



VOTER

October 2026

info@lwv-bf.org

<https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Polly Parton

It's election season and yes, our members are fully engaged and actively defending democracy by educating, registering and empowering our voters. Numerous tabling events such as the REACH hosting a Teacher Open House, Tri-Cities Diversity and Inclusion Council's Celebration of Culture event, Kamiakin Open House and Marcus Whitman Open House provide opportunities to engage with potential and current voters. Thank you to our many volunteers who believe in this mission for our community, show up and make all this happen.

Our Get Out the Vote (GOTV) committee is designing flyers to encourage voter turnout and on-time ballot submission. We are especially targeting communities with low voter turnout. They will be posted throughout the Tri-Cities (watch for them!). Public service announcements (PSAs) are also in the works. We hope to build on this for future elections and welcome others to join us.

Of course, we are most known for our voter forums and candidate events. Bev Johnson-Torelli and Brianna Harty lead the challenging efforts to partner with appropriate organizations while meeting the needs of our community. Candidate forums are ruled by the FCC and the League's guidelines are based on this. Read the following articles and spread the word how to view this valuable voter information.

BENTON AND FRANKLIN COUNTY FORUMS

Voter Forum Committee - Bev Johnson-Torelli

Livestream coming to you!

Congressional District 4 Candidates: John Duresky and Amanda McKinney

When: Wednesday, September 30, 2026, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Where: NWPB YouTube, NWPB Facebook and AARP Facebook

Collaborators: AARP, NWPB, LWVBF & LWV Yakima County

Soon after, the recording of CD4 will be available on NWPB's YouTube Channel.

(Following that, view it on AARP's Facebook, LWVBF's Facebook, and the Columbia Basin Badger Club's website. It will also be broadcast on KTNW TV (PBS) -dates TBA.)

Other Benton and Franklin Races

No livestream

View the recordings at LWVBF's Facebook, and the Columbia Basin Badger Club's website and will also be broadcast on KTNW TV (PBS) from mid-October through November 3rd. Featured are the races where both candidates were both available to participate in the recording session:

Benton County: Sheriff, District Court Judge #1, City of Richland City Council Position 4

Franklin County: Sheriff, District Court Judge



VOTER ENGAGEMENT – Bev Johnson-Torelli, Chris Grantham and Diane Molleson, Carla Chiotti

JOIN US FOR A TALK, OR FOR A TALK AND DINNER - Christine Grantham

Please join us on Wednesday October 21, 6 pm at Fiesta Mexican Restaurant for our October Table Talk. Our speaker will be Mr. Gabriel Portugal. Mr. Portugal is a retired educator, longtime Pasco community activist, and current National Vice President for the League of Latin American Citizens Northwest.

If you would like to join us for dinner prior to the event, **please call Christine Grantham (509) 845-0820 by Sunday October 18th** to make your reservation.

Location: Fiesta Mexican Restaurant 5210 N. Road 68 Pasco

COMMUNICATIONS CORNER

The Hatch Act: Acting to Achieve Impartiality - Richard Badalemente

During the government shutdown of 2025 over 1,000 citizens filed complaints with the US Office of Special Counsel (OSC) alleging that the White House and 37 federal agencies had weaponized taxpayer-funded resources for partisan attacks — some verging on outlandish — a clear violation of the Hatch Act. I was one of them.

I was a commissioned officer for twenty years. Our military leadership made sure we were briefed on and abided by the Hatch Act, or its counterpart, DoDD 1344.10. Failure to do so could, if severe, result in court martial, and reduction in rank, or even dismissal.

So, like so many others I complained directly to the OSC, government agency watch dog responsible for adherence to this directive. Just today, almost a year later, I received their response. It said, in effect, the various statements and banners displayed on government websites didn't go far enough to warrant action under the Hatch Act.ⁱ

For decades, the League of Women Voters has maintained an unwavering pledge to non-partisanship, anchoring its civic mission in the belief that public trust depends on absolute neutrality. But a healthy democracy requires more than nonpartisan civic organizations; it demands that the government and its vast apparatus of agencies serve all citizens with that exact same impartiality.

