashok Kumar (WI)**

Ashok Kumar is a member of the Dane County Board of Supervisors. Below Kumar speaks about a bill currently before Congress, the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). The bill would reform the nation's basic labor laws by requiring employers to recognize a union after a majority of workers sign cards authorizing union representation. He is currently organizing a campaign to pass the Labor Peace and Neutrality ordinance in Dane County, which will work to implement the goals of EFCA within the restrictions of municipal/county labor laws.



The “Labor Peace and Neutrality” ordinance will require the county to prioritize contracting with companies that agree not to violate people’s democratic right to form a union. The most effective way to ensure priority for union contracts or companies that remain neutral to union organizing drives at their workplace is through ‘labor peace and neutrality’ provisions. These provisions can be amended into existing living wage ordinances for contractors, subcontractors and grant beneficiaries.

When people take it upon themselves to organize a union, they often face employer campaigns of blatant lawlessness and dehumanizing brutality. In order to create a broadly shared, high quality of life in the cities, rural and suburban communities in which we all live, working people need organization. However, Human Rights Watch has shown that workers’ democratic right to organize for their own health and safety, for shorter workweeks against workplace discrimination and for a salary that allows them to support their families and neighborhoods, is violated every day.

A ‘labor peace and neutrality’ ordinance would ease the unionization process for county workers, just as the Employee Free Choice Act will do at the federal level. Local ordinances have a substantial effect within the private sector, assisting many workers in bringing their employers to the bargaining table. Moreover, by posing pro-labor guarantees of labor peace as a pre-requisite for contracting, the ordinance circumvents potential federal, state, or circuit court preemption laws.

Currently, we are building a coalition of labor, community, and social justice related organizations to mobilize support for the ordinance. We expect strong private sector resistance, especially among the hundreds of businesses that currently receive funds from Dane County. Once the ordinance is introduced in the middle of May and debated in early June, I believe it stands a strong chance at passing -- especially if both the organized and unorganized sectors of labor ask elected officials to vote in the interest of people.

Job Announcements

**Associate to the Midwest Regional Director
The White House Project**

St. Paul, Minnesota

The White House Project is seeking a person to provide program assistance to the Midwest Regional Director. The Program Associate will offer administrative support while assisting in outreach, fundraising and servicing constituents. Applications are due on or before noon on May 28, 2007, with a cover letter describing interests, qualifications, and salary requirements and a resume.

Send applications to cgray@thewhitehouseproject.org.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Donald Betts- Kansas

Kansas State Senator Donald Betts was honored April 19th by the Progressive States Network with a State Legislator of the Year Award. The award was given in recognition of Senator Betts' leadership opposing the escalation of the Iraq war. He's the primary sponsor of the State Senate resolution to condemn troop escalation.



Representing the opinions of his constituents and the best interest of the state of Kansas, Senator Betts forced a debate about the Iraq war when others in the Kansas legislature wanted to ignore the issue. At the public hearing for his resolution, the Senator was joined by a disabled Iraq War veteran in delivering an impassioned message that sparked local media coverage and public debate.



Senator Betts represents the part of Wichita where he once lived with his grandmother, and Betts is the youngest legislator serving in the Kansas State Senate and a member of the YEO network. He was the youngest legislator to serve in the Kansas State House of Representatives at the age of 24 before being elected to the State Senate in 2004.

PROGRESSIVE PARTNER

HIGHLIGHT:



Progressive States Network was founded in 2005 to drive public policy debates and change the political landscape in the United States, by working to pass progressive legislation in all fifty states. Progressive States Network advances this agenda by providing coordinated research and strategic advocacy tools to forward-thinking state policymakers, legislative staff, and non-profit organizations.

Our support to legislators includes:

- Crafting policy using tested best-practices
- Writing a strategy that includes framing, messaging and coalition building
- Building a network by providing formal means of communications between legislators and non-profit organizations so we can all be on the same page
- Providing support when it's needed most by being there as critical progressive initiatives advance to mobilize state networks, identify experts to assist with policy creation and passage, and run paid media

Perhaps most importantly, we function as a meeting space for progressive leaders, activists, and citizens, and serve as a hotbed of information exchange. By tracking legislation in all 50 states, we help to spark change across the country merely by making it easier for people to learn more about how to get good ideas passed into law –and take power into their own hands.

Contact:

Joel Barkin, jbarkin@progressivestates.org
www.progressivestates.org

Special Features?

If you have interesting policy or experiences to share with your fellow YEOs, please contact Raquel Simon at rsimon@pfaw.org to arrange to write a special feature.



POLICY CORNER

Fair Housing Protections for Immigrants

Former Common Council President Austin King, Madison, WI

Level of Government: All

Policy Category: Fair Housing/Civil Rights

Possible Allies: Latino community, other immigrant communities

Synopsis

Most cities, counties, and states have fair housing legislation that defines a certain number of “protected classes”, and prohibits a landlord or realtor from discriminating against a prospective tenant or buyer for being a member of a protected class. This proposal adds anyone who declines to disclose their Social Security number unless such disclosure is required by state or federal law.

