



# The Voter

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County

FEBRUARY 2018

VOL. 59, No.7

## Are Budgets Moral Documents?

by Nikki Hurley, Social Justice Committee Co-Chair

Over the past few months, the tax bill and the proposed congressional and presidential budgets have dominated the news cycles. Much of that coverage has included variations of the old adage, “Budgets are moral documents.” Often attributed to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, this phrase resurfaces every time the government begins working on fiscal documents, but what does it really mean and who believes in it?

In a very informal Facebook poll hosted by Social Justice Committee Co-Chair and Board Member Melissa Taylor, 91 percent of people who voted said that budgets are in fact moral documents. In the following lengthy comments chain, people listed their varying reasons for this belief. As the phrase, “budgets are moral documents” largely appears during the federal and state budgeting seasons, it’s unsurprising that many of the commenters jumped straight to governmental budgets.

Many politicians on both sides of the aisle have accepted this statement as truth, from Speaker Paul Ryan to President Obama. Those leaning towards the left, Democratic, and progressive sides use this argument to discuss strengthening the social safety net through programs like SNAP, Medicaid, and Medicare, often by raising taxes on those who have better means to pay. Those leaning towards the right, Republican, and conservative side discuss the morality

in terms of leaving large debts as the responsibility for future generations. On the other hand, some are adamantly against the idea that governmental budgets reflect any kind of morals. Rather, they believe that budgets reflect changing priorities and pragmatic calculations. This argument hinges on the fact that while the fiscal reality of income, expenses, and priorities change, the morals of those making the budget do not necessarily shift.

While most of the discussion of moral budgeting focuses on governmental bodies, Congress is not the only entity that makes a budget. For-profit businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations must also reconcile whether or not to consider their budgets as moral documents. For those making budgets for their place of work, some consider only the bottom line and the practical projections of their income in order to move their company forward, believing that morality is based on human behavior rather than budgeting. Others decide to tackle the moral decisions that may lessen the overall profits of the firm, like whether to pay larger wages than the mandated minimum wage, to increase benefits like paid maternal and paternal leave, and to use sustainable materials.

The discussion that is often left out of the debate of moral budgeting is about the

*Continued on page 6*

# Contents

President’s Message ..... 3  
 Calendar ..... 4  
 Forum Schedule..... 5  
 Board Briefs..... 5  
 Committees..... 7  
 King County Connects  
   Member Orientation ..... 8  
   Great Decisions..... 8  
   Making Democracy Work Award..... 9  
 Action ..... 10  
 Voter Service..... 11  
 Membership..... 12  
 Features  
   Saving Discovery Park..... 13  
   Book Review ..... 14  
 Unit Meetings..... 16  
 Board and Committee Contacts ..... 19  
  
 This Month’s Forum or Event ..... back cover

# Contact Information

President: Stephanie Cirkovich  
*The Voter* Editor: Amanda Clark

League of Women Voters  
 of Seattle-King County  
 1620 18th Avenue, Suite 101  
 Seattle, WA 98122

Phone: 206-329-4848  
 info@seattlelwv.org  
 www.seattlelwv.org

Office Hours:  
 Weekdays, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

League of Women Voters of Washington  
 1402 Third Avenue, Suite 430  
 Seattle, WA 98101  
 206-622-8961  
 lwvwa@lwvwa.org  
 www.lwvwa.org

League of Women Voters of the United States  
 202-429-1965  
 lwv@lwv.org  
 www.lwv.org

### Postal Regulations

*The Voter* is published monthly  
 except June and August by the League of  
 Women Voters of Seattle - King County,  
 1620 18th Ave, #101, Seattle, WA 98122.

Periodicals postage paid at  
 Seattle, WA.

Postmaster:  
 Send address changes to *The Voter*:

1620 18th Ave, Suite 101  
 Seattle, WA 98122  
 The Voter (ISSN 0888-8841)

### **Mission Statement**

The League of Women Voters of  
 Seattle-King County, 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.

## Connecting with the Leadership

UNIX, the computer operating system developed by AT&T, has a philosophy: Do one thing and do it well. That same mantra can be applied to the League of Women Voters, which recently issued a document offering guidance to local Leagues on partnering with new and similar organizations that are suddenly working to “safeguard democracy.”

The guidance suggests that rather than feel “unsettled” about the number of organizations taking on the work that the League has been doing for nearly a century, local Leagues should embrace these groups and find new ways to partner with them. My other half likes to say that “many hands make light work,” which seems fitting here. The more people who are working on safeguarding democracy, the more people who benefit from stronger democratic institutions.

