

March 2021 Calendar of LWV Events

Wed., March 3, 1:30 p.m.—Book Club—*In the Garden of the Beast* by Erik Larson
Virtual meeting. Link will be emailed.

Mon., March 8, 2 - 4 p.m.—Board meeting—via Zoom

Wed., March 17, 6 - 8 p.m.—All-member meeting—Discuss the book
Becoming a Democracy:

***How we can fix the Electoral College,
gerrymandering, and our elections***

by Kristin Eberhard

Virtual meeting. Link will be emailed.

Buy the book at [Becoming a Democracy](#).

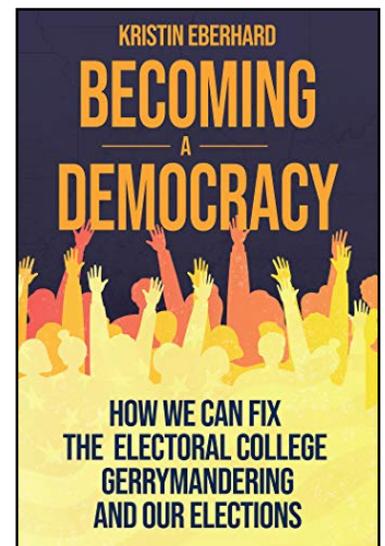
More information on Page 2.

Sat., March 20, 1 p.m.—Great Decisions: “End of Globalization?”

Virtual meeting. Link will be emailed.

(This was last month’s topic that was postponed due to
the ice storm.)

Discussion leader: [Patty Davenport](#)



Salem City Club meetings via Zoom:

Friday, March 5, noon—

“Salem’s Changing of the Guard: Police Chief Trevor Womack Takes Command”

Register at <https://salemcityclub.com/event-4147974/Registration>

Cost for non-City Club members is \$5.

Friday, March 19, noon—

“The State of Higher Education” with Dr. Stephen Thorsett, President, Willamette U.

Register at www.salemcityclub.com when available. \$5 for non-City Club members.

Making Democracy Work™

Becoming a Democracy: How we can fix the Electoral College, gerrymandering, and our elections

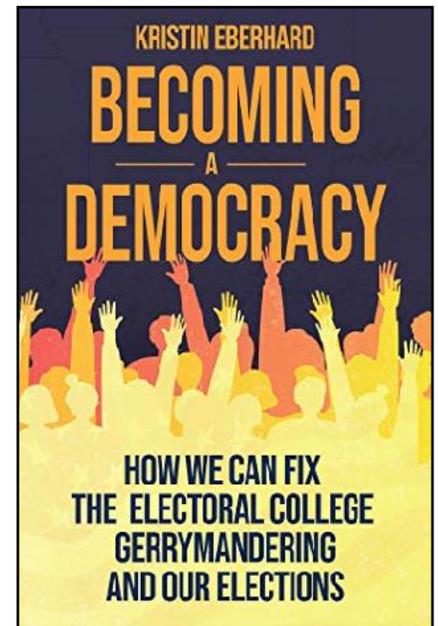
Discussion of this book by Kristin Eberhard
Director of Democracy Program at Sightline Institute

Our March 17th meeting from 6 - 8 p.m. via Zoom will be a discussion of the new book *Becoming a Democracy: How we can fix the Electoral College, gerrymandering, and our elections* by Kristin Eberhard.

Kristin Eberhard, Director of the Democracy Program at Sightline Institute, has thoughtfully researched how the U.S. election system is unjust, poorly designed, or broken, and walks you through ten big but practical ideas for making our elections free, fair, and secure. Her new book **Becoming a Democracy** is a field guide to the most viable upgrades for our elections so that America can truly be governed by and for the people.

