

Healthy Democracy News



Dear Friends of Healthy Democracy,

We are pleased to share this mid-year update on our programs and partnerships, and, as always, thank you for your support in making our work possible. Together, we *can* do democracy better! Here are some of the ways we are working on that now.

Citizens Juries

Healthy Democracy's flagship program, the Citizens' Initiative Review, is based on a construct developed by one of our co-founders, Ned Crosby, called the [Citizens Jury](#). As votes on statewide ballot initiatives are most frequently held on even-numbered election years, Healthy Democracy is now developing pilot programs in off-election years utilizing the original Citizens Jury process on local government policy issues. Our experience with the CIR shows us that these processes increase trust between citizens and their government, and are a particularly effective means of re-engaging the public in decision-making in a new and dynamic way.



Thanks to a generous grant from the Carol & Velma Saling Foundation, the [first pilot Citizens Jury project will be held in the City of Milwaukie, Oregon](#) over the course of two weekends in August. Citizens Jury panelists will gather to study and make recommendations on a question about city council compensation. Healthy Democracy would also like to offer special thanks to Clackamas Community College for donating the space for the Citizens Jury at

their beautiful Harmony Campus in Milwaukie. The public is welcome to attend and observe, and it will also be livestreamed.

HELP US FIND MORE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERS!

People often ask Healthy Democracy "what can we do to help?" Because Citizens Jury work with local governments can happen anytime during the year and not just on election cycles, we are seeking more local government partners who are interested in implementing this method of citizen engagement.

If you would be interested in approaching your local city or county government about Citizen Jury panels, [contact Robin or Linn](#) at the Healthy Democracy office. We will be happy to meet with you, train you on our public outreach materials and talking points, and coach you on making that first contact with your local mayor or other city official.

Citizens' Initiative Review: International Editions



As the CIR takes a break in the United States this year, Healthy Democracy had the privilege of providing training and technical support to our first international CIR held in partnership with the University of Turku in [Korsholm/Mustasaari](#) Finland earlier this year (photo on right shows Program Manager, Linn Davis, with the CIR team at the University of Turku).

The ballot question considered involved the potential merging of two municipalities (one majority Swedish-speaking and the other, larger one which was majority Finnish-speaking). It was exactly the sort of public issue that the CIR process is made for. The city was divided essentially 50/50 on the issue, which made the political pressure especially high. It was described as “a family-splitting, social-media-exploding” local issue in a town of 20,000. Still, the citizen panel managed to write a statement, accepted unanimously and in two languages. It offered more evidence that the CIR works in a highly polarized, and even bi-lingual, context.

Our next international experiment with the CIR will take place this November in [Switzerland](#) in partnership with the University of Geneva.

Community Oregon



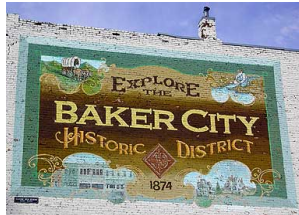
This new and deeply personal 3-phase program joins rural and urban Oregonians together to better understand one another and to think about the kind of democracy they want to build together in their state.

The [first phase](#) of this year's program took place at Camp Sherman's Lake Creek Lodge on April 25-28, and focused on relationship building across difference, and how to use dialogue as a tool for mutual understanding.



“I became a lot more open minded about holding valuable conversations with people on the opposite end of the political "spectrum". I also learned that I often make assumptions inappropriately.”

- 2019 Community Oregon participant when asked about a key takeaway from program



Phase 2 of the program, the Urban/Rural Exchanges, [started in June](#) with a small group of Portland participants traveling to Baker City. Another small group from Portland will travel to Sherman County in August, and the remaining urban individuals will be visiting Klamath Falls at various times over the course of the summer. Rural participants will also visit their urban colleagues before the end of the summer.

The final phase of the program, the Community Oregon Expo, will take place on Saturday, September 21 at Concordia University, where participants will share their learnings via photos, film clips, journal entries or other creative means. This event will be free and open to the public so mark your calendars!

