



VOTER May 2025

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message -- Diane Molleson

After May 15, I will no longer be the LWVBF president. It has been a great honor to hold this office for the past two years, and I am so thankful to the officers, board members and committee chairs who served with me and helped in countless ways. I could never have done this job without them. Also, a huge thanks to all our League members for their contributions and for being a part of this organization. Together we can accomplish a lot.

Our **Annual Meeting** will be held on **Thursday, May 15 at 5:30 p.m.** at **Tri-Tech** Vocational & Technical School (5929 Metaline Ave. in Kennewick). It will be a buffet dinner, \$25 per person. Please have cash or your checks, made out to LWVBF, ready so they can be collected at the door. The buffet menu (grilled chicken puttanesca, roasted potatoes, roasted asparagus, green salad and strawberry shortcake trifle, coffee and tea) has vegetarian and gluten free options. **RSVP** to Diane at molleson@frontier.com **by May 6** if you plan to attend. Please understand that we are responsible for all the meals we order, so any no-shows will still have to pay. At the meeting, we will elect a new slate of officers and board members, pass a budget and a program of work. We will also be giving two Marilyn Perkins Scholarship Awards to the winners of our annual essay contest. The winners are invited along with their parents, and it is inspiring to meet them.

The **LWVWA's State Convention** will be held in Vancouver, Washington on **June 6-8**. Guest speakers will include WA State Attorney General Nick Brown and LWVUS President Dianna Wynn. We can send four delegates and currently have three interested LWVBF members. Members can also be observers, and can attend in-person or virtually. If you are interested in being our fourth delegate, please let me know at molleson@frontier.com **by May 17**. There is money in our budget to cover the registration fee for our delegates. For more information, and to register for this event, go to <https://lwvwa.org/Convention-2025-Details/>

By May 13 candidates will have filed for local offices, such as City Council and School Board. As soon as we know who has filed, we will begin work on our candidate forums. The Primary Election will include positions that have three or more people running for office. The forums will be recorded at Northwest Public Broadcasting's studio in Richland in June and broadcast in July.

Voter Registration Drives

Bev Johnson-Torelli, Chris Grantham, Kelly Doyle, Katie Larson and Michele Pierrot attended the Naturalization ceremony on April 15 where they helped welcome 25 new citizens, most of whom registered to vote. Two other Naturalization ceremonies are scheduled on September 16 and November 5.

Virgie Robinson Elementary School will hold its school carnival on May 28 from 5- 7 pm. Chris Grantham, Margie Bass and Diane Molleson will attend with voter information and a civics ed activity.

Volunteers will be needed for the Celebration of Community, Diversity and Culture on September 6, from Noon to 4 pm, at Howard Amon Park in Richland. We will call on LWVBF members closer to that date.

News From LWVUS

On April 17, 2025, the LWVUS declared that the US is in a constitutional crisis. Here is the link to their press release: [Read our press release here](#). The LWVUS received a shoutout on the PBS News Hour with Brooks and Capehart. See the link to the PBS Show here: <https://shorturl.at/q7jHv>

League Members can go to <https://www.lwv.org/take-action> to sign up for alerts from the LWVUS. The LWVUS encourages members to contact their senators to oppose the *Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act*, “which would require citizenship documentation to register to vote even though voters in every state are already required to affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering. The *SAVE Act* would create one more barrier to the voting process, as many eligible voters do not have easy access to the necessary documents.”

Nominating Committee Report

The slate of officers for the 2025 – 2026 year as reported by the Nominating Committee are as follows: President – Polly Parton, First Vice President – Ruvine Jimenez, Second Vice President – Michele Pirotte, Secretary – Diane Molleson and Treasurer – Carla Chiotti. Elected Directors: Margie Bass – Position 1, Brianna Harty – Position 2, Marci Palmer – Position 3, Mary Shaw – Position 4, Glenda Williams – Position 5 and Shirley Sonnichsen – Position 6. From the membership survey, three members nominated for the nominating committee for next year, Ruvine Jimenez as chair, Marci Palmer and Michelle Pirotte – Position 1 and Brianna Harty – Position 2.

The following members have expressed interest in being appointed to the coming year’s board: JoAnne Dimond, Leonna Hassing, Lora Rathbone, Susan Thornton, and Beverly Johnson-Torelli. If other members are interested in serving on the board, please let Polly Parton know.

