

Civics for Adults Update, February 15, 2021

Upcoming Workshops

*Need to check a registration link? See www.civictinker.info/schedule

What Is Democracy and Why Does It Matter? New series

 of three workshops! Open to all.

A three-part series featuring thought-provoking presentations and discussions on democracy. At our first event, we'll explore our right to vote and changes that we might like to see in how elections are run. Next, we'll learn what democracy meant to our country's founders, and deliberate whether our federal government structure reflects their, as well as our, values. At our last session, we'll review how we measure our progress as a democracy. Presentations by myself with co-discussion facilitation with Sheila Panyam. <https://multcolib.org/events/what-democracy-and-why-does-it-matter?fbclid=IwAR0jVrDQg84a46do8hMI7B50NlvZ4liNzN3lqAw5-Wa28BGABYm2xiPqRSI>

Wednesday March 3	6-7:30	Voting Rights
Wednesday March 10	6-7:30	Democracy and Our Federal Government
Wednesday March 17	6-7:30	Measuring Success in a Democracy

New Workshop! This special, timely, workshop will be available for a limited time.

Voting Rights, Voter Fraud, Voter Suppression and Election 2020

This workshop focuses on voting rights, voter suppression and then traces the events of Election 2020 up to Jan 6. It's a powerful presentation which includes a great deal of data and commentary from bipartisan sources.

Thursday April 7 6:30-8:00 Register: <https://www.ci.oswego.or.us/library/online-voting-rights-voter-fraud-voter-suppression-and-election-2020?date=0>

Misinformation, Fake News and Political Propaganda

Are you overwhelmed with messages from politicians, news sources and other media? Distinguish truth from fiction using real-world examples. Become your own "factchecker"! Also, how to find accurate information.

"Loved it...well-rounded, wide array of examples!"

Mon. March 22. Evening. Check website for registration. Sponsored by Oregon City Public Library.

Citizen Activism 101 — Making Change Happen

Learn about types of advocacy and strategies for change. Brief historical perspective; Examples of successful advocacy—local-national; Choosing your battles; Who makes the rules? Getting heard; tools for change; "Tracking" state and federal legislation. *"Excellent. Thanks!"*

Mon. April 5. Evening. Check website for registration. Sponsored by Oregon City Public Library.

The Constitution: Fulfilling Democracy's Promise?

We'll look at the Constitution's creation, trace major changes to its interpretation, and examine some structural limitations. We'll puncture some myths and develop a perspective that helps evaluate its meaning more thoughtfully in light of contemporary concerns. I've recently added some key information about the status of our democracy and what we need to be looking at to improve it. Apparently, I'm on the right track... from a recent workshop:

The workshop was very good. Donna's presentation was flawless, and informative.

This was excellent presentation and I hope the it can be available to other groups, especially educational institutions.

It was good to see people coming together to discuss this important topic.

Totally EXCELLENT!

This workshop was very good and I would recommend this workshop to everyone. Cohen is a good speaker and the information and context was insightful.

Mon. March 15 6-7:30. Check website for registration. Sponsored by League of Women Voters-Umpqua Valley.

Oregon Library Association!

Donna will be presenting two workshops at the Oregon Library Association virtual conference in April. April 20 "**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**" – How Libraries Can Support EDI Beyond the Institution

April 23 **A Natural Alliance Youth Librarians, Schools and Teaching Critical Thinking [aka dealing with Misinformation]**

See the OLA program descriptions for more details. <https://oregonlibconference.org/2021/program/>

Want to see more? Ask your local library or community group to sponsor a workshop! Thanks.