Far too often, rental applications and other housing applications have a blank spot for Social Security number (SSN). The mere existence of this prerequisite prevents those who are living in our communities without SSNs (both legal and undocumented immigrants) from having access to the same stock of housing as the rest of us. Although the rental industry will argue that a Social Security number is essential to doing the necessary credit and background check, this is false. Immigrants who pay taxes have an ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) that is also a unique identifier, and just as effective at establishing credit worthiness as a SSN. This proposal does not require a landlord to rent to someone with bad or inadequate credit. It merely requires a an applicant not be turned away for declining to provide a SSN.

Resources

The language change is relatively simple, and usually involves adding to an already-existing list of protected classes. From the Madison ordinance: “...sex, race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, age, disability, marital status, domestic partnership status, source of income, arrest record or conviction record, less than honorable discharge, physical appearance, sexual orientation, political beliefs or the fact that a person is a student as defined herein, or the fact that a person declines to disclose their Social Security number when such disclosure is not compelled by state or federal law.”

Interview

The local Latino community was firmly behind this effort, and many members of the public came and testified about the difficulties of finding housing when one lacks a Social Security number. Of course, many immigrants that are here legally do not have a SSN, so we were generally successful at preventing this proposal from becoming a proxy debate about immigration reform nationally.

Most landlords have changed their application form to read “SSN or ITIN” or otherwise stopped asking for SSN information altogether. Members of the immigrant community have reported greater accessibility in new housing units. Like all fair housing laws, education and enforcement make the difference.

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Conference of Mayors

June 22-26, 2007

<http://www.usmayors.org/>

Los Angeles, CA

The National Education Association:

Joint Conference on Concerns of Minorities and Women

June 27-28, 2007

<http://www.nea.org>

Philadelphia, PA

The National Education Association:

Annual Meeting/Representative Assembly

June 30 - July 5, 2007

<http://www.nea.org>

Philadelphia, PA

NAACP: 98th Annual Convention

July 7-12, 2007

<http://www.naacp.org>

Detroit, MI

National Black Caucus of State Legislators:

June 28 - July 2, 2007

<http://www.nbcsl.com>

Memphis, TN

National Association of Counties: 2007 Annual Conference

July 13-17, 2007

<http://www.naco.org/>

Richmond, VA

National Association of Latino Elected Officials:

2007 Annual Conference

June 28-30, 2007

<http://www.naleo.org>

Orlando, FL

The Council of State Governments:

Southern Legislative Council Annual Meeting

July 14-18, 2007

<http://www.slcatlanta.org>

Williamsburg, VA

Job Announcements

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Communications Director

New York League of Conservation Voters

New York

NYLCV seeks a Communications Director to devise and implement media strategies and increase media presence statewide, in New York City, Long Island, Westchester, and the Capital District media markets.

Last day to apply: May 31, 2007

<http://www.idealists.org/en/job/212858-131>

Communications Director

The Commons Project

Madison, Wisconsin

The communications director, accountable to the executive director, will have lead responsibility for development of the Commons Project communications effort, which will be heavily e-based.

Last day to apply: June 15, 2007

<http://www.idealists.org/en/job/218148-29>

Policy Analysts

The Commons Project

Madison, Wisconsin

The policy analysts/writers will have responsibility, under the direction of the Project's executive director, for preparing briefing materials on different areas of state policy, assisting in program organization and direction, and helping in communication.

Last day to apply: June 15, 2007

<http://www.idealists.org/en/job/218149-62>

Policy Analyst

CLASP

Washington, DC

CLASP's Child Care and Early Education team is seeking a Policy Analyst to work with policy experts in child care and early education. The policy analyst's topic areas will focus on CLASP's work in promoting integrated early education/pre-kindergarten programs delivered in diverse settings (including child care, Head Start, and schools), analyzing federal Head Start data, identifying and analyzing state policies in support of infants and toddlers, developing Web-based resources, and supporting the overall work of the child care and early education team.

<http://clasp.org/showjob.php?id=33>

Executive Director

The Commons Project

Madison, Wisconsin

The Executive Director will have lead responsibility for organizational development, program, and management including: developing organizational structures and policies and procedures; developing the full range of Commons' services and products; representing Commons to outside audiences; building a wide range of partnerships with executive administration staff and policy and technical assistance providers; supervising in-house and field staff; identifying new program opportunities; and enlarging and diversifying revenue streams.

Last day to apply: June 15, 2007

<http://www.idealists.org/en/org/161608-330>



YOUNG ELECTED OFFICIALS NETWORK STAFF

Young Elected Officials Network

A program of People For the American Way Foundation

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