LWVBF Treasurer's Report – Carla Ciotti

As of March 31, 2025:

Checking is	\$7,431.64
Savings is	\$1,857.40
Total	\$9,289.04

Income and Expenses: In March, we received one new membership from Marie Bang. The total deposits for the month of March total \$200.61. This includes donations from members from the Pi Day/Immigration Consensus Meeting event at Diane's house and the Go Green Table Talk at Shalom. Expenses totaled \$759.75 and included reimbursement to Diane Molleson for the printing of TRYs (\$570.68), reimbursement to Janet Nail for name tags (\$127.07), and the room charge at Shalom (\$40.00).

Transition to ChapterSpot Membership Platform: The League of Women Voters of the US (LWVUS) launched the new membership system on February 3, 2025. The rollout of the new system has been slower than expected. As of April 7, members, other than selected officers, have not received an email inviting them to log in to the ChapterSpot portal and create a profile. If you would like to complete this step, members can log in at the LWVUS website and choose the Profile button to create a profile. We are still expecting LWVUS to send invitations to create a profile when they have caught up with questions and fixes with ChapterSpot. You will not be asked to renew your membership until it expires in the Fall.

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 received an update from the Education Fund on March 31, 2025, showing a member contribution of \$1,000. Our balance stands at \$12,640.42.

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. Thank you.

Making Donations to LWVBF - Carla Ciotti

Many members of LWVBF have generously made donations to our local league usually by adding money to their annual dues. With the change to the new ChapterSpot Membership System, donations made by increasing your annual dues will be divided among National, State, and Local leagues. Our share will be 20%, minus processing fees.

When you are asked to renew your membership, we would like to encourage you to pay the recommended dues of \$75 (this has been our league's regular dues amount), then use another method to donate extra to our league.

Ways to donate to our local league:

1. The recommended method is - write a check! A check written to LWVBF and mailed to P.O. Box 765, Richland, WA 99352 will be deposited into our bank account and used for local programs and operating expenses. Every penny of your donation will go to our league. Although our league is a charitable, non-profit organization, we are not a 501(c) 3, so this donation will not be tax-deductible. Donations will be greatly appreciated, especially during the uncertainty of the ChapterSpot transition.
2. Go to our website, <https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties>. The Donate button will take you to a page where you can donate either to the Education Fund (more on that below) or to the League of Women Voters. If you choose the second option, you will be directed to another page that gives you a choice to either donate by check or to continue and donate using PayPal with your credit card. Donations will come directly to our local league, minus PayPal fees.
3. Go through the LWVUS ChapterSpot website when you pay your dues. The donation button for local leagues will be on the page following your dues renewal page. Remember if you simply add money to your dues amount we will only receive a fraction of it. If you use the donation button we will receive the amount minus Stripe transaction fees.

What about donations 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, Attn: Ed Fund Treasurer. Please note on the check or separately that your donation is for the Benton-Franklin League Education Fund. This is a 501(c)3 fund so donations are tax deductible. The funds are used for sponsoring our scholarship program and can be used for other educational purposes.

This information is quite confusing. If you have questions, please, contact Carla at (509) 946-7217 or (509) 521-2158 or Shirley Sonnichsen at (509) 392-1808 or Diane Molleson at (509) 554-7317.

2025 Legislative Update from the LWVWA – Lora Rathbone

The 2025 Legislative Session for Washington state ended April 27. LWVWA issue chairs chose from hundreds of bills to prioritize. And this year, as is usually the case, only a few of the bills passed. Many thanks to all of you who signed in “Pro”, sent comments, or even written and oral testimony!

Bills that have passed or are likely to pass this year, as of this writing:

Making Democracy Work

SB 5077 - Expansion of voter registration services. (Automatic Voter Registration Expansion) 8th & 16 Legislative District Senators and Representatives voted no.

SB 5400 - Supporting local news journalism. Co-sponsored by Senator Boehnke. It would help address the local news decline in Washington state by funding the employment of news journalists to cover civic affairs in underserved communities. New dollars would come from for-profit social network sites and internet search portals and websites that gross more than \$5 million annually. These firms don't compensate news outlets for the original content they use on their own platforms.

AHB 1060 - Concerning newspapers and eligible digital content. Requires newspaper printers and publishers who were exempted from Business & Occupation taxes for 10 years to submit a complete annual tax performance report. House- unanimous. Senator Boehnke- no, Senator Dozier- yes.

