

Immigration, Immigrants and the 2008 Elections

**October 22, 2008
City Club**

Stewart Kwoh, President and Executive Director of Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California

Reverend Eric P. Lee, President and CEO of Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Los Angeles

**Ira Mehlman, Media Director of Federation for American Immigration Reform
Angela Sanbrano, Board President of National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities**

Moderator: Jon Beaupre of California State University, Los Angeles and KPCC

The panel discussion addressed the importance of an equitable immigration policy and the treatment of immigrants in the U.S.

The panelists began their conversation by examining why individuals and families immigrate. While a majority does immigrate out of self-interest, the actual causes vary from economics to politics. For example, Mr. Kwoh stressed family reunification as a reason for the Asian Pacific community to immigrate.

Mr. Mehlman stated that the objective of current immigration policy is not clearly defined and should be designed to serve the interest of the American people while also enforcing immigration laws. Ms. Sanbrano suggested that we should look beyond and claimed that the current immigration policy is broken, due to the failure of the federal government, and urged for reform that include education, healthcare, and fair trade agreements. Mr. Mehlman and Rev. Lee suggested that we keep in mind the interests of immigrants while assessing the impact on the existing population. Rev. Lee advocated changing how immigration and immigrants are viewed. In its place he recommended that we need to focus on human rights issues.