Locally, we are embarking on projects with several partners who are equally committed to our mission of encouraging informed and active participation in government. After December’s “Fake News” forum at Benaroya Hall, we were asked to join a consortium that includes KCTS Channel 9 and the University of Washington to create a series of public service announcements combatting fake news. The Civil Discourse in Action project that you read about in last month’s Voter has been working closely with KNKX 88.5, and our January programming forum featured several outside organizations eager to partner with us on a number of issues. And in February, a group of us will be meeting with King County Elections Director Julie Wise to see how we can better support the great work her office is doing to make voting more accessible.

Also in the spirit of doing one thing well, the national League is refocusing efforts on the Campaign for Making Democracy Work®, which ensures a “free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters.” They have asked that local Leagues follow suit and refrain from adding any new national studies or reviews to the 2018-2020 agenda. Rather, the League’s focus should remain on the components of this campaign, which include:

- Voting rights: advocating for proactive reforms such as expanded early voting and online voter registration; ensuring access to the polls and combating voter suppression laws; helping voters get the information they need to get to the polls.
- Improving elections: improving polling place management; ensuring compliance with voting laws; promoting automatic voter registration laws.
- Campaign finance/money in politics: fighting against attempts to cut back campaign finance regulations; overhauling the Federal Elections Commission; encouraging campaign finance reform.
- Redistricting: challenging gerrymanders; calling for fair representation in the redistricting process.

If you attended January’s program planning meeting, you saw Voter Services Co-Chair Barbra Chevalier’s outstanding presentation on redistricting, an area that she would like the League to focus on in our programming this year. Our board has also looked into the issue of ranked choice voting; an article about various voting systems appeared in the Voter in late 2017. If you would like to delve deeper into any of these issues, please contact us at [info@seattlelwv.org](mailto:info@seattlelwv.org) so we can

*Continued on page 6*

# February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Forum: Budgets as Moral Docu- ments 7:00 p.m.	2	3 Board Meeting 10:00 a.m.
4	5 Voter Deadline	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Special Election Day IR/Great Deci- sions 7:00 p.m.	14 League's 98th Birthday!	15	16	17
18 Social Justice Comm. 3:00 p.m.	19 Presidents' Day Holiday	20	21	22 Education Comm. 11:00 a.m.	23	24 Econ. & Tax. Committee 9:30 a.m.
25	26	27 IR/Great Deci- sions 7:00 p.m.	28	March 1	2	3 Board Meeting 10:00 a.m.
4	5 Voter Deadline	6	7	8	9	10

*Units meet during shaded period. See pages 17-18 for detailed unit meeting listings.*

## FEBRUARY

Forum: Budgets as Moral Doc.'s  
Thursday, February 1  
7:00 p.m.  
Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting  
Saturday, February 3  
10:00 a.m.

**The Voter Deadline**  
Monday, February 5

IR/Great Decisions  
Thursday, February 13  
7:00 p.m.  
909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

Social Justice Committee  
Sunday, February 18  
3:00 p.m.  
League Office

Education Committee  
Thursday, February 22  
11:00 a.m.  
League Office

Econ. & Tax. Committee  
Saturday, February 24  
9:30 a.m.  
909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

IR/Great Decisions  
Thursday, February 27  
7:00 p.m.  
909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

## MARCH

Forum: Voting Patterns and  
Behavior  
Thursday, March 1  
7:00 p.m.  
Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting  
Saturday, March 3  
10:00 a.m.

**The Voter Deadline**  
Monday, March 5

## Forum Schedule

**Jan 4** - Program Planning  
**Feb 1** - Budgets as Moral Documents  
**Mar 1** - Voting Patterns and Behavior  
**Apr 5** - Taxation with Dwight Dively

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County (LWVS-KC) presents a public forum most months between September and May, generally on the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Most forums are held at the Seattle First Baptist Church, but occasionally they are scheduled at other locations and times. Check the *Voter* each month or the LWVS-KC website, [seattlelwv.org](http://seattlelwv.org), for up-to-date information. Past forums are frequently televised and can be accessed from the resources page of the website.

## Board Briefs by Katie Dudley, Secretary

*The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County and Education Fund Boards met on January 13, 2018. This is a summary of their work.*

The Board assembled for its first meeting of the year on January 13, 2018. There's a lot to be excited for in the coming year, and after the Pecha-Kucha style presentations at January program planning forum, everybody is excited to get to work.