Social and Economic Policy

Health Care:

HB 1142 - Standardizing basic training and certification requirements for long-term care workers who provide in-home care for their family members, including spouses or domestic partners. Amends the training requirements for long-term care (LTC) workers who are providing in-home care to their family members to align the training requirements across the in-home care provider types. Passed. Effective 7/27/2025. 8th and 16th Legislative District Senators and Representatives voted yes.

HB 1432 - Improving access to appropriate mental health and substance abuse disorder services. To improve access by updating Washington's mental health parity law and ensuring coverage of medically necessary care. 8th and 16th Legislative District Senators voted yes, along with Representative Rude; the other Representatives voted no.

Housing:

HB 1217 - Rent Stabilization. Improving housing stability for tenants by improving the current situation of rent gouging and short notices to tenants, making them unable to adjust to rent increases. 8th and 16th Legislative District Senators and Representatives voted no; believe it leads to housing shortages.

HB 1353 - Establishing a self-certification program for accessory dwelling unit project permit applications. Allows cities planning under the Growth Management Act to operate programs through which registered architects can certify compliance with applicable building codes. Unanimous. Passed. Effective date 10/1/2025. **SB 5148** also relates to GMA housing requirements.

HB 1491 - Transit-Oriented Housing. Provides guidelines & assistance to cities in achieving this type of development. It helps with affordable housing and promotes use of transit. All 8th & 16th District legislators voted no.

Environment:

HB 1409 - The Clean Fuels Program. Strengthens CFP standards - means more incentives for and investments in clean fuels, including investments in electric vehicle infrastructure and utilities to improve air quality. 8th & 16 Legislative District Senators and Representatives voted no.

HB 1462 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with hydrofluorocarbons. Their use in refrigeration, air conditioning, and heat pumps make them significant contributors to climate change. Better working fluid alternatives are available and in use. All 8th & 16th District legislators voted no.

SB 5284 - The Recycling Reform Act. Establishes an extended producer responsibility program for covered packaging and paper products. All 8th & 16th District legislators voted no.

Progressive revenue:

Because of the state's budget shortfall, we were also asked to advocate for additional revenue. The deficit "stems from an unanticipated downturn in forecast revenue combined with an upturn in services needed and committed." Washington state has the second most regressive tax structure in the US, resulting in a greater burden on lower income people. The League asked that legislators not reduce services and not increase regressive forms of tax to generate new revenue; rather, that they consider new progressive sources of revenue".

The final LWVWA Legislative Newsletter will be issued May 4 and will report on bills that passed and will summarize the implications.

Spring Fling Table Talk – Christine Grantham

Thanks, from the Table Talk Committee to our members, prospective members and guests for attending our "Spring Fling". There certainly was a great selection of YUMMY food. More potlucks are in order after the sampling of so many epicurean delights. I think everyone enjoyed an evening to relax, visit and renew old acquaintances and meet some of our new members. We collected a lot of food and \$700 in donations. We would like to thank VJ Meadows, Executive Director of the Tri-Cities Food Bank, for speaking at this event. She was most appreciative of the support she received from the league knowing so many people will benefit from your generosity.

Table Talk Committee - Sabiha Khan, Sue Thorton, and Christine Grantham. If you have a suggestion for a Table Talk Event let us know.

LWVBF Book Club – Polly Parton

On May 12th we will review *Total Garbage: How We Can Fix Our Waste and Heal Our World* by Edward Humes. What is the dirty truth about our garbage? April's read was *Mrs. Quinn's Rise to Fame* by Olivia Ford. It was a fun read about long-held secrets, a passion for baking and a newfound competitive spirit in the silver years.

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

May

- 15 LWVBF Annual Meeting, 5:30 pm at Tri-Tech in Kennewick (RSVP Due Date to Diane Molleson is May 6th)
- 28 Voter Registration at Virgie Robinson Elementary School, 5 – 7 pm

June

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

July Primary Candidate Forums Broadcast, dates TBD

Email: lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

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
P.O. Box 765
Richland, WA
99352

OFFICERS:

President: Diane Molleson
1st Vice President: Susan Thornton
2nd Vice President: Ruvine Jimenez
Secretary: Peggy Gregory
Treasurer: Carla Chiotti

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