Other Programs & Partnerships

Civic Saturdays In an ongoing collaboration with the [Deliberative Democracy Consortium](#), Healthy Democracy is adding more [Civic Saturdays](#) to the calendar between now and the end of the year. Civic Saturdays are a program of [Citizen University](#), which creates programs on civic power and civic character designed to be spread across the country, what its founder Eric Liu calls "[civic religion](#)". The next Civic Saturday will be held in Crook County on September 12, and another will be hosted by Clackamas Community College on October 12. More are planned for early next year as well. Watch for updates on Healthy Democracy's website and Facebook page – we hope to see you at a Civic Saturday somewhere in the state!



Community Solutions Fellows Program In early August, Healthy Democracy will welcome Farres Alkhayer, a young professional from Lattakia, Syria. Funded by the U.S. State Department, the [Community Solutions Program](#) is a professional leadership development program "for the best and brightest community leaders worldwide." (About 80 CSP fellows are chosen each year from 87 countries and selected from over 5,000 applicants. They are placed in about 10 cities across the U.S.) Farres will complete a four-month fellowship with Healthy Democracy, after which he will return home to apply his new skills through a community action project of his own design. We look forward to introducing him to the Healthy Democracy family once he

Thank You



A heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped us celebrate our 10 year anniversary at [Portland Center Stage](#) in April.

Three of Healthy Democracy's co-founders were able to join us to honor their legacy of strengthening democracy and citizen participation in Oregon and beyond.

Healthy Democracy raised almost \$25,000, thanks to a generous matching gift by co-founder Ned Crosby and Pat Benn. This has enabled us to explore more opportunities for program expansion – such as Citizen Juries – in off-election years.

Special thanks to the Healthy Democracy [board of directors](#), whose support for this event was nothing short of magnificent, and to our keynote speaker, John Frohnmayr, who offered his [Eight Suggestions for Democracy](#) – words we invite you to reflect on along with us.

Oregon Legislature Update

Healthy Democracy, on behalf of the CIR Commission, supported [SB755](#) which would have created an endowment fund managed by the state treasurer (as with public employee retirement funds, for example), the interest of which would have funded CIRs in Oregon going forward.

We are deeply appreciative of the bipartisan support this bill enjoyed – sponsored by Senator Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay), with written support from Senators Jeff Golden (D-Ashland), Bill Hansell (R – Pendleton) and Fred Girod (R – Stayton), and Representatives Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene), Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland), Greg Smith (R-Heppner), and Duane Stark (R-Grants Pass).

Unfortunately, even with this strong bipartisan support, the bill was not successful. Though a disappointing outcome, we remain very grateful to these dedicated elected officials – as well as other respected good government groups such as Oregon's League of Women Voters - who understand and have supported the need to rebuild trust between Oregon's citizens and their government, which the [CIR has proven to do](#).

In addition, we would not have been able to make a credible effort to support this bill without the invaluable pro bono assistance of Mike McArthur of Frontier Advocates. While the future of the CIR in Oregon may be uncertain, we are optimistic that there will be other options for sustaining this groundbreaking innovation in democracy right here in its birthplace, even as it spreads to other states and countries in the world.

Support Our Work

Here are a couple of meaningful ways you can support the work of Healthy Democracy this summer.

Social Media Do you like Healthy Democracy enough to say so in public? Please visit our [Facebook page](#) and like AND review us. While you're at it, [Google us](#) and do the same. We don't have much in the way of reviews on either site, and we'd love to populate those parts of our outward-facing social media so that folks can find us more easily when they search the internet.

Friend-raising Do you know people you think should know about Healthy Democracy, but you aren't sure how to approach them? Give us a call or [send us an email!](#) Healthy Democracy staff and board members are ready, willing and able to go along on visits to spread the word about this work to anyone willing to listen.



Donate Now more than ever, your [financial support](#) is deeply appreciated. We want you to know that Healthy Democracy works hard to be worthy of your financial gift, by ensuring the quality of our work, attention to the integrity of our programs and processes, and being inclusive of all who wish to participate more fully in their democracy. Healthy Democracy conducts publicly available financial audits or reviews every year and also boasts a Gold Seal of Transparency from GuideStar as further evidence of our good stewardship of charitable gifts. Thank you for your support!

We plan to provide shorter, monthly updates going forward, so thanks again for your interest in the work of Healthy Democracy – until we meet again!

“We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.



Healthy Democracy's mission is to elevate the voice of citizens and improve public discourse for the benefit of all voters.

[Donate Now](#)

Connect with us!

