

whether veterans' experiences as beneficiaries spilled over indirectly into their lives as members of their communities and as citizens in a democratic polity. Her data indicate that veterans who made use of GI Bill education and training programs were significantly more likely than other veterans to join civic organizations and become active in politics. This difference cannot be attributed entirely to the well-established relationship between educational attainment and political participation: When we control for educational level, veterans who went to school or learned a trade on the GI Bill were more likely than other veterans to become active in civic and public affairs. Mettler suggests that the bill's inclusive design, fair implementation, and transformative effects on the veterans' life chances "communicated to beneficiaries that government was for and about people like them, and thus it incorporated them more fully as citizens" (p. 106). These "interpretive effects" seem to have been most pronounced in the immediate aftermath of participation and then gradually weakened. Even so, because education and training also yielded "resource effects" in the form of skills that could be transferred readily to associations and politics, the GI Bill cohort remained engaged in civic life at a high level over time. The author also suggests that through their political participation, veterans contributed to the extension of welfare state coverage in the postwar era.

The gains realized under the GI Bill did not come without a substantial social cost, however, as Mettler carefully details. The civic organizations and unions in which white veterans participated did not open their doors to non-white veterans. Nor was better education an antidote to systemic forms of racial exclusion in the workplace. Above all, because the GI Bill applied only to those who had served in the military, the generous benefits went overwhelmingly to young men. The women who worked double shifts in the munitions factories during the war were left out entirely. As a direct result, the gains women had made in higher education since 1900 were wiped out overnight. Not until 1970 would college graduation rates for women return to their prewar level. Since education and training shaped career prospects and social status, moreover, the gendered effects of the GI Bill rippled through postwar American life.

Mettler contends that we can apply the lessons of the GI Bill to policy debates in our own era. An unabashed liberal, she defends public social provision as a vital link between citizens and the government in a liberal democracy. "Through the bestowal of social rights," she says, "citizens may become more fully incorporated as members of the political community. The extension of social provision may not only assure them some modicum of well-being but also convey to them a sense of dignity and value as citizens" (p. 119). In the book's conclusion, Mettler calls for a renewed commitment to affordable higher education and other programs that could revive faith in

the American dream among disadvantaged groups. She adds that we ought to consider, too, how programs can be designed to promote a stronger sense of civic membership, such that beneficiaries will see themselves as respected members of the polity and reciprocate by sharing in its public life.

This is, unfortunately, the least satisfactory part of *Soldiers to Citizens*. Mettler demonstrates that the GI Bill contributed to the conditions that promoted participation in the postwar era, but as she realizes, other factors also mattered. Those other factors no longer exist, and there is little likelihood that more inclusive government social provision by itself could revive citizenship at the lower end of the social scale. Big government was not the enemy of civic engagement that some conservatives depict. But a modern counterpart to the GI Bill would be at best a small contribution to the restoration of the robust civic life the original helped to sustain.

Saving Democracy: A Plan for Real Representation in America. By Kevin O'Leary. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006. 394p. \$50.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.
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— John Gastil, *University of Washington*

It is difficult to solve a problem to everyone's satisfaction when so few agree about the nature of the problem, let alone whether one exists. Such is the daunting task Kevin O'Leary faces in *Saving Democracy*, a book written to save us from a peril few onlookers see the same way, if they see it at all.

The democracy O'Leary hopes to save is our own American republic. He contends that the most unapologetic exporter of democracy fails to meet its Founders' own high standards for self-government. Our nation, he argues, has outgrown its political clothes, with each congressional district now representing not tens but hundreds of thousands of citizens. Representative government has become a distant abstraction for Americans, and it inspires little civic spirit or action. When rampant public apathy combines with a greedy upper class possessing "the desire and ability to manipulate . . . the public," O'Leary senses the meteorological conditions for "corruption's perfect storm" (p. 52). Thus, our system of government has become unaccountable, except to the most powerful special interests.

This diagnosis-by-metaphor should sound familiar, and many readers, like this author, share in the sense that representative government needs to become more efficient and competent at public-spirited lawmaking. We are fortunate that he provides a new reform for us to consider. Generous with acknowledgements (to Robert Dahl, Jim Fishkin, Ned Crosby, Athens, New England, and many others), O'Leary still has enough novelty in his proposal to warrant our attention.