Problems with the current system and what some states are doing about it

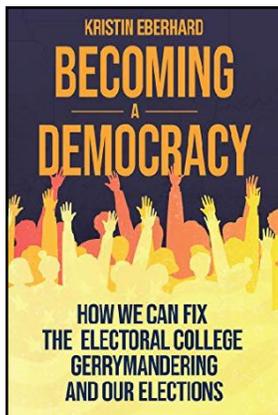
- More than half of Americans live in just nine states. That means less than half the population controls 82 percent of the Senate. It doesn't have to be that way. We can hope the Senate eliminates the filibuster. But while we're holding our breath, what if we went further and remade the Senate to represent people?
- Voter suppression justified by trumped up fears of double voting and dead voters – why? There's already a simple, proven solution working in 30 states to keep voter lists secure and accurate.
- Feel stuck with the Electoral College reversing the popular vote? That isn't even in the Constitution! There is a path for states to ensure the candidate with the most votes wins (and we're already on it).
- We could defeat gerrymandering and create a multi-party system where voters have more options, lawmakers get more work done, and extremists are relegated to the fringe, unable to take over a major party.
- American voters aren't going to elect the American president. Twelve states are.
- One in every 13 Black adults could not vote as the result of laws limiting voting rights for people with felony convictions, as of 2016.
- Some 23 million American citizens who are eligible to vote could not exercise that right if all states had strict voter ID laws. More than one in ten voting-age citizens do not have a current, government-issued photo ID. So, if you're in a state with a strict Voter ID law, that means no vote.
- The Supreme Court cleared the way for states to purge 2 million voters from the rolls between 2012 and 2016. The book's author shows how states across the country are changing all that with proven solutions for running fair elections and making every vote count.
- Thirty states are members of a secure and modern system to keep voter rolls clean. Together, they've removed more than 300,000 names of deceased voters from their rolls and updated addresses for nearly 10 million eligible voters.



(Continued on Page 3)

Becoming a Democracy (Continued from Page 2)

- In the 2020 primary, Montana mailed ballots to all registered voters. That state saw the highest voter turnout in more than 40 years.
- In the 2014 midterm elections, voter participation in Vote At Home states across the nation was on average 23 percent higher than in other states.
- In 2018, Maine voters used ranked ballots to elect members of Congress. A four-way race for a House seat would have elected someone with only minority support, but ranked choice voting elected the candidate with support from more than half of voters.



At our March 17th meeting we'll discuss the author's ideas for improving our democracy, so we urge you to read her book.

You can buy the book from <https://store.bookbaby.com/book/becoming-a-democracy1>. The black-and-white-paperback costs \$12.99 plus shipping. The full color paperback (\$31.99 plus shipping) and the eBook (\$7.99) may be ordered through links at the bottom of that webpage.

To participate in the March 17th meeting, email a request to Sally Hollemon at rhollemon@comcast.net to receive the link.

Bills to require Civics to graduate high school in Oregon

Two companion bills are before the Oregon Legislature to require high school students to pass a civics competency test in order to graduate. They are HB 2299 (sponsored by Rep. Paul Evans) and SB 513 (sponsored by Sen. Fred Girod).



FOCUS

Focus is the newsletter of the League of Women Voters® of Marion and Polk Counties. Members subscribe through their dues, and membership is open to anyone 16 years of age and older.

Voter Service

Deanie Anderson, Voter Service Co-chair

Vote411

We plan to enter candidate and contact information for school district board races for Marion and Polk Counties' 15 separate school districts and one community college district. (In 2019 there were 66 candidates for these school district positions). We also plan to enter any local ballot measure information. There is no cost to the local League for participating in Vote411.

There are 32 special districts in our two counties—cemetery, water, fire, recreation. In 2019 there were an additional 101 candidates for these races; most ran unopposed, and we didn't enter them. However, if someone likes to do data entry, Janet Adkins would train that volunteer on how to do it on Vote411.

May Election

Candidates for all these positions may file any time between February 6 and March 18. Four of the seven Salem-Keizer School District positions (Zones #1, 3, 5, and 7) will be on the ballot. Candidates must live in the zone they represent but they are voted on "at large" (unless the School Board changes that requirement this spring).

I have contacted Capital Community Media and City Club and hope to work collaboratively on a school board candidate forum for April probably as a public evening webinar.

Legislation on Solid Waste on the horizon in Oregon

Important environmental legislation (nearly a dozen bills) will be considered this legislative session and many of them affect solid waste. They include:

- Modernizing Oregon's recycling system
- Mattress and carpet recycling
- Sharps collection systems
- Guaranteeing the right to repair electronics
- Expanding household hazardous waste collections

Many of the above are centered upon the idea of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). EPR would direct the manufacturers or distributors of certain products to pay for and/or oversee the collection and recycling of products no longer of use.



For more information about these proposals, check out this link [EPR Today](#), which takes you to the BRING website, a non-profit organization leading the efforts to support these various proposals.

See The LWVOR Action Priorities re Climate at <https://www.lwvor.org/climate-emergency-updates>.

Observer Corps February 2021 Reports

Salem Area Mass Transit District Board (02/25/21)

Janet Adkins, Observer

Main Points/Issues Discussed:

- Employee retirement plan for non-bargaining unit employees.
- Discussion and approval of Federal and state funding project lists for future biennium.
- Quarterly performance and financial reports including average ridership declines of 50% due to Covid measures. No fares being charged during the pandemic.
- Updates on numerous outreach and coordination activities with employers, chambers of commerce and public.
- Upcoming virtual open house and public input opportunities for Albany to Salem Transit Feasibility Study.



