LWV CASCADE ECHOES

League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through educationand advocacy

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
A Voice – FOR CITIZENS
A Force – FOR CHANGE

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2016 AND JANUARY 2017

DECEMBER

1 FIRST THURSDAY LUNCHEON, the topic is JERICHO ROAD, speaker Eleanor Bessinette
. At **Black Bear Diner (1465 NE 3rd Street, Bend.** 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 pm. More information on pages 2 and 3

4 HOLIDAY PARTY, Sunday 1-4 pm, Awbrey Glen. Invitations have been sent.

8 Board Meeting, 10am at the County Building. All members welcome

25 Merry Christmas and Happy Hannukah

JANUARY

5 FIRST THURSDAY LUNCHEON, the topic is "The Political Scene. At **Black Bear Diner (1465 NE 3rd Street, Bend.** 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 pm.

12 Board Meeting and General Program Planning Meeting for State and Local Programs. 10am board meeting, 11:30am Planning meeting at the County Building

21 AAUW of Central Oregon will meet at 9:30 AM at Touchmark.

26 Election Methods Update and consensus, 10am at the home of Marie and Pat Gibson, 19530 Mammoth Dr., Bend.

WEB SITES
Local
www.lwvdeschutes.org/index.htm
State
www.lwvor.org
National
www.lwv.org
Nationwide Election Information
www.VOTE411.org

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-2017 THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DESCHUTES COUNTY

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President's Message

After this grueling election season, I'm sure we are all looking forward to relaxing with family and friends during the holidays. There have been many great things that have happened over the last year and some not so great. I am happy that the League of Women Voters continues to be a beacon for those wanting to do good things for our fellow Americans through our education and voting rights endeavors.

I hope everyone can make it to the LWVDC Holiday Party on Sunday December 4th at Awbrey Glen Golf Club from 1-4 pm. Please note if you have not already sent in your check for the party, please send it to Carol Cavoretto, 1796 Meerkat Avenue Bend OR 97701. This is due by November 23rd. Please bring a book, DVD or item to sell to support our local league. Any questions about the Holiday Party? Please call Carol at 541-385-8144.

The LWV of Deschutes County yearly 'Planning Meeting' will be held immediately after the January 12th Board Meeting. If you have ideas about what we should be working on locally or ideas for First Thursdays, this is the place to voice those and we would love any and all input.

All members are invited to come to the Board Meeting at 10 am before as well. The planning meeting should start about 11 am in the Lyon room in the County Building, 1300 Wall Street.

We will be holding a caucus on a new study from the LWVOR on 'Election Methods'. This will be on January 26th, Thursday at Marie and Pat Gibson's house at 10 am. Please put this in your calendars. I know I am very interested in learning about this topic especially with how our local elections might be changing in the coming years.

I encourage all of our members to come to our First Thursday Luncheons and bring friends. Our numbers have not been as stellar as we would like and I hope all members can help us support this important part of our League outreach.

Thank you to all our members, participants and supporters. We couldn't do anything without you.

Kim Smith, President
LWV of Deschutes County

FIRST THURSDAY LUNCHEON TOPIC AND SPEAKER

Jericho Road was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 2007 when several congregations in Redmond realized that individually they did not have the resources to meet the needs of all those who needed assistance, but that by working together they could significantly increase their impact. Jericho Road's mission is to provide financial, emergency housing support to the homeless and mentoring as well as provide meals for those in need within their community. Eleanor Bessonette is President of the Board and Housing Coordinator

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AAUW of Central Oregon Meeting Announcement

AAUW of Central Oregon has no meeting in December, but usually meets on the 3rd Saturday at at 9:30 AM atTouchmark. The meeting includes a brunch for $15 or coffee/juice for $5. Reservations are required and the deadline is noon of the Wednesday before. You may phone me your reservation--Carol @ 541-385-8144

Coming Attractions: Program Updates and Program Planning

In January we will turn from our voters service work to the other League side: working on updating or undertaking new studies for our Program. The Oregon state League has two studies wrapping up, and we are now being asked to consider Election Methods and update our current position. A brief summary follows here. We will have a members meeting to reach consensus on January 26th. The committee will include Corol Ann Cary, Barbara and Jim McCormick and Dave Stranahan. The second study is Public Postsecondary Education, and we expect to have more information soon to pass on to you. Meanwhile, hope that you enjoy the upcoming holidays, and at some point, have time to review this information.

