



Statement by Senator Dianne Feinstein
*-On San Francisco Board's Proposal to Put
Non-Citizen Voting Rights on Ballot -
July 21, 2004*

“From its first days, our nation has been strengthened by immigrants who have come to the United States with the dream of becoming citizens. I strongly support the naturalization process and encourage it whenever I can. I believe that the greatest right and responsibility of being a citizen is the right to vote. That is the core of democracy. Allowing non-citizens to vote is not only unconstitutional in California, it clearly dilutes the promise of citizenship.

Article II, Section 4 of the California Constitution specifically states that only California residents who are U.S. citizens at least 18 years of age may vote in California elections. It seems clear that this section would prevent the extension of voting rights to non-citizens, even in local elections. Indeed, based on this Constitutional provision, a State court judge in 1996 struck down a proposal to allow non-citizens to vote in San Francisco.”

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