



VOTER March 2025

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message -- Diane Molleson

The National League's new membership system, ChapterSpot launched in early February, and members should be receiving an email asking them to log in to the ChapterSpot portal and create a profile. As of February 14, our League's members, with the exception of the officers, had not yet received this invitation. Please stay tuned for this message from the National League. Further details are in the treasurer's report in this issue.

February 14, 2025 was the League's 105th birthday, and we celebrated the occasion with lunch at CG Public House in Kennewick. Despite the snow, the event was well attended. Our guest speaker was Tracci Dial, Multimedia News Director for NW Public Broadcasting. Her presentation on the "Truth Seekers" in the age of disinformation was very timely and informative. She also provided suggestions for reliable news sources she uses, such as <https://www.readtangle.com/readtangle.com>. With the threat of cuts to public broadcasting, she suggested making our voices heard at Protect Our Public Media: <https://www.protectmypublicmedia.org>.

Seventeen members joined our consensus discussion on the State League's Elder Caregiving Study, which focused on care for vulnerable adults 60 years and older in Washington State. These consensus meetings provide the study committee and the State League's board with valuable input they then use to form a position. Once the League's positions are approved, they can be used to advocate for legislative action.

We will be having a consensus discussion (date and time to come) on the LWVWA's other study completed this year: **Welcoming Immigrants to Washington State**. LWVBF members Judy Golberg and Christine Grantham were on the study committee and they will be available to participate in our discussion. You can read this study and the consensus questions on the State League's website: <https://lwvwa.org/immigration>

On March 21, we will "go green" with a Table Talk on the environment and environmental legislation at Shalom Church in Richland. Our guest speaker will be Courtney Flatt, Northwest Public Broadcasting's senior environmental correspondent. Details are in a separate announcement in this issue. We hope you will join us.

Table Talk – “Go Green” In Honor of St. Patrick’s Day – Christine Grantham

St. Patrick’s Day is just around the corner so save Friday, March 21 for a “Wee bit of Irish Fun”. After all everyone is a bit Irish, and if you aren’t you can still join in the fun – just wear GREEN!! We are lucky to have two speakers informing us about “Going Green”: Public Broadcasting Senior Environmental Correspondent Courtney Flatt will be our Guest Speaker while our very own Irish lass Lora Rathbone will inform us about environmental issues before the Washington State Legislature. There will be cookies or sweets in the shade of green to celebrate the Irish traditions of the past! We will gladly serve you a HOT TODDY too! (tea, coffee or punch). Date: March 21st, 1 - 3 pm, at Shalom United Church of Christ, 505 McMurray St, Richland.

They Represent You (TRYs) - Diane Molleson

Our 2025 TRY pamphlet has now been printed and will be distributed to the auditors’ offices, city halls, ports, community centers, schools and other organizations. It can be found on our website at www.lwv-bf.org under Publications. If members need copies for voter registrations or other events, or if anyone would like a printed copy, please contact Diane Molleson at molleson@frontier.com

From LWVUS – Diane Molleson

You will find the letter the League of Women Voters of the United States sent to congressional leaders at the link listed below. It was signed by League chapters from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, concerning the protection of the US constitution and ending the executive branch’s overreach.

<https://www.lwv.org/lwv-urges-congress-exercise-its-authority>

The press release about the letter is here:

<https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/league-women-voters-us-urges-congress-act-new-letter>

LWVBF Treasurer’s Report – Carla Ciotti

As of January 31, 2025:

Checking is	\$8,023.02
<u>Savings is</u>	<u>\$1,857.38</u>
Total	\$9,880.40

Income and Expenses: In January we did not receive any new memberships or donations. The only income was two cents interest in the savings account. We also did not pay any expenses.

Transition to ChapterSpot Membership Platform: The National League of Women Voters (LWVUS) launched the new membership system on February 3, 2025. In February, all members will receive an email asking them to log in to the ChapterSpot portal and create a profile, but they will not be asked to renew their membership until it expires. As of February 14, members of our League, other than officers, have not yet received the invitation to log on and create a profile. After the invitations are sent, a group of seven members have volunteered to contact other members to inform them of this step and assist if needed. The Join/Renew button has been placed on the LWVBF webpage and is working. On February 11th, Dartanya Helgeson was the first member to join using the new system. Welcome Dartanya!

Information on the new ChapterSpot membership system is available for all members on the [ChapterSpot Resources page](https://www.lwv.org/league-management/membership/chapterspot-resources) of the LWVUS Management Site (<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/membership/chapterspot-resources>).

Education Fund: We have not received an official update on the balance of the Education Fund since January 1. Our balance stands at \$9,040.42.

On February 7, a Project Approval Request was submitted to the Education Fund Manager outlining the plans of the Scholarship Committee to award two scholarships of \$2,000 each. The request was for a total of \$4,500. The extra \$500 is to cover expenses.

Members can donate to our education fund by sending a check to: **LWV-WA Education Fund**. The address is 1511 Third Avenue, Suite 801, Seattle, WA, 98101, Attn: 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. Thank you.

Extreme Risk Protection Awareness Project – Richard Badalamente

The ERPO Awareness team now consists of LWVBF members Richard Badalamente (Project Leader), Diane Molleson, Carla Chiotti as well as Karla Carlisle, Managing Attorney for the Northwest Justice Project; JoDee Garretson, Executive Director of SARC (Support, Advocacy & Resource Center), Rosanna Herrera, SARC Program Director, and Christine Brown, former candidate for Congress. There's always room for more, especially those willing to write letters to the editor and/or guest commentary on the issue. In addition, it would be helpful if members would post information on their social media, e.g., Facebook, linking readers to information on ERPOs, which can be found here: <https://protectionorder.org/erpo/faq-extreme-risk-protection-orders.html>

The Benton-Franklin Health District has designated our League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties as a partner in the Health District's Community Health Assessment (CHA) and the resulting Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) program. This is a result of our Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) team's efforts to reduce gun violence in Benton and Franklin Counties.