Election Methods Update Study

Have we taken all the care we can to ensure fair, impartial and representative elections? In addition to fighting voter disenfranchisement and the corrupting influence of money, are there ways to design the way we vote to help ensure our elected officials speak for the people and our legislative bodies are more nearly a miniature portrait of the people at large? These questions were originally raised by one of the Founding Fathers, John Adams.

This report buildS on the work of the 2008 Election Methods Committee to present and evaluate voting methods and election systems that are currently in use in the U.S. or around the world and that could be considered for adoption in Oregon. In Benton County, one such system will be on the ballot in November 2016.

Single-Winner Election Systems

There are multiple options for electing a single winner. A single-winner election could be for a single position, such as a Mayor or Governor, or for a single legislator from a certain geographic area, such as the one congressperson representing a particular district, or a councilor representing the whole city. Oregon currently uses first-past-the-post, plurality voting, but there are other possibilities.

Plurality is the American status quo. It's easy to use and understand, but it discourages sincere voting and, compared to other methods, is less effective at electing the candidate who is most representative of the people.

Delayed runoff is an improvement on plurality in electing representative candidates. It requires two elections, one to narrow the field to two candidates and one to select between the two, usually involving lower voter turnout in one of the elections.

Range voting requires voters to rate each candidate on a scale, say from 1 to 5. The candidate with the highest average rating wins. If all voters vote sincerely, range voting is extremely good at selecting the most representative candidate. It is, unfortunately, very susceptible to strategic voting as opposed to sincere voting.

Approval voting enables voters to indicate whether or not they approve of each candidate for the position. The candidate with the most approvals wins. Approval voting is second best to range voting in electing the most representative candidate and second worst to range voting in encouraging strategic voting.

Ranked choice voting is known as instant runoff voting when used to select a single candidate. Studies show it to be nearly as good as range voting in selecting the most representative candidate and best of all systems considered in encouraging sincere voting.

Multiple Winner Election Systems

Because each district is politically diverse, electing just one representative per district will not yield a legislative body that is "an exact portrait of the people at large." Most western democracies elect multiple candidates from each district so that legislators can represent the different political views within each district. There are several election systems for electing multiple legislators per district.

Bloc types exist in Oregon. In this system, the entire electorate elects multiple candidates to a legislative body, electing each candidate in separate races. For example, all residents of the City of Portland elect four councilors, plus a Mayor. Each council candidate runs for a numbered council seat against other candidates who filed for that numbered seat. This system has been shown to be *less* representative than dividing the area into districts and electing a candidate from each district, because the majority opinion of the entire area determines the outcome of all the races.

Semi-proportional systems, including cumulative and limited voting allow voters multiple votes in the same race. The highest vote-getters win. These systems can lead to more representation for all groups if minority political groups carefully coordinate their voting strategy and focus all their votes on a single candidate to ensure a candidate representing them wins one of the positions.

Proportional representation systems are favored by most political scholars as the most representative systems. Most western democracies use a form of proportional representation voting to elect legislative bodies. A pool of candidates contends for the available seats in a district. There are several ways to elect representatives that reflect the major political opinions of the district:

Party list voting allows voters to choose a candidate from a party list (open list voting, the most common form of voting in developed democracies) or simply to choose a party (closed list voting). In open list voting, a vote counts for that candidate and for the candidate's party. The party wins seats in proportion to the number of votes for candidates on its list, with candidates given the party's seats in proportion to their number of votes they receive. In closed list voting the party's pre-determined list of candidates win positions in proportion to the number of votes for that party.

Mixed-member proportional voting, a newer system, is the one most election experts favor. It retains a local representative while allowing for overall proportionality of the legislature. Voters get two votes: one for a local representative from a single-winner local district, and one for a party. Parties win seats in proportion to the number of votes each party receives.

