

# CIR Panelist Testimonials

**Program participants gain a positive experience of civic engagement and build enthusiasm for citizen-centered democracy:**

*“Participating in the Citizens’ Initiative Review has been a unique and enriching experience for me. This opportunity to work side by side with fellow voters has **affirmed my belief in the value of public participation in the democratic process.**”* -Melissa N., Portland

*“This opportunity to participate in the CIR process **has validated my belief in democracy.** Each individual idea and opinion completes the full circle of thought and beliefs. We all belong. We are all needed.”* -Bonnie J., Talent

*“**This is really, truly democracy in action.**”* -James M., Bandon

*“Being a **young person who is just beginning to vote,** I feel that this week has been really valuable to me by expanding my views and critical thinking skills and **allowed me to become involved in the democratic process.** Even though I was much less experienced than everyone else, my thoughts and opinions were considered and even valued. I would recommend the CIR to any citizen, especially young voters.”* -Megan B., Clackamas

*“This has been a fantastic learning and growing experience. It helps people see each other as people and fellow citizens – not as the enemy or someone to be afraid of. **It builds community, bridges differences and establishes an example of how we can reach out to each other – despite differences – to create hope, stimulate thought, and to discover our commonalities in the process of creating a better Oregon and maybe a better nation that we can all be proud of.**”* -Tim M., Portland

*"So many people from so many areas, so many backgrounds coming into the group and **being able to work together is just so incredible.**"* -Jeff C., Pendleton

*"Being younger, voting and voter information is not something that I was concerned about. **Now that I've been through the Review, I'll be a lot more involved with the voting process.**"* -Davida M., Keizer

*"We all accomplished something that I don't think we could have if we hadn't been able to **listen to each other with respect and with an open mind.**"* -Carol S., Eagle Creek

*"I'm excited that this opportunity exists for a diverse group of people come together to share their thoughts. It **makes me more optimistic about our democracy and more inspired to be a part of it.**"* -Dawn S., Portland

***"Many of us consider [the CIR] to be our most meaningful experience in politics. And for those of us who have struggled to keep faith in the political system, it helped to restore it."***

*— Joint Statement by 2016 Massachusetts Citizen Panelists*