



VOTER

May 2024

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message ~ Diane Molleson

Our **Annual Meeting** will be held on **May 21 at 5:30 pm at CG Public House**, 9221 W Clearwater Ave, Kennewick. We will be in the Amon Creek Room and will order off the short menu similar to the menu at our February League birthday meeting. If you have dietary restrictions, you may order from the wait staff. In addition, we will be awarding the two Marilyn Perkins scholarships to the winners of our student essay contest as well as approving a budget, program, and a new slate of officers. **Please RSVP to Diane Molleson at molleson@frontier.com or 509-554-7317 by May 18 if you plan to attend.**

In preparation for the Primary Election on August 6, the State League is planning a series of in-person candidate forums to be held throughout the state. Our League will host the forum for the **candidates for Attorney General in the WSU-TC East Auditorium (2710 Crimson Way, Richland) on Tuesday, June 18 from 6:00pm - 7:30pm**. The auditorium holds 135 people, and we are hoping for a good crowd. Northwest Public Broadcasting will film the debate and post it on YouTube and other sites. Questions for the candidates are welcome and can be sent to Bev Johnson Torelli (SasJoh@aol.com) or Diane. Volunteers will be needed as greeters and timers, so please contact Bev or Diane if you can help.

The LWVBF is also planning its own primary forums for the local and regional races. The official week candidates can file for office is May 6-10, so after that week, we will know how many candidates will be running.

We also have a June Table Talk planned (see details in a separate article) and two upcoming voter registration drives. We look forward to seeing you at some of these events.

Table Talk on June 7: Emergency Risk Protection Orders

Washington State's "red flag" law was passed in 2016. Public Records Requests indicate that the law in our community is being used only sparingly. At the same time, tragic incidents involving gun violence here demonstrate the vital need for this law. Please join us on **Friday, June 7 at 1:00pm in the Gallery Room of the Richland Public Library** (955 Northgate Drive) for a presentation and discussion of Emergency Risk Protection Orders. Our guest speaker will be LWVBF member Richard Badalamente, who has been leading the League's effort to increase awareness of this underused law in Benton and Franklin Counties. Refreshments will be served.

Voter Registration Drives

Naturalization Ceremony on Wednesday, May 1 at 10:00am at the Federal Building in Richland. Diane Molleson, Chris Grantham and Margie Bass are volunteering. More are welcome. **River's Edge High School** in Richland **on Thursday, May 16 from 3:30pm- 6:00pm**. Diane Molleson and Polly Parton are volunteering. Contact Diane at molleson@frontier.com or 506-554-7317 if you would like to join us.

State Council and National Convention

The LWWWA has issued their call to **the State Council in Lacey, WA on May 31-June 2** (May 31 is optional). Our League can send three delegates and there is the option to attend in person or virtually. Those who don't sign up as delegates can be observers. See <https://lwvwa.org/This-Month-in-the-League/13338337> for more information.

The LWWUS's **National Convention will be held June 27-30** at the Washington Hilton in **Washington, D.C.** This will be a hybrid event, and League members can attend in-person or online. Our League can send three delegates, and we have two members signed up to attend virtually. We would be happy to send a third. For more information, see [Home-2004 LWWUS National Convention](#).

We have money in our budget to pay our members' registration fees. Please let Diane Molleson (molleson@frontier.com) know if you are interested in attending State Council or National Convention.

From the LWVWA

League of Women Voters of Washington Takes Stand Against Three Ballot Initiatives

Seattle—The League of Women Voters of Washington announces its opposition to three initiatives that will appear on the November ballot.

"Our stance against these initiatives is a reflection of the League's firm commitment to equitable education funding, climate resilience, and accessible long-term care," said **Mary Coltrane**, president of the League of Women Voters of Washington. "We're safeguarding our state's future with each vote against these regressive measures."

At its April Board meeting, the Directors voted to contest these proposals for the following reasons, based on League positions adopted by member consensus following studies of the issues.

Initiative 2109, Repeal Capital Gains Tax, if passed, would terminate a significant source of income for education and school construction that is generated from the state's wealthiest individuals. Collections to date have exceeded nearly \$1 billion in 2023 from only 3,895 taxpayers. This tax not only supports the state's mandate to amply fund education but also shifts the balance in the state's revenue structure toward equity from the most regressive tax structure in the US.

The League of Women Voters' positions on this issue are that the state has the responsibility for amply funding education and that action to obtain a balanced tax structure that is fair, adequate, flexible, and has a sound economic effect is needed.

Initiative 2117, Prohibiting all state agencies, counties, and cities from implementing any type of carbon tax credit trading [Repeal the Climate Commitment Act (CCA)], if passed, would prevent the state from achieving the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set in 2020, which are necessary to deter further climate change impacts. The state would lose a significant funding source for implementing programs to correct past environmental damage and injustice resulting from lack of scientific perspective, short-sighted or poor policy creation and implementation, and unintended consequences. The funds available through the CCA support clean transportation, clean buildings, clean energy development, siting and transmission, environmental justice measures, and more.

The League of Women Voters recognizes that climate change poses a significant threat to both our nation and the planet as a whole. We stand in solidarity with efforts to establish pricing mechanisms for carbon emissions, be it through cap-and-trade systems, carbon taxes, or other effective methods. Additionally, we advocate

for meeting the state's short-term energy needs through the implementation of a robust conservation program. This program should be inclusive of all energy users and enforced if necessary to achieve energy-saving objectives. Moreover, we emphasize the importance of employing positive conservation strategies, including tax incentives and support for energy-saving initiatives. Encouraging the adoption of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, along with the recovery of energy from waste, is paramount.