When taxpayer-funded resources such as official agency websites, and federal communication channels are leveraged to broadcast partisan talking points, as they did during the contentious 2025 shutdown, the fundamental boundary between governance and electioneering collapses. The Hatch Act was designed to prevent precisely this.

When the OSC fails to enforce these violations, public confidence in institutional neutrality is deeply eroded. Citizens rely on federal institutions to operate as unbiased arbiters of the law, not extensions of a political party or campaign. Americans have a right to expect, and indeed, demand more of their leaders.

ELECTION SEASON. IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM LWVWA - Lora Rathbone

1. WA Supreme Court Candidates <https://lwvwa.org/Supreme-Court-Candidates>
 - Importance and role of the WA Supreme Court
 - Interviews with candidates
 - Additional information about the candidates
2. Initiatives on the November ballot:
 - LWVWA Opposes [IL26-001](#) & [IL26-638](#) “Protect Vulnerable Kids”

- What Would Yes on IL26-001 Mean? Carefully crafted language passed by the 2025 Legislature would be eliminated including changes made to protect parent and student rights while making sure Washington’s parent access laws are consistent with federal and state laws.
 - IL26-638 is inconsistent with long-standing League positions on DEI, equality of opportunity, good government and equity in public education.
 - LWV WA Opposes [I 645 to Repeal the Millionaires Tax](#)
 - Repealing the tax would mean a loss of an estimated \$3–4 billion in annual revenue needed to support vital public services.
 - The state budget faces an even larger shortfall. I-645 keeps several tax changes passed by the Legislature without providing a way to pay for them. These changes provide relief to struggling families and small businesses.
3. Resisting Threats to Democracy
- [Sign on to Unite and Rise](#)
 - [Take Action to Protect Democracy](#)
 - [Know Your Constitutional Rights](#)

LWVWA PRESIDENT’S CALL HIGHLIGHTS – Polly Parton

Pixel Perfect-ish: Phone photography essentials training. Please *register on the LWVWA events calendar*.

- The Basics – Seeing & Composing: Tuesday, Oct. 20, from 6-7:30 pm.
- The Edit – Polish & Post: Dec. 1 from 6-7:30 pm.

Washington State Supreme Court candidates

- 13 of the 14 candidates have participated in our recorded interviews. See the Candidate Forum page on the LWVWA website.

Advocacy

Initiatives: Webpage up: [Vote “NO” to Protect Vulnerable Kids - LWVWA Opposes I-001 & I-638](#). LWVWA has helped write the CON statement in the WA State Voters Guide.

1. Vote NO on I-001: Removes protection for abused children. Restricts Students’ access to help. **Issue paper and flyer available in English and Spanish.**
2. Vote NO on I-638: Replaces WA’s successful policy with a blanket ban. **Issue paper and flyer available in English and Spanish.**
3. Vote NO on I-645 (to roll back Millionaires Tax)

From LWVUS

NEW: Overview and FAQ on Proposed Census Changes

- The US Department of Commerce and the Census Bureau have proposed significant rule changes to the census that if approved, would only count US citizens and green card holders

toward census apportionment data and would exclude any non-permanent residents and undocumented immigrants from the total apportionment count.

QUOTE FOR THE MONTH

“The future depends entirely on what each of us does every day; a movement is only people moving.” by Gloria Steinem

LWVBF TREASURER’S REPORT – August 2026, Carla Chiotti, Treasurer

Thank you to all members who have renewed your membership. Memberships expire one year after the date you join. Most of our members are due for renewal in September and have received at least one reminder email from LWVUS. Contact Carla with questions at (509) 521-2158.

As of August 31, 2026

Checking is	\$7,229.87
<u>Savings is</u>	<u>1,857.66</u>
Total	\$9,087.53

Income:

Dues	226.94
Contributions	547.44
Savings interest	<u>.01</u>
Total income:	\$774.39

Expenses:

Museum at Keewaydin	<u>100.00</u>
Total expenses	\$100.00

Membership Dues and Donations: In August we received dues from two new members and 16 returning members.

Expenses: The only expense for the month was \$100 to the Museum at Keewaydin. This was payment for the room for the Women’s Equality Day event.