Becky Cox and Linnea Hirst spoke to the Board, detailing the intricacies of local, state, and national LWV chapters. Linnea kindly researched and provided information about the way that other Leagues in different parts of the country conduct League business and activities—for instance, some have opted to discontinue unit meetings and instead meet in other ways, like meet and greet cocktail hours, or they focus strongly on committees. What the Board learned was that Leagues are diverse and have many different ways of doing things to cater to the needs of their membership.

While Seattle isn't having an election in February, many other cities in King County

are. One of the things that the board discussed was how to ensure that we are focusing on other towns and cities rather than exclusively focusing on the city of Seattle. We are working on being educated about the issues facing cities throughout the county.

Another new thing this year is the Leadership Column—traditionally, every month sees a new column provided by the president, but there are a lot of people on the Board with diverse perspectives, so you'll be hearing from all of us soon.

On the Education Fund side of things, Barbra and Bridget are continuing to liaise with community groups, schools, and other organizations to encourage voter education and civic engagement.

Additionally, the planning for the spring event is well underway and already sounds like an exciting event—we hope to see you there!

*Leadership continued:*

connect you with Voter Services and their great work.

You should also email [info@seattlelwv.org](mailto:info@seattlelwv.org) if you're interested in volunteering for any of the events and initiatives mentioned above. Specifically, the Civil Discourse in Action committee could use skilled facilitators and someone with desktop publishing skills to help produce materials for the event. An important volunteer opportunity not mentioned above is our Voices of Democracy Gala, tentatively scheduled to take place in early May; we need fun and creative people to help plan the event and awards ceremony. Our League is only as good as you make it, so please pitch in and make it outstanding!

Stephanie Cirkovich  
President

*Cover article continued:*

personal and family budget. Decisions that need to be made for the moral budgeter range from how much to spend on vacations and clothing versus charity and political causes, whether or not to spend more on organic and locally sourced food, and how to divide up the disposable income slated for charity or savings. These decisions can be seen as available only to those with higher means and moral budgeting a practice of privilege, however. For those who do not believe that budgets are moral documents, ensuring the health and happiness of a family alongside realistic incomes is enough of a mental exercise.

The February 1st forum will feature panelists including Kristen Harris-Talley, former Seattle City Council Member, and Jackie Vaughn, of Fuse Washington, to discuss the intricacies of moral budgeting on various levels. We look forward to puzzling through this concept with you.

Supplementary Reading

<https://sojo.net/articles/truth-bears-repeating-budget-moral-document>

<https://www.politico.com/story/2011/04/begich-budget-a-moral-document-052947>

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/3/16/14943748/trump-budget-outline-moral>

<https://aclj.org/us-constitution/is-the-budget-a-moral-document>

<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/budgeting-ethics-47002.html>

<http://bomble.com/budgets-are-not-moral-documents/>

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/budgets-arent-really-moral-documents/article/2617647>

# Committees

## **Economics and Taxation Committee**

DATE: Saturday, February 24  
TIME: 9:30 a.m.  
PLACE: 909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

## **Education Committee**

DATE: Thursday, February 22  
TIME: 11:00 a.m.  
PLACE: League Office

## **International Relations Committee**

DATE: Tuesday, February 13 & 27  
TIME: 7:00 p.m.  
PLACE: 909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

Meetings are combined with the Great Decisions group until June.

## **Social Justice Committee**

DATE: Sunday, February 18  
TIME: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
PLACE: League Office

*Have a question? The contact information for the committee chairs is listed on the inside back cover.*

We encourage participation in our committees by all interested members. It's a great opportunity to meet and talk to community leaders, stakeholder organizations, and experts where you can have direct input on local issues that affect you.

Don't see a committee that covers your issue? Call the office and let us know. Sometimes people are working more informally without regularly scheduled meetings. If so, we may be able to help connect you with them or help you start your own.

## **Diversity Policy**

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County (LWVS-KC), in both its values and practices, affirms its beliefs and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of gender, gender identity and/or gender expression, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

LWVS-KC recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. LWVS-KC subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

LWVS-KC affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its membership, board, staff and programs.

---

## King County Connects — Announcements

---

### **GETTING ENGAGED: AN ORIENTATION TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

Are you new to the League? Would you like a refresher on what the League is all about? Learn . . .

- Background of the League
- What does “nonpartisan” really mean?
- Action vs. Education
- Studies and Positions

And more! And refreshments!