Flyer describing workshops: https://static.s123-cdn.com/uploads/2516289/normal_5fe8c854352d5.pdf

Donna was interviewed on **OPB's Think Out Loud** in October! <https://www.opb.org/article/2020/10/30/civics-educator-aims-to-enhance-knowledge-and-engagement-in-political-process/>

Sampling of Facebook posts

Oregon lawmakers consider allowing prisoners to vote. A good article discussing several voting related bills [not only this issue] currently in the Oregon legislature. Look them up on O.L.I.S., if interested, and set up an email alert so you know when there is a hearing [and you can email or virtual testify]. <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/02/11/oregon-lawmakers-consider-allowing-prisoners-to-vote/>

Updated information on Felon voting rights from the National Conference of State Legislatures. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/felon-voting-rights.aspx>

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Another bill in the Oregon State Legislature. Follow them easily using O.L.I.S. [Oregon Legislative Information System.] The state Criminal Justice Commission would create a **new public database that captures reports on the use or threatened use of force by each police or corrections officer, under House Bill 2932.**

https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/HB2932?fbclid=IwAR1Hzo6qmNGxArbflRei_PUj_0lrg3ZU7q6fpjmmupXG2JfBUlbo5FOJm7l

[Learn about how to find and track legislation, and submit testimony in my Citizen Activism 101 workshop!]

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Do you live in Multnomah County? **A Charter Review Committee is going to be selected** to create recommendations for Charter changes. The Charter is like the "Constitution" for the County. This is similar to what has just begun for the city of Portland with its newly formed Charter Review Commission. To apply: <https://multco.us/multnomah-county/apply-charter-review-committee>

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We knew that the opening up other states did to make voting easier and safer [in other words, more like Oregon!] would have a backlash in some places. Here are **proposed pro-voter bills as well as bills to roll-back improvements** that came about this last year. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-2021>

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67 PERCENT OF AMERICANS SUPPORT H.R.1 FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

HR1 / SB1 The For the People Act would change elections rules, campaign finance rules and ethics rules. It's worth checking out. And, it does look like - when presented fairly - a majority of voters, from all sides, support it. <https://www.dataforprogress.org/blog/2021/1/22/majority-support-hr1-democracy-reforms>

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The times we are living in... 😞 From a related article: "the **Department of Homeland Security has issued a warning** that anger "fueled by false narratives," especially unfounded claims about the 2020 presidential election, could lead some inside the country to launch attacks in the coming weeks." The actual alert: <https://www.dhs.gov/ntas/advisory/national-terrorism-advisory-system-bulletin-january-27-2021>

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More on the Oregon Legislature which has begun its long session.

I listened to the state **House Housing Committee** talk about housing legislative plans for this session. Pleased that **they are looking to boost so many avenues of housing: affordable rental housing, first-time homeownership, and houseless programs.**

If only the federal government would step up now. Federal monies have diminished drastically over the past few decades. **The federal government is still providing more housing subsidy monies for the upper half of the income scale - via the mortgage interest deduction - than all the money that is spent on housing assistance for folks in the lower half, combined!**

Governor's Recommended Budget - OHCS Investments					
HOUSING STABILIZATION		HOMEOWNERSHIP		AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING	
Individual Development Account ⚡ Converts IDAs to General Fund in Fiscal Year 2022	\$7 million	Down Payment Assistance tied to OHCS lending	\$10 million	Bond Funding for LIFT (Rental and Homeownership) & Permanent Supportive Housing	\$250 million
		Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership	\$2 million	PSH Rental Assistance & Services	\$15 million
Improving HMIS	\$1.2 million	Homeownership Development Resources	\$10 million	Affordable Housing Preservation & Land Acquisition	\$30 million
Long-Term Rental Assistance for Youth	\$4.5 million	Manufactured Housing Program – Homeowner support	\$2.5 million	Increase in Agricultural Worker Housing Tax Credits	\$9.5 million
COVID-19 Energy Assistance	\$5 million	Manufactured Housing Program – Park Preservation	\$3.5 million	Broadband Assistance for Low Income Oregonians	\$6.4 million
		LIFT Homeownership	See Bond Funding		



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I thought myself lucky to hear the young **Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman**, at the Inauguration. Twice lucky - here she is on the TED stage...

"The choice to be heard is the most political act of all"

<https://www.facebook.com/TEDEducation/videos/1315149238830991>

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Hugely important article. **And, the author's book, Economic Dignity**, needs to be widely read.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/01/05/shared-time-loved-ones-covid/>

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More at <https://www.facebook.com/Civics-for-Adults-1490728887922036>

Donna