

CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT WELFARE COLLABORATIVE  
**California Update**

Volume 5

Issue 2

April 4, 2001

## ***Planning for 'Immigrant Day 2001' Heads into Final Weeks***

Scheduled this year for May 7, Immigrant Day 2001 will bring hundreds of low-income immigrants and advocates from across the state to Sacramento to take part in sessions intended to introduce them to the political process. As with previous Immigrant Days, this year's event will also give immigrant participants the chance to express their views to legislators and other government officials on issues of concern to their communities.

"We're building on the success of previous years' events and expecting another turnout of enthusiastic immigrants who work and live in California and should be fully integrated in the state," noted Julie Han, Immigrant Day 2001 coordinator. "There is still time to register," Han continued, "but providing adequate transportation and lodgings, particularly to delegations from southern California, cannot happen if we don't get more financial contributions."

According to Han, who previously served as census project associate for the California Asian Pacific Islander Census 2000 Network, the agenda for the day will consist of the following:

- a morning press conference to kick off the event that will highlight the immigrants' rights groups' state policy agenda for 2001;
- legislative visits that will introduce participants to the political process; and
- a noon rally to build support for the issues under consideration in this year's legislative season that have been identified as most urgent to immigrants.

Immigrant Day 2001 participants will meet with their representatives to discuss extending immigrants' eligibility for two key safety net programs, access to driver's licenses, tuition for public colleges and universities, and linguistically appropriate provision of services (see "CIWC Announces Legislative, Policy Goals for 2001-02," CALIFORNIA UPDATE, Feb. 28, 2001, p. 1).

Under current law, immigrants who entered the U.S. on or after the federal welfare law's Aug. 22, 1996, enactment date are due to have their eligibility for state-funded food and cash assistance programs terminated in six months. Unless new legislation is enacted, such persons will lose their eligibility for California Food Assistance Program and Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants benefits on Sept. 30, 2001. Introduced by

Assemblypersons Wilma Chan and Gil Cedillo, AB 989 would, if enacted, establish permanent assistance programs for eligible immigrants without regard to their date of entry. Immigrant Day participants will also call legislators' attention to the importance of increasing immigrants' access to health programs.

Access to driver's licenses remains a pressing issue for many hardworking immigrants in California. Significant Immigration and Naturalization Service backlogs and delays prevent large numbers of immigrants from adjusting their immigration status. Immigrant Day 2001 participants will encourage legislators to enact AB 60 (Cedillo), a measure that would allow people to apply for driver's licenses while their immigration adjustment applications are pending.

Immigrant Day 2001 participants will build support for a measure to enable California high school graduates to pay in-state tuition to attend public colleges and universities without regard

*Please see "Immigrant Day 2001," page 2, column 1*

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## **Pre-Immigrant Day Advocacy Skills Workshop to Be Held**

In advance of the upcoming Immigrant Day 2001 event, the California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative will be holding a series of advocacy skills-building workshops in southern and northern California. The sessions will orient registrants for Immigrant Day on the workings of the legislative process and effective advocacy techniques.

Training sessions in Los Angeles have been scheduled for April 18 and 21, with sites to be determined. Sites and dates for the northern California sessions have yet to be determined. For additional information, interested individuals should contact Julie Han, Immigrant Day coordinator, at 213-639-3900, ext. 114. Readers of CALIFORNIA UPDATE may also call Monica Hernandez, program director of the Northern California Coalition for Immigrant Rights, at 415-243-8215, ext. 308, or Sylvia Mora, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, at 213-353-1340.

### **THE CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT WELFARE COLLABORATIVE IS A JOINT PROJECT OF**

- Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California
- Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
- National Immigration Law Center
- Northern California Coalition for Immigrant Rights
- Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network

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***Immigrant Day 2001*** (continued from page 1)

to immigration status (AB 540, Assemblyperson Marco Firebaugh). They will also express to legislators their concern about providing linguistically appropriate services to limited English-proficient populations. In so doing, they will urge lawmakers to adopt SB 987. The bill was introduced by Senator Martha Escutia and, if passed, would ensure proper implementation and enforcement of the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act. Legislators will also be asked to reconsider the state's use of a fingerprint imaging system that likely discourages eligible immigrants from applying for cash and nutrition assistance.

With just over a month remaining before the event, outreach to promote Immigrant Day is intensifying. Multilingual versions of the enclosed flyer are available in Spanish, Chinese, Russian,

and Farsi. Besides Han, Edwin Rodriguez of the Northern California Coalition for Immigrant Rights and Sylvia Mora of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles are responding to inquiries in northern, central, and southern California. Parties throughout the state interested in contributing assistance or participating should contact Rodriguez or Mora, as appropriate.

Han can be reached at 213-639-3900, ext. 114; Mora can be reached at 213-353-1340, and Rodriguez can be reached at 415-243-8512, ext. 313. Monetary donations to help defray event costs should be made out to "National Immigration Law Center," marked "For Immigrant Day 2001," and sent to: Attn: Julie Han, National Immigration Law Center, 3435 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 2850, Los Angeles, CA 90010.

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