Please join us.  
***Saturday, February 17, 2018***  
10:30 AM to 1:00 PM

Church of the Redeemer  
6210 NE181st St.  
Kenmore, WA 98028

RSVP to [membership@seattlelwv.org](mailto:membership@seattlelwv.org)

### **Great Decisions 2018**

Great Decisions briefing books are in the mail, but there is still time to order your copy from the Foreign Policy Association ([fpa.org](http://fpa.org)). In addition, the video of the first topic, “The Waning of Pax Americana,” is now on YouTube. Search to find Great Decisions | Pax Americana: The American Peace—Full Episode. The running time is 26 minutes and 48 seconds.

The International Relations Committee is meeting with the Great Decisions discussion group for the season. The first meeting is on February 13th at 909 Newton Street, Unit D, Seattle. There is ample street parking, and the number 49 bus stops half a block away on 10th Ave E. Coffee and cookies are served at 7:15 PM, and the discussion is from 7:30 to 9:00. If you have questions, contact Rosalie McCreary at 206-687-7415.



**MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK? NOMINATE SOMEONE**

By Barbra Chevalier

Do you know a person or group working in King County to promote equality and democracy through civic engagement? Nominate them for the League of Women Voters’ Making Democracy Work Award between now and midnight on February 23, 2018!

This annual award recognizes two individuals and one organization who have helped King County residents find and raise their voices through civic and community engagement. The awards will be presented in May at the League’s “Voices of Democracy Gala” on May10th. The gala celebrates the League’s mission of encouraging informed and active participation in government, increasing understanding of major public policy issues, and influencing public policy through education and advocacy.

Anyone who has made real contributions to King County’s civic life can be nominated. Ideally, we want to recognize one organization, one young person (an emerging voice) and one other individual in government or who is in some other way a “statesperson.” (Please note that we cannot accept nominations for anyone running for public office in 2018, as an award may be construed as an endorsement, and the League does not oppose or support any candidate.) The ideal nominee for any of the three awards has:

- 1. A strong commitment to democracy
- 2. Made a significant contribution to promoting equality in King County
- 3. Mobilized community members to raise their voices in civil discourse and civic participation toward that goal.

Anyone who has contributed to the King County community can be nominated. Individuals can nominate themselves or can be nominated by a friend, colleague, or organization. The nomination form can be completed online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/D3YT5TM>

Please reach out to your contacts and others to send in nominations for the League’s Making Democracy Work Awards by midnight, February 23, 2018.

For more information or if you have any questions, contact Barbra Chevalier at [barbra.n.chevalier@gmail.com](mailto:barbra.n.chevalier@gmail.com).

---

## Action

---

### Change May Be Coming to Port of Seattle

By Pat Griffith

A change to how we elect port commissioners has been proposed in House Bill 1999, sponsored by Rep. Mia Gregerson and several King County legislators. The bill would expand the commission to nine members from districts with the same boundaries as County Council members. The bill applies to counties with 1.5 million or larger population and five commissioners though King County is the only entity that fits the definition.

The bill's intent is to provide more responsive representation to voters and to encourage more diverse candidates to run for port commissioner. Port candidates run at large in the county, making the position extremely expensive to campaign for. Districts for port commissioners would make campaigns less expensive and

more responsive to all areas of the county. Residents and cities in South King County often feel ignored by port commissioners, especially concerning environmental issues connected with the airport.

The bill also would boost compensation for a port commissioner to the same amount as for legislators.

The bill received a hearing in the 2017 session and in the current session but has not been voted out of committee.

The League position is not clear cut, as our position does not support election solely by districts. However, LWVSKC supports measures which increase voter participation and responsiveness.

---

### Democracy Day in Olympia



Dozens of League members turned out with members of Fix Democracy First to lobby our legislators. Check out the LWVWA legislative newsletter each week to stay on top of what's happening with our League priorities. [www.lwvwa.org](http://www.lwvwa.org)

## Voter Service



*Sepanta Farmandeh-Bahri, who became a US citizen last month, was excited to register to vote!*

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County and Shoreline Community College have begun a collaborative relationship. In their first joint effort, the North King County Unit participated in Shoreline Community College's "Welcome Back" week this winter quarter registering students to vote. We now have 21 new voters! Other joint activities will include meeting monthly with on-campus clubs to offer education regarding civic and voting concerns and providing "Ballots and Baristas" information in the cafeteria for the student population.

### **DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!**

Although it seems as if we just had an election—and we did—there's another one this month. Many school districts throughout King County have levies or bond issues on the ballot, and one city—Black Diamond—has an election to recall a City Council member. Every one of these issues is important.

