

Arizona certifies voting ballot measure

PHOENIX (AP) - An initiative that would require people to prove their citizenship when registering to vote or when seeking social services in Arizona was certified Monday for the November ballot.

Supporters say Proposition 200, the Arizona Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, is intended to combat welfare and voter fraud. Opponents say it is unnecessary and rooted in racism.

Secretary of State Jan Brewer announced that supporters had collected more than the required 122,612

names.

If approved by voters, Proposition 200 would require state residents to prove their citizenship when registering to vote and show identification when casting a ballot in person.

People applying for services not mandated by the federal government would also have to prove their identities and eligibility. Initiative supporters say that requirement is limited to people applying for welfare but opponents say the reach is broader.

Federal law already re-

quires state workers to check if applicants are eligible for welfare benefits. Undocumented immigrants are barred from getting childcare assistance, food stamps or other money from the government.

A poll released in July by Arizona State University said three of every four voters surveyed said they supported the initiative.

But Ann Marie Tallman, president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, voiced opposition.

"For persons even presumed to be undocumented

immigrants, the new policy could implement restrictions on the most basic services, including law enforcement and fire fighting services," she said. The Service Employees International Union on Friday filed a lawsuit seeking to keep the initiative off the ballot; a hearing is set for Tuesday.

In a related development, the Arizona Supreme Court on Monday declined to rule on a separate lawsuit filed by the union to challenge some parts of the official voter pamphlet's description of the initiative.

Unity

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learned what I need to do to purchase a home. This is a great program to help you look at what you want to do in the future whether you have any experience or not. And by doing an internship with the program, you can decide if this is the career you want to pursue."

That kind of impact is exactly what coordinators of the SBI program hope each student experienced. Debbie Conway, manager for business development for Clark County, has worked with the program since its inception 10 years ago. She has witnessed its growth from only a few students to 112.

"We're teaching young people how to be disciplined, stay focused, how to get on a job site and to be good/hard workers and employees. We taught them the value of being a good citizen, how to get along with others in the workforce, interpersonal skills and how to give back to the community. We've tried to approach working with the students from a holistic approach that included financial management and life skills," Conway said.

At the summit, the students attended three workshops rotating throughout the day to allow them an opportunity to experience each. Topics dealt with student activism, allowing them to express themselves in a positive manner on issues of importance to them. Each of the workshops ran approximately 50 minutes and was entitled (GOTV) Get Out The Vote, Healthy Dating, and Value Stand Out.

In the GOTV session, students identified three issues that they supported and three that they opposed. Issues supported by the students included civil rights, education, raising the minimum wage,

social security, environment, universal health, gang prevention, and employment/job creation. On the other side were George Bush, taxes, abortion, drunk driving, the No Child Left Behind Act, military draft, death penalty, and school dietary restrictions.

The Value Stand Out session allowed students the opportunity to take a stand on positions they agreed with, disagreed on or were undecided about. Topics included: Rap music has a better message than R&B; Men who are dating women should pay for the date; Youth should work if they don't plan on going to college; Police should stop and question any youth who fit the description of a drug dealer or gang member; and In a relationship it is the responsibility of the woman more than the man to provide birth control.

Learning about one's values, beliefs, and opinions occupied the discussion in the Healthy Dating session where the students discussed the positives and negatives of being a man or woman. The students also talked about what women want from men in a relationship and what men wanted from women in a relationship and developed a

coping list to define values appreciated in each sex that were acceptable to them.

The teens heard from Marc Matsuo, co-vice president of the Organization of Chinese Americans during the day. The organization brought in guest speaker Daren Mooko, Director of the Asian American Resource center at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif. And thanks to the Chinese Organization, students are eligible to win \$1,000 in an essay-writing contest. The winner will be announced in October.

With this year behind her, Conway is looking ahead and said next year she hopes to "have some of the high school students who previously participated in the program come back as college students and continue their growth and development as a new component to the program. Another change will be to have smaller groups of students working together so that we can have more one on one contact with them in terms of shaping and molding their personalities."

Conway also said new funding sources will be sought for next year and that informal conversations have taken place with state legislators about working the pro-

gram into the budget. She also said they would work to attract more local public relations firms, their clients and customers to allow them to buy into supporting the program. In addition to Clark County and the Chinese American Organization, sponsors of the summit included MGM MIRAGE, Arcata Associates, Bank of Commerce, Citibank, Hamada of Japan Restaurant, Ho Ho Ho Chinese Restaurant, and the Whole Bean Coffee Roaster.

Voting

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forcement Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, were asking potential voters for identification;

- In 2002 in Pine Bluff, Ark., five Republican poll watchers allegedly asked only African-Americans for identification and took photographs of them during the first day of voting;

- Also in 2002 in Baltimore, Md., anonymous fliers were posted in some Black neighborhoods, stating "URGENT NOTICE." The flier gave the wrong date for Election Day and warned that parking tickets and overdue rent should be paid before voting;

- The staff of the Duplin County, N.C. Board of Elections was removed after allegations of fraudulent and criminal behavior, including altered signatures, unauthorized voting address changes and voter intimidation at the polls. According to Democracy South, a civil rights watchdog group, the local district attorney's office refused to prosecute despite overwhelming evidence.

Among the resolutions outlined in the report, the Election Protection efforts will be in full operation on Nov. 2 among the plans:

- The NAACP and PFAW are already working to identify potential election problems and resolve them;

- Closer to Election Day, thousands of volunteers will distribute state-specific Voters' Bills of Rights in more than 30 states. These will be two-sided flyers with information, including what to do about specific problems at the polls or related to voter registration;

- On-site volunteers will continue to monitor polls nationwide, offering assistance to voters with problems.

"Robbing voters of their right to vote and to have their vote counted undermines the very foundations of our democratic society," the report concludes.

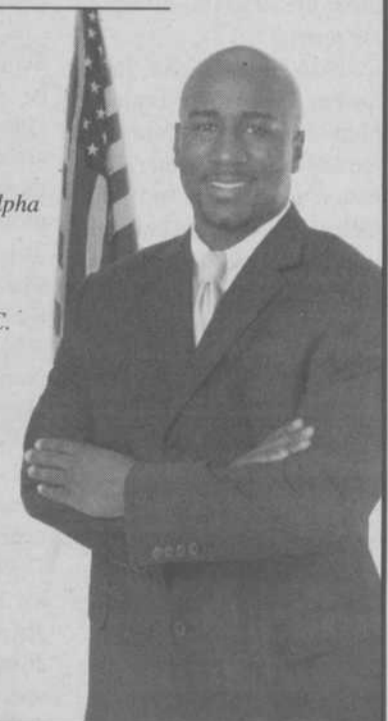
"Politicians, political strategists, and party officials who may consider voter intimidation and suppression efforts as part of their tactical arsenal should prepare to be exposed and prosecuted."



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