ERPO information brochures have been translated into Spanish and are being distributed widely in an effort to improve general awareness of the role of this particular protective order and its purpose.

Pat Griffith of the Seattle LWV contacted the ERPO team and proposed partnering with Grandmothers Demand Action, a spin-off of Moms Demand Action. MDA is primarily a legislative advocacy non-profit.

Richard, Karla, and Rosanna met with the Benton Franklin Police Chiefs and the Benton County Prosecuting Attorney, on February 5, 2025. Richard presented an overview of the project to raise public awareness of ERPOs, and the team participated in a roundtable discussion concerning petitioning for and serving ERPOs. It was clear from the discussion that more work is needed to convince the police that ERPOs are both a life-saving measure, and a crime prevention measure.

Advocacy Update – Lora Rathbone

Legislative Action with the League of Women Voters Washington

Public Statement — LWV Urges Congress to Exercise Its Authority

On the 105th anniversary of its founding, the League of Women Voters sent a letter to Congressional leadership regarding the organization's grave concern over the state of our nation. Specifically, the League wrote to urge Congress to exercise its authority to protect the rule of law, defend the Constitution, and end the overreach that the Executive Branch has shown in the last few weeks. The letter outlines our concerns and is signed by leadership from every state League and DC affiliate in the country. [View Letter](#)

2025 WA State Legislative Session – ends April 27

Do your part to make progress in these areas: Making Democracy Work, Environment, and Social & Economic Policy. Click on the bill number to learn more about a few bills the LWVWA supports:

[HB 1116](#) Recognizing election day as a holiday and promoting civic education. In House Rules.

[HB 1750](#) Voting Rights Act claims guidelines. In House Appropriations.

[ESSB 5400](#) Supporting local news journalism. In Senate Ways & Means.

For all the priority league bills, and how to participate, go to <https://lwvwa.org/action-alerts> .

Send comments to your legislators (8th or 16th) when the bill is on their committee. You can also leave a comment at the hotline 1-800-562-6000. Committees:

8th LD Sen. Boehnke: Enviro, Energy & Tech, Rules, Ways & Means, Higher Educ. & Workforce Dev.

8th LD Rep. Barnard: Tech, Econ. Dev. & Veterans, Enviro & Energy, Rules, Capital Budget.

8th LD Rep. Connors: Appropriations, Housing, Rules.

16th LD Sen. Dozier: Ways & Means, Business Fin. Services & Trade, Early Learn. & K-12.

16th LD Rep. Rude: Education, Labor & Workplace, Appropriations.

16th LD Rep. Klicker: Local Gov, Transportation, Enviro & Energy, Energy supply, conserve, resiliency.

Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Lora: ldrathbone@outlook.com

Easy ways to help get LWVWA priority bills passed during the WA 2025 Legislative session:

1. Sign up for the LWV WA Legislative newsletter. [Click here to subscribe](#). It is sent each Sunday during the session. They provide good descriptions of the bills and straight forward directions.
2. Follow the directions: often the only thing to do is click on a link, state your position (select Pro), then give your contact information. (Later, we will be asked to contact our legislators. See #4).
3. For more impact, you can sign up to send written or oral testimony for bill hearings. To do this click on the bill in the LWVWA action alert OR go to the LWV WA website <https://lwwa.org/2025Issues/> then click on a topic i.e. Local News and Democracy, then on a bill number in the list of priority bills. If the bill is having a hearing that week there will be a dark green bar "sign up to testify". Click on that bar, then follow the directions. Or contact me at ldrathbone@outlook.com and I will walk you through it. I would like to help!
4. Schedule a meeting with your legislators to lobby. If you would like to speak to them in a Zoom meeting, let me know your legislative district, then we'll plan on a time. We will also have a meeting to plan what to say before we meet with them.

Nominating Committee - Beverly Johnson-Torelli

The Nominating Committee will be contacting you soon to prepare a slate of potential officers to be brought forward at the May 2025 Annual Meeting. Officers are required to serve for one year but may run for additional terms. The offices are President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Ruvine Jimenez (Chair), Michele Pirotte, Margie Bass, Polly Parton and Bev Johnson-Torelli are members of the committee.

LWVBF Book Club – Polly Parton

The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid was our February read. This is about a strong female using her abilities to make her way through life in another era. Join us March 10th as we discuss *The Quiet Damage* by Jesselyn Cook. Some books tell us disturbing stories in real time and this is one.

Join us the 2nd Monday each month, 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. Polly.parton@yahoo.com or 509 -551-3818.

Calendar Of Events

March:

March 5th: Teacher Open House at the Reach Museum 5 – 7 pm

March 10th: Book Club via Zoom, 6 pm

March 18th: Business and Planning Meeting/Board Meeting 6 pm via Zoom

March 21st: Go Green Table Talk, Shalom Church, 1 – 3 pm

April:

April 15th: LWVBF Business and Planning Meeting/Board Meeting via Zoom, 6 pm

May:

May 13th: LWVBF Annual Meeting

June:

June 6 – 8: LWVWA Convention at the Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, WA

Email: lww.of.bf@gmail.com

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

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

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OFFICERS:

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1st Vice President: Susan Thornton

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Treasurer: Carla Chiotti

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Janet Nail

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