Here are important dates to know about this February's special election:

January 24—Ballots mailed

February 5—In person voter registration deadline for new voters

February 13—Election day. Last day to mail your ballot or put it in a drop box.

February 14—LWV 98th birthday

February 23—Election certified

Check the King County Elections website to learn more about what's on the ballot. [kingcounty.gov/elections](http://kingcounty.gov/elections)

*The League turns 98 years old on February 14<sup>th</sup>!*

*Be sure to renew and consider a gift membership to galvanize a friend to action and help ensure the vitality of the League for the next century.*

## Join the League!

Take part in informed discussions of the issues facing our communities. Members automatically receive the VOTER, either in print or electronically, for the latest updates on current studies and action, monthly forums, committee activities, voter registration, and other volunteer opportunities. In addition, members receive action alerts about legislation in Olympia and Washington, D.C., as well as publications from the state League.

League membership is open to everyone.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Dues and contributions:

- \$75 one year individual membership
- \$110 one year household membership
- \$40 low or fixed income
- \$35 student
- Enclosed is a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to LWVS-KC and return with this form or go online to [www.seattlelww.org/membership](http://www.seattlelww.org/membership).

Membership dues and contributions are not tax deductible; however, eligible tax deductible contributions may be made to the LWVS-KC Education Fund.

## Thank you for supporting the work of the LWV!

Please return this form to:  
League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County  
1620 18th Avenue, Suite 101  
Seattle, WA 98122-7007



**Celebrating 98 years of educating voters, improving elections, and making democracy work!**

---

## Features

---

### Saving Discovery Park—Again!

By Emma Marris

Last summer I took an out-of-town visitor to Discovery Park. With its diverse wildlife, beaches, meadows, dunes, forest and nearly 12 miles of trails, it is a great spot to introduce people to what makes area so beautiful and unique. As we strolled down a trail near the edge of Discovery's 534 acres, we came upon a boy, about 10 years old, selling lemonade. Naturally, we each bought a cup. He explained that he lived nearby. After we moved on, I looked over my shoulder. In our hurry-hurry, screen-mediated, over-parented world, here was a kid doing nothing, outside, just being and listening to the bird song.

Funnily enough, this is very much exactly what the founders of Discovery Park had in mind. In 1972, the year it became a city park, a Master Plan defined Discovery Park's role: "to provide an open space of quiet and tranquility for the citizens of this city—a sanctuary where they might escape the turmoil of the city and enjoy the rejuvenation with quiet and solitude and an intimate contact with nature can bring."

The creation of Discovery Park as a place of respite and natural experience owes much to the League of Women Voters. In the late 1960s, the LWV was a part of the "Citizens for Fort Lawton"—a citizen's group named after the now-closed military base on the site. This group asked the federal government, which owned the land, to transfer it to the city to be used as a park.

Their park idea had to compete with other visions for the site. In 1970, the United Indians of All Tribes staged a dramatic occupation of the old fort, demanding the land be returned to its indigenous owners. Meanwhile, the US military wanted to set up

an antiballistic missile facility. In the end, seventeen<sup>1</sup> acres of the park were set aside for an Indian cultural center, now known as Daybreak Star, and the city got the rest as a park. The missiles, thankfully, didn't get in.

Since then, several generations of native and non-native Seattleites have grown up with important memories of Discovery Park. I remember catching garter snakes in the long grass there as a child, and riding my bike across the city for a dose of nature in my early 20s. Now approaching 40, I live in Oregon, but I visit nearly every time I am home. An increasing body of scientific research shows that time in nature is good for health, mental wellbeing, and happiness. Discovery Park is the large, green, beating heart at the center of a regional archipelago of open space.

Despite its key role for residents of Puget Sound, Discovery Park is not quite as safe from development as you might think. Old military housing has recently been sold off to private owners. The open landscape and vistas will forever inspire "what-if" ideas. What if a restaurant, an arts campus, a hotel and boarding facility. . . . All have been proposed. It was the vast number of competing uses that dictated the need for a long-term Master Plan in the first place. There are other places in the city for these special activities. Such developments would necessitate opening closed roads and constructing new ones, fracturing the peace and quiet of the park, and slowly chipping away at those opportunities for "rejuvenation" through contact with nature.

---

<sup>1</sup>Their website says 20 acres now, but Seattle and the *Roots of Urban Sustainability: Inventing Ecotopia*, by Jeffrey Craig Sanders, says it was 17 then.