The author's idea is basically this: We should create a third legislative branch, consisting of 43,500 citizens chosen by lot. There are two versions of this idea. The first would be to create a citizens' Assembly, which would convene two to three times per month in each of the 435 House districts. Every two years, a lottery would select each Assembly district's one hundred members (reluctant citizens could opt out). In exchange for nothing more than a per diem to cover expenses, these Assembly members would discuss issues in depth. Well-timed polls of the Assembly would be reported to public officials to influence pending legislation. The second version of this proposal is the People's House, a citizen body with sharper teeth. Built like the Assembly, this House could introduce a few bills each session, pull dying bills out of committee for a floor vote, and reject legislation by majority vote (overridden by a three-fifths vote in the House or Senate).

A citizen steering committee would set the agenda for these citizen bodies. Each year, every district would nominate one of its Assembly members for the committee, and 25 of those chosen at random would join the steering committee for two years. The first year of service would be learning the ropes, and the second year would confer real authority, such as choosing which bills for the People's House to review.

Within this basic structure, O'Leary admits that there exists a range of possibilities. As he says modestly, "I offer one possible blueprint; others will offer theirs" (p. 12). In this spirit, one tweak he might consider is providing sufficient pay and job protections to ensure assembly participation from low-wage workers who hold high-pressure jobs.

Among the most original details in O'Leary's blueprint is the grouping of Assembly districts into six geographic regions, then randomly matching each district up with one from every other region. This would create 72 quasi-national Assemblies with sister-city connections. This would wonderfully complicate the "Better Know a District" segment on *The Colbert Report*, but it would also facilitate workable, wired national conversations.

In tallying the benefits of Assemblies, O'Leary argues that they would give the public a space in which to exercise its voice, provide a system to promote public deliberation over special-interest politics, and break through legislative gridlock. Popular and sound ideas would reach floor votes in Congress, and elected officials might find passage of such bills irresistible, owing either to public pressure or the political cover provided by the Assembly. To argue for the plausibility of his proposal, O'Leary demonstrates how the citizen Assemblies could draw on our deepest political traditions. Both Madison and Jefferson would see something they like, and the assemblies fit within our constitutional framework and modern deliberative theories of democracy. The point O'Leary endeavors to make is that his idea may be novel, but it is by no means heretical.

Even if it has a hidden pedigree, is the United States—or any country—ready for this idea? There is circumstantial evidence that the timing is right. British Columbia and Ontario have empanelled randomly selected Citizen Assemblies to write electoral reforms to be put before voters, much like an initiative in the United States. Brazil now has a constitutional requirement for citizen participation in budgeting and administration that goes further than perhaps any nation before it. Meanwhile, citizen juries, deliberative polls, and other citizen-centered reforms have continued to proliferate. Perhaps a nation, state, or province will soon be ready for a People's House.

What O'Leary does not provide, but would surely be delighted to see, is a clearer road map to implement his ideas for institutionalizing a space for influential citizen deliberation that can reawaken the public's civic spirit. It is likely that he underestimates the resistance of the major parties to his reform. Republicans reflexively cry foul at any growth in government's scope, even if it has a modest price tag (O'Leary estimates \$15 million to \$50 million in annual expenses). Leaders in both parties are also likely to reject any serious threat to a status quo that both sides believe, in their heart, favors their own party. Special interests accustomed to easy access to government will likely resist the idea with even more ferocity, and as the author himself acknowledges, there is no reason to doubt their power.

Despair, however, would be contrary to the optimistic spirit of the democratic project. O'Leary's book offers us a new idea to consider, and I hope it will inspire practical theorizing and campaigning that will close the gap between the imperfect present and a modestly less imperfect future.

True Faith and Allegiance: Immigration and American Civic Nationalism.

By Noah Pickus. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. 272p. \$35.00 cloth, \$22.95 paper. DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707071903

— James Simeone, *Illinois Wesleyan University*

Is civic nationalism an oxymoron? Noah Pickus does not think so, at least not in America. Here, the best leaders have been able to combine a "rational commitment to a common creed based on abstract ideals" with a moderate nationalism valuing "tradition, inherited opinion, and a set of obligations that flow from sharing a distinctive history and culture" (p. 5). Civic nationalism, he argues, is possible in theory and has been achieved in practice. At pivotal moments in American history, leaders like James Madison and Theodore Roosevelt found a way for "civic principles and American nationalism" to reinforce each other (p. 5). Pickus calls for a new emphasis on civic nationalism in our time and cautions against too quickly dividing "civic nationalist positions into civic *or* national positions alone" (p. 125). In this carefully argued if not always persuasive book, he counsels a prudent policy of