Single-transferrable vote systems are the second choice of election experts. Candidates run in a pool for a number of seats. For example, all candidates for Portland City Council would run together for any of the four council seats, rather than splitting up into different races for individually numbered seats, as they do now. Voters rank the candidates and any candidate who passes a certain threshold of support wins a seat. For American voters, this proportional system has the added attraction of allowing voters to vote for individual candidates, not for parties.

The minimum level of the threshold, to avoid electing representatives with very small support groups, and the size of the district are important design considerations for proportional systems.

Political Parties and Oregon Reforms

In Oregon, a candidate can list up to three parties on the ballot, assuming all three have nominated the candidate. This **aggregated fusion voting** gives voters more information about the candidate. A full fusion voting system would list each candidate as many times on the ballot as there are parties nominating her. By choosing which place on the ballot to vote for the candidate, voters indicate support for that party. **Full fusion** would give candidates more information about the sources of their support.

The purpose of partisan races in primary elections is to select major party candidates to run for partisan seats, like State Senator or Governor, in November general elections. Major parties in Oregon are the Democrat, Republican, and Independent parties. Voters not registered with one of these parties are excluded from partisan races in the primary. Proposed reforms include a **limited open** primary, in which unaffiliated voters can vote by choosing which party's ballot to receive, an **open** primary in which all voters choose which party's ballot to receive on election day (a consideration with Oregon's vote-by-mail system), and **top-two** primaries, in which all voters, regardless of party affiliation, vote on all candidates for each seat and the top two vote-getters, regardless of party, advance to the general election. See delayed runoff above.

Administration of Alternate Methods

Changes in election methods may also require changes in voting administration hardware and software, training and voter education campaigns, as well as updates to other aspects of election administration. The three Oregon county clerks interviewed as part of our research all agreed that complexity and cost of equipment are important concerns and should be included along with other criteria when considering administering different voting methods.

National Program: The League has long argued for more independence for the District of Columbia. During the current emphasis on Voting Rights, more publicity is available, to help educate the public and of course, our League members. Two current documents are presented here.

How the District of Columbia Is Governed in 2016

Since the passage of the DC Home Rule Act on December 24, 1973, the District has been governed much like any other state in the US. There are three separate, co-equal branches of government: legislative, executive, and judiciary, each providing checks and balances. There are, however, a few important areas in which the District government cannot operate with the same autonomy that other state governments do. States generally have the power to make and enforce laws, to create their own agencies, and to manage their affairs free from interference from the federal government. This is not the case for DC.

Legislative The District Council with 13 members is the legislature for the District. Four members are elected at-large, eight are elected in partisan races from one of the District's eight wards and the Chair is elected at-large. Members serve for 4-year terms. The Council enacts legislation and has the power to create, abolish or organize any District agency. The Council essentially serves year round, breaking for a summer recess from mid-July to mid-September when Council members concentrate on constituent services. The body is unicameral, just as is the Nebraska Legislature. The District also elects Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs). The system was designed to bring the government closer to the people and allow the people to get closer to the government. Today there are 40 ANCs. Commissioners are elected to 2-year terms in a nonpartisan election and serve without pay. Each represents approximately 2,000 people in a Single Member District.

Lack of Autonomy The Home Rule Charter mandates the composition of the Council in two ways. First, the number of legislators is restricted to 13 with no provision for growth in population or complexity of governing. Second, originally, no more than two of the four at-large positions can be nominated by the same party. In subsequent elections the charter mandates that "a political party may nominate a number of candidates for the office of at-large member of the Council equal to one less than the total number of at-large members (excluding the Chairman) to be elected." Most importantly, all legislation enacted, including the annual budget, must be assigned an Act number and submitted to Congress. Congress has 30 days to approve or disapprove the legislation, 60 days in the case of certain laws related to criminal proceedings. There are no exceptions, and any piece of legislation may be overturned.