The authors of the Master Plan saw this coming. "In the years to come there will be almost irresistible pressure to carve out areas of the Park in order to provide sites for various civic structures or space for special activities," they wrote. "The pressures for those sites may constitute the greatest single threat to the Park. They must be resisted with resolution."

So let us resist! A petition hosted on change.org asks the Seattle City Council to pass a resolution that would affirm their commitment to keeping Discovery Park open space. I urge you to join the nearly 2,000 signers. Next, consider joining the Friends of Discovery Park to keep up to date and continue the LWV's legacy as park advocates. The League has a great opportunity to get involved, perhaps through the formation of an environmental committee. Generations of kids sitting in the park, doing nothing, as the leaves sway in

the June sunlight, will thank you.

*Editor's Note: The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County supports the proposed resolution asking the Seattle City Council to recognize the 45th anniversary of the Discovery Park Master Plan, reaffirming Seattle's commitment to providing open space for its residents, protecting the environment, and honoring Seattle's history and culture.*

*Emma Marris is a writer based in Klamath Falls, Oregon. She writes about nature, people, food, language, books, and film. Her goal is to find and tell stories that help us understand the past; take meaningful action in the present; and move toward a greener, wilder, happier, and more equal future.*

---

**BOOK REVIEW** by Vicky Downs

***Dream Hoarders: How the American Upper Middle Class Is Leaving Everyone Else in the Dust, Why that Is a Problem, and What To Do About It***

By Richard V. Reeves

Richard Reeves, a Senior Fellow in Economics at the Brookings Institution, tells us that "the upper middle class is separating from the majority" of Americans. While the annual median household income is about \$54,000, the top fifth is "households with incomes above the \$112,000 mark," and they tend to include "well educated professionals such as journalists, scholars, managers and bureaucrats."

This top quintile is now the "upper middle class, with high levels of human capital" and they "flourish in a global economy. They proclaim the benefits of free markets but are largely insulated from the risks." Their jobs

are not likely to go to China, nor do robots easily replace them.

Basically, this group "has been having it pretty good," but tends not to realize how privileged it is. This is in part because the top 1 to 5 percent is the upper class that includes all the billionaires who are much better off, making the upper middle group feel like they are ordinary middle class folk.

These are people with "graduate degrees, homes, second homes, and kids in good colleges." The big "class divide is not between the upper class and the upper middle class: it is between the upper middle class and everyone else" below them.

Though the top 5 percent should not be ignored, the upper middle class also has outsized political power: it can “reshape cities, dominate the education system, and transform the labor market.” Why? Because it includes many journalists, think tank scholars, and pundits, who can influence public discourse.

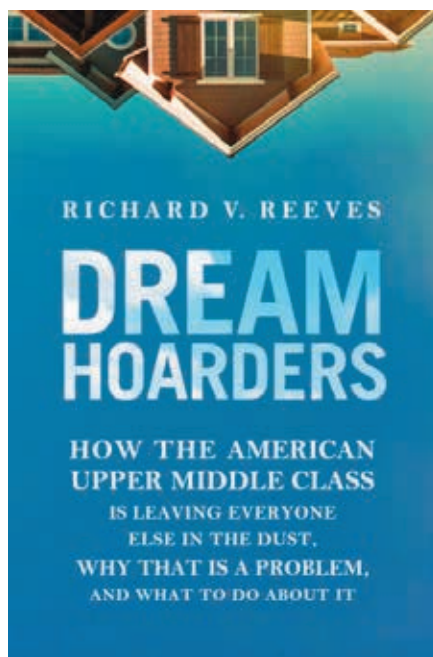
Reeves is concerned that these people are hoarding the advantages they often gained at birth. They were “raised in a stable home by well-educated, married parents,” who lived in great neighborhoods and attended the area’s best schools. “They developed a wide range of skills and gained an impressive array of credentials. Upper middle-class children lucked out right from the start.” They also may include many, perhaps most, Leaguers.

In adulthood, they do what any parent would do; they “hoard opportunities” by helping their children succeed in life. They ask their own universities to admit their child as a legacy student if they think he or she will not be accepted otherwise. They talk with people they know, to help their child win acceptance as an intern during summer holidays. Doing so, they make it likely their child will be invited to work for the firm thereafter rather than a student who is poor and without well-educated and well-connected parents.

Reeves goes on to say upper middle-class parents will also do almost anything to prevent their children from falling behind. They do this by turning to tutors, psychologists, special schools, and other

help, and thereby placing a “glass floor” under their children so they do not fall into a lower class with second-rate schools and opportunities. All this leads to a less competitive economy and a less open society.