Education Fund: The Education Fund balance remains at \$14,019.28.

Audit Committee: The Audit Committee, Shirley Sonnichsen and Barb Puigh, met at the treasurer’s house on August 10th to review the finances for fiscal year 2025-2026. It was reported at the August business meeting that no irregularities were found.

IRS Report: The annual Form 990-N was submitted to the IRS on August 4th.

LWV Membership Renewal: Members will be notified by LWVUS 60 days and 30 days before their renewal date and again on the renewal date. Members will be considered active members

for 60 days beyond their renewal date (the grace period). If members do not renew by the end of the grace period, they will be dropped from the national roster and our local league's email list. If you choose Auto Renew, your membership will be automatically renewed on your due date.

Also, when you renew online you need to use the email address that is associated with your LWV account. This is how your account is identified. If you don't know which email address to use, please contact Carla, Treasurer (509-521-2158) or Shirley, Roster Manager (509-392-1808)

You can also join or renew your membership by writing a check to **LWVUS** and sending it to our local post office box: LWVBF, P.O. Box 765, Richland, WA 99352. You choose your dues amount; it must be at least \$20. \$75 is the recommended dues amount.

If you have questions on how to renew, which email address to use, or need to know when your membership is due for renewal, please contact Carla or Shirley (phone numbers above).

Contributions:

To donate to the Education Fund: Members can donate to our education fund by sending a check to: **LWVWA Education Fund**. The address is 1511 Third Avenue, Suite 801, Seattle, WA, 98101, Attention: Ed Fund Treasurer. **Please note on the check or separately that your donation is for the Benton-Franklin League Education Fund.** Donations to the Education Fund are tax deductible.

If you would like your donation to go exclusively to our Scholarship Program, please specify that in your note. Also, please contact Carla separately and your donation will be earmarked for scholarships.

To donate to our local league: Members can donate to the League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties by either writing a check to **LWVBF**, P.O. Box 765, Richland, 99352 or clicking the Donate button on our web page <https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>. Donations to our local league are not tax deductible.

Thank you.

Carla Chiotti, LWVBF Treasurer
cchiotti@gmail.com
(509) 521-2158 (text is fine)

BOOK CLUB – Polly Parton

The September book was *There is No Place for Us: Working and Homeless in America* by Brian Goldstone. The October book is *The Dream Hotel* by Lala Lalami.

Join us the 2nd Monday each month at 6 pm via Zoom by emailing or texting Polly Parton to be added to the link. We keep discussions to one hour. Please join in even if you did not squeeze the book into your schedule. For more information. pparton34@gmail.com or 509 -551-3818

Calendar of Events – August

9/30 Wednesday – CD4 livestream from 5:30 - 6:30 pm. It will also be recorded at the same time and available on YouTube soon after

10/12 Monday – LWV Book Club 6 pm

10/20 Tuesday – Planning/Board meeting 6 pm

10/22 Thursday – CBC Voter Tabling
12:30 -2 pm, Carol Larkin leads
any helpers?

10/26 Monday – Communications Meeting, 6pm

Email: info@lwv-bf.org

This is a new email address

<https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>

Instagram: [lwv.of.bf](https://www.instagram.com/lwv.of.bf)

Facebook: [League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties](https://www.facebook.com/LeagueofWomenVotersofBentonFranklinCounties)

Mailing Address:

League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties
PO Box 765, Richland, WA 99352

OFFICERS:

New 2026-2027 OFFICERS:

President: Polly Parton
1st Vice President: Michelle Pirotte
2nd Vice President: Brianna Harty
Secretary: Diane Molleson
Treasurer: Carla Chiotti

ELECTED DIRECTORS:

Richard Badalamente
Margie Bass
Emily Dirkes
Christine Grantham
Sue Thornton
Glenda Williams

APPOINTED DIRECTORS: (TBD)

Bev Johnson-Torelli
JoAnne Dimond
Lora Rathbone
Ruvine Jimenez
Judy Blair

Nominating Committee

Brianna Harty - Chair
Emily Dirkes, Michele Pirotte