Executive

The Chief Executive of the District is the Mayor. The mayor has the responsibility to enforce all city law; administer and coordinate city departments, including the appointment of a City Administrator and heads of the departments (subject to confirmation by the Council); to set forth policies and agendas to the Council and prepare and submit the city budget at the end of each fiscal year. The mayor either approves or vetoes bills passed by the DC Council; submits drafts of legislation to the Council; and can propose federal legislation or action directly to the president and/or Congress. Mayors can draft and enact executive orders relative to the departments and officials under their jurisdiction and reorganize any entities within the executive branch (except in the case of formal disapproval by the Council). The mayor is elected to a 4-year term in the same year as mid-term elections take place. There are no term limits in the District. If the mayor is unable to serve, the Chair of the District Council acts until a new mayor is elected. The District's agencies mirror those in most of the 50 states. Agencies include Business Development; Public Schools; Health and Human Services; Public Safety and Justice, which includes the Metropolitan Police Department and the Department of Human Resources; Planning and Economic Development; Policy and Legislative Affairs; and General Counsel.   The District now elects its Attorney General. There are also a number of independent agencies, which include the DC Public Library, the University of DC, and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

Lack of Autonomy Like a governor, the Mayor signs bills before they become law. Unlike a governor, she must await Congressional approval before a law takes effect.

Judiciary The District has two courts: the DC Court of Appeals, which is the equivalent of state Supreme Courts and Superior Court, which is the trial court for DC. In addition, four other bodies form the Judiciary branch. The Joint Committee on Judicial Administration handles various administration and personnel issues, including audits, annual budget requests, and liaison with other court systems. The Commission on Judicial Disabilities and Tenure is the judicial disciplinary agency that has the power to censure, reprimand or remove judges from either the DC Court of Appeals or the Superior Court. The 7-member Judicial Nomination Commission selects and recommends candidates for judgeships. Members are appointed by the US President, DC Mayor, DC Council, Chief Judge of the US District Court, and the DC Bar.

Lack of Autonomy The 50 states generally use one of five different methods for selecting their judges: 1) appointment by the governor; 2) appointment by the state legislature; 3) merit selection by a legislative committee based on past performance (some states also employ "retention elections" after judges have been in place); 4) partisan elections; 5) non-partisan elections. The common thread is that judges for any state are selected by some state action. Judges in the DC Court of Appeals and DC Superior Court are appointed by the President of the United States. DC is the only jurisdiction without the power to appoint its own judges.

Other Government Representatives
DC residents elect a non-voting delegate to the US House of Representatives, two shadow Senators, and one shadow Representative whose task is to lobby Congress for statehood.

Lack of Autonomy District residents have no voting representation in the House of Representatives. And, whereas residents in all 50 states have two Senators, DC residents have no representation at all in the Senate.

Congressional Intervention in District of Columbia Local Affairs

The quest for Statehood for the people of DC is not only about securing full representation in the US Congress, but also about securing rights to self-governance and local autonomy in the District of Columbia.

Under the District Clause of the Constitution, the U.S. Congress continues to exercise authority over DC local affairs. Congress reviews all DC legislation before it can become law. Congress can modify or even overturn such legislation. It can impose new and unwanted laws on the District. And, it retains authority over the District's local budget, most of which is funded only by taxes levied by the District on its residents

Members of Congress routinely impose their own personal political agendas on the District of Columbia and its residents. Recent examples include:

- Expanded federally-funded private and religious school voucher programs.
- Barred District spending to offset the costs of abortions for low-income residents.
- Blocked DC's medical marijuana program and prohibited legislation to tax, regulate and commercialize marijuana sales.
- Pushed to eliminate efforts to control gun violence.
- Blocked attempts to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS with needle-exchange programs.
- Threatened to repeal DC marriage equality laws.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DESCHUTES COUNTY

FIRST THURSDAY LUNCHEON

DECEMBER 1, 2016

"JERICHO ROAD"
Eleanor Bessonette
is President of the Board
and Housing Coordinator

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 pm
at Black Bear Diner,
on the corner of 3rd and Olney Streets in Bend.

There is a separate dining room for our use.
There is no cost to hear the speakers;
however those wanting lunch
should arrive about 11:00 a.m. and order off the menu.
The speakers will begin at noon
and allow time for questions from the audience.

No reservations are needed.

This event is open to the general public.