He argues that the 1 to 5 percent “need to pay more tax, perhaps much more.” However, “If we are serious about narrowing the gap between ‘the rich’ and everyone else, we need a broader conception of what it means to be rich.”



We need to understand what privileges **we** have and find ways to make our country more egalitarian. We do the right thing when we “risk a fraction of our home values by rezoning our neighborhoods in favor of some higher density housing,” and thereby welcome lower income students to the schools our own children attend. Alumni can ask their college or university to stop legacy admittance and create more student

grants instead.

We need to welcome those who are less well educated and less well off into our neighborhood. We need “to share rather than hoard, the American dream.”

*Opinions in this review are personal and do not necessarily represent those of the League.*





## Unit Meetings

(Unit times and locations subject to change; please verify with unit leader.)

Meetings are open to all.

Unit Leader email	Phone	Time	Location
<b>Monday, February 5</b>			
<b>SOUTH SEATTLE</b> - Marian Wolfe and Vivian Montoya			
hedgwolfe@aol.com	206-763-9430	5:30 p.m.	Third Place Books - downstairs
montoyaviv@gmail.com	206-695-2620		5041 Wilson Ave. S, Seattle
<b>Wednesday, February 7</b>			
<b>QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA/BALLARD EVENING</b> - Kathy Pugh and Marlis Worthington			
ckp1966@comcast.net	503-580-1240	7:30 p.m.	Magnolia Church of Christ
marliswrt@hotmail.com	206-283-7147		3555 W McGraw St, Seattle
<b>Thursday, February 8</b>			
<b>MERCER ISLAND</b> – Paneen Davidson			
paneenie@gmail.com	206-466-2023	9:00 a.m.	Emmanuel Episcopal Church 4400 86th Ave SE, Mercer Island
<b>ISSAQUAH</b> – Margaret Austin			
margaret.austin@comcast.net	425-392-5760	10:00 a.m.	Echo Room, Issaquah City Hall 130 East Sunset Way, Issaquah
<b>SOUTHEAST KING COUNTY/ENUMCLAW</b> - Cathy Dormaier			
clcathy@skynetbb.com	360-802-6799	12:00 p.m.	Location: contact unit leader
<b>NORTH CENTRAL SEATTLE</b> – Jan Orlando			
orlanre@aol.com	206-524-0936	1:00 p.m.	Hostess: contact unit leader
<b>Monday, February 12</b>			
<b>CAPITOL HILL/MONTLAKE</b> –			
	206-329-4848	7:15 p.m.	Hostess: Linnea Hirst 1602 E McGraw St., Seattle 206-322-3076
<b>Wednesday, February 14</b>			
<b>NORTHEAST SEATTLE</b> (formerly View Ridge) – Gail Winberg			
winbergeng@Q.com	206-524-7801	12:45 p.m.	Brig Bldg. (6344) in Magnuson Park 7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle
<i>Directions: Go into the Park through North entrance at 74<sup>th</sup> and drive EAST toward water. At the STOP sign, turn LEFT to park in front of the Brig, or RIGHT, for more parking.</i>			

Continued on next page

(Unit times and locations subject to change; please verify with unit leader.)

Unit Leader email                      Phone                      Time                      Location

Friday, February 16

**UNIVERSITY HOUSE/WALLINGFORD** – Janet Kime

kraftyjane@comcast.net                      206-588-0988                      2:00 p.m.                      University House, San Juan Room  
4400 Stone Way N, Seattle

Saturday, February 17

**BALLARD/MAGNOLIA/QUEEN ANNE DAY** – Janet Anderson

janetranderson@msn.com                      206-285-2460                      10:00 a.m.                      Hostess: Betsy Loyer  
7317 13th Ave NW, Seattle  
206-829-8824

Monday, February 19

**FIRST HILL** – Adele Reynolds

adelereynolds@netscape.net                      206-621-4867                      10:30 a.m.                      Horizon House, Forum & Social Room  
900 University St., Seattle

**NORTH KING COUNTY** – Judy Deiro/Lea Galanter

judy.deiro@gmail.com                      425-774-1492                      7:00 p.m.                      Third Place Commons, Stadler Mtg Room  
leagal99@hotmail.com                      425-820-9096                      17171 Bothell Way NE, Lake Forest Pk.