Decisions/Actions Taken:

1. Approved change to an employer funded non-bargaining-unit employee retirement plan with defined contribution and additional optional employee contribution matched by employer.
2. Approved project lists for 2022-2023 biennium state and federally funded senior and disabled transportation including support for Cherriots Lift, Shop and Ride, Travel Trainer as well as Silverton dial-a-ride, West Valley Hospital medical transportation operations and Woodburn out-of-town medical transport using mostly volunteer drivers.
3. Approved other 2022-2023 state funded projects in region including design and engineering for a proposed South Salem Transit Center (location to be determined), operation of the coastal connector between Salem and Lincoln City, and a 99W corridor pilot project proposal to link Junction City and McMinnville.
4. Approved purchase of four replacement and three additional buses using state funds and local match.



Housing Authority of City of Salem (02/08/2021)

Alice LaViolette, Observer

Main Points/Issues Discussed:

The Consent Agenda consisted of Resolution 2272: Approving disposition of land located at 3112-3120 Broadway Ave. NE for development of the affordable housing project, Sequoia Crossings. It will consist of 77 units (studio, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom) located within walking distance of grocery store, bank and bus line. This property was the previous location of Orchard Village, a 30-unit public housing project, torn down in 2009. Plan is to start building in spring 2022 and complete in 2023.

Decisions/Actions Taken:

Resolution 2272 (described above) was unanimously approved.

(Reports continue on Page 6)

Housing Authority of City of Salem (02/22/2021)

Alice LaViolette, Observer



Main Points/Issues Discussed:

- A report summarizing the various programs of Salem Housing Authority was presented by Nicole Utz, SHA Administrator.
- Security Deposit Assistance - 2021 HOME funds of \$58,500 available to provide rental security deposits for qualifying clients.
- Sec. 8 Housing Vouchers - currently serving 2702 households.
- Veterans Assistance Supportive Housing - provides 68 vouchers for homeless and at-risk veterans in partnership with the VA.
- Family Unification Vouchers - 119 vouchers provided through partnership with Dept. of Human Services for families needing stable housing and for youth 18 - 21 who are aging out of foster care programs.
- Sec 8 Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy - private property owners provide 26 units for eligible clients.
- Housing Rental Assistance Program (HRAP) - this program works with private landlords to provide housing for the "hardest to house" chronically homeless by providing wrap-around services to clients and support/information to landlords. There is a great need for more landlords.

Actions/Decisions Taken:

Program Report (described above) was accepted.



HOW TO BECOME an Observer

Contact Amy Vandegrift or Alice LaViolette to let them know which council/commission/committee you want to observe and to answer any additional questions you might have. In the absence of coverage of these governmental bodies by journalists, you can keep all of us informed. Our LWV board will send a letter on your behalf to the committee chair to let them know you are a regular LWV Observer.

From the City of Salem: We need your help! Recently, the Mayor and City Council requested a report from the Human Rights Commission on "actions the City should take to promote diversity as a core strength of our community that ensures everyone—regardless of culture, race or ability—can thrive in safety and dignity."

The Commission has already begun gathering suggestions from its members and community leaders. We seek more voices who can provide perspective on ways to combat discrimination in Salem, whether based on race, religion, color, sex, marital status, familial status, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or source of income.

We welcome suggestions from individuals and organizations from all backgrounds for our ongoing work to combat discrimination in the City. Please share your ideas on how to combat discrimination in the City online at <https://form.cityofsalem.net/s3/Help-Make-Diversity-a-Core-Strength-of-the-City-of-Salem>. You may also email humanrights@cityofsalem.net.



**League of Women Voters®
of Marion and Polk Counties**

**Half-year membership through September 30, 2021,
for *NEW* members *only***

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all women and men 18 years of age and older. Membership includes email subscriptions to local, state, and national League publications.

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Phone
(H) _____ (W) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Yes, I want to join the League. I am enclosing:

\$ 32.50 for Individual Membership

\$ 15.00 for each additional Household Member, or Limited Income Member

Student members are free.

\$6.50 extra to receive printed newsletters through the mail

\$ _____ TOTAL to LWVMPC (not tax deductible)

Mail check & form to Treasurer Elsa Struble, 210 18th St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

or

Join online [HERE](#).

For further member information, contact Amy Vandegrift at 503-364-0492, vandebloom@gmail.com.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
of Marion and Polk Counties**

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Salem, OR 97302-5908

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Making Democracy Work™



The League of Women Voters®, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

March 2021

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