Tuesday, February 20

**BELLEVUE/KIRKLAND/REDMOND** – Cathy O'Shea

cathy\_oshea@yahoo.com                      425-753-4182                      12:00 p.m.                      Kirkland Public Library  
308 Kirkland Ave, Kirkland

**WEST SEATTLE** – Ethel Williams/Pat Lane

ethelwjw@comcast.net                      206-932-7887                      1:00 p.m.                      Daystar Retirement Village  
pgblain11@gmail.com                      206-932-1578                      2615 SW Barton, Seattle

## Board & Committee Contacts

Term	Executive Committee			
2017-19	<i>President</i>	Stephanie Cirkovich	206-329-4848	president@seattlelwv.org
2016-18	<i>1st VP - Action</i>	Pat Griffith	206-285-2452	pgseattle@q.com
2017-19	<i>2nd VP - Program</i>	Abigail Doerr	206-329-4848	abigail.doerr@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Secretary</i>	Katie Dudley	206-329-4848	kate.c.dudley@gmail.com
2016-18	<i>Treasurer</i>	Linda Snider	206-329-4848	treasurer@seattlelwv.org
<b>Directors</b>				
2017-19	<i>Technology</i>	Liz Bander	206-478-7335	lizhill@outlook.com
2017-19	<i>Development</i>	Carla Chavez	206-329-4848	carla.chavez.board@gmail.com
2017-18	<i>Voter Service</i>	Barbra Chevalier	425-445-2281	barbra.n.chevalier@gmail.com
2016-18	<i>Development</i>	Kiku Hayashi	206-329-4848	kikuhayashi1@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Committees &amp; Units</i>	Zara Kublin	206-276-2831	zkublin@hotmail.com
2017-19	<i>Voter Service</i>	Bridget Kruszka	716-783-2407	bkruszka3@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Membership</i>	Cathy O'Shea	425-753-4182	coshea120@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Action</i>	Anastasia Samuelsen	206-329-4848	anastasia606@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Outreach &amp; Events</i>	Melissa Taylor	206-329-4848	melissataylor.lwvskc@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Program</i>	Alyssa Weed	206-329-4848	afweed1@gmail.com

*Note: All board members listed above are also members of the Education Fund Board*

### Education Fund Officers - same as above except Treasurer

2017-19	<i>Treasurer</i>	Christy Wood	206-707-3845	eftreasurer@seattlelwv.org
---------	------------------	--------------	--------------	----------------------------

### Nominating Committee

2017-18	<i>Chair</i>	Amanda Clark	206-236-0517	amandac5@comcast.net
2017-18		Amelia Woolley	206-329-4848	woolleyamelia@gmail.com
2017-18		Judy Love	206-329-4848	judysteveL@gmail.com

*Boardmembers Carla Chavez and Alyssa Weed have been appointed to the committee.*

### Off Board Positions

	<i>Voter Editor</i>	Amanda Clark	206-236-0517	votereditor@seattlelwv.org
--	---------------------	--------------	--------------	----------------------------

### Committees

	<i>Economics &amp; Taxation</i>	Nora Leech		nleech2002@yahoo.com
	<i>Education</i>	Joanna Cullen	206-329-8514	jfoxcullen@gmail.com
	<i>International Relations</i>	Carol Goldenberg		carolsamgo1@gmail.com
	<i>Social Justice</i>	Nikki Hurley		nhurley1009@gmail.com
	<i>Social Justice</i>	Melissa Taylor		melissataylor.lwvskc@gmail.com
	<i>Waterfront</i>	Nancy & Charles Bagley	206-282-1578	candnbagley@comcast.net

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County  
1620 18th Ave, Suite 101  
Seattle WA 98122

Periodicals Postage  
Paid at Seattle, WA

**Moving? Prefer the online edition? Let us know!**

Call the League office at (206) 329-4848 or  
email [info@seattlelww.org](mailto:info@seattlelww.org)

## **LWV SEATTLE-KING COUNTY:**

### Forum: Budgets as Moral Documents

**Thursday, February 1**

6:30 p.m. — Doors open

7:00 p.m. — Program begins

Seattle First Baptist Church  
1111 Harvard Ave (at Seneca)  
Seattle, WA 98122

Forums are free and open to the public

A discussion of varying ways of interpreting budgets as moral documents at the city, county, and state levels.

Panelists:

Kirsten Harris-Talley, former Seattle City Councilmember

Jackie Vaughn, Fuse Washington

Sheila Capestany, Best Starts for Kids

The panel will be moderated by Reverend Harriet Walden.