Initiative 2124, Opting out of Long-Term Services Insurance Program, threatens to jeopardize the state's groundbreaking mandatory long-term care benefit which guarantees access to vital long-term care and home health care services for all employed individuals in Washington. This benefit is sustained by contributions from employees over time, serving as a crucial safety net for the 70% of the population who will inevitably require long-term care at some stage. However, rendering this fund optional would jeopardize coverage for those in need and likely lead to its financial collapse, rendering it ineffective for those who do contribute to the fund.

The League of Women Voters advocates for universal access to essential healthcare, including long-term care, for all residents of the United States. We support comprehensive reform of the healthcare system to ensure that everyone can access a comprehensive, uniform, and affordable range of services. Additionally, we support programs and policies aimed at poverty reduction, promoting self-sufficiency for individuals and families. At present, only people of means can afford long-term care insurance.

“The League’s opposition to these initiatives reflects our unwavering commitment to advocating for policies that promote equity, sustainability, and social justice across Washington state,” stated LWVWA President **Mary Coltrane**.

LWVBF Nominating Committee ~ Ruvine Jimenez

Committee Members:

Ruvine Jimenez, Chair
Judy Golberg
Bev Johnson-Torelli
Michele Pirotte
Lorie Rowley

Slate of Officers, Board and Nominating Committee

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

Board (six elected with up to six appointed by the incoming Board)

1. JoAnne Dimond
2. Leona Hassing
3. Bev Johnson-Torelli
4. Janet Nail
5. Polly Parton
6. Lora Rathbone

Willing to be appointed on the incoming Board

1. Michele Pirotte

Chair of the 2025 Nominating Committee: Ruvine Jimenez

Members of the Nominating Committee: (Two, with two appointed by the Board)

1. Michele Pirotte
2. Bev Johnson-Torelli

Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

As of March 31, 2024:

Checking is:	\$5,889.38
Savings is:	\$1,857.21
Total:	\$7,746.59

Income:	\$10.00
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Kathryn Tominey donated \$10.00 through our website donate button.

Expenses: \$1,325.99

Janet Nail was reimbursed \$353.96 for the last two years badges. \$327.75 was paid to the state league for the last quarter per member payment. Diane Molleson was reimbursed \$643.50 for the TRY payment to Budget Printing.

Membership and Dues: We currently have 103 members. In January 2025, National will be taking over membership and dues. The new database is called Chapter Spot. We will still have our membership drive in September, and we will still pay Per Member Payments (PMP's) through June 2025. Details are still being worked out.

Budget:

Carla Chiotti, JoAnne Dimond, and Janet Nail met in March and formulated a FY 2024-2025 budget. The board approved this budget at its April meeting and the final Budget will be voted on at the Annual Meeting in May.

Ed Fund: \$12,640.00

We received an anonymous donation of \$2,000.00 to add \$1,000.00 each to the current \$1,000.00 scholarships. If you would like to donate to the State Education fund towards our future scholarships, please make your check out to *LWWWA Education Fund, attention Ed Fund Treasurer*. Their address is 1151 Third Avenue, Suite 900, Seattle WA 98101. Earmark it for our Benton-Franklin scholarship fund.

Redistricting Reform Task Force ~ Leona Hassing

Seventy-five League members joined via zoom the League of Women Voters of Washington's Redistricting Reform Task Force for the briefings on Washington's new legislative maps and the Redistricting Reform Campaign.

[If you missed the public briefings on April 10 and April 13. You can catch the recording here.](#)

At the briefings we heard from:

Alison McCaffree, Task Force Chair and LWVWA Redistricting Issue Chair, about the new map.

Yurij Rudensky, Senior Council at the Brennan Center, on the complexity of VRA (Voting Rights Act)

Cynthia Dai, former California Citizens Redistricting Commissioner, on the workings of a People First Commission in California. Her message was "The commission has helped their legislature become responsible to the people." A true validation for the reason to reform our commission from the current five-person commission to a People First Redistricting Commission.

At the Task Force monthly committee meeting we reviewed the briefings, formed a policy committee, a communications committee and discussed legislative strategy as well as plans for LWVWA Council for June 1-2. Committee members chose to work on the committee of their interest.

The legislative districts have been updated. If you are wondering if your legislative district changed, check at votewa.gov or leg.wa.gov.

What's Next

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1siprM8twPMIM5j4pf64Evk2thfFztUdV/view?usp=mail>

LWVBF Book Club ~ Polly Parton

In May we will discuss *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles. Zoom in with us and discuss a little history, politics, and some great fiction. April's Book was *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* by Helen Simonson. June's pick will be *The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared* by Jonas Jonasson. We will be selecting our next book list soon. Let's get reading!

Join us Monday, May 13, 6:00pm via Zoom by emailing or texting Polly Parton to be added to the link. We keep the discussion to one hour.

Polly.parton@yahoo.com or 509 -551-3818

Scholarships ~ Judy Golberg and Peggy Gregory

We received 65 scholarship applications from high school students in Finley, Kennewick, Kiona-Benton, North Franklin, Pasco, and Richland School Districts. The essays were written with the theme: *What being an educated voter means to me*. The essays are being judged by seven judges. Two winners will be selected and presented with their \$2,000.00 check at our May 21 annual meeting. Each winner is welcome to bring two guests. If the winner is unable to attend the check will be mailed.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 13, 6:00pm ~ Book club via Zoom

May 21, 5:30pm ~ Annual Meeting at CG Public House, Kennewick

May 31-June 2 ~ LWVWA Council in Olympia (May 31 optional)

June 7, 1:00pm ~ Table Talk, Richland Public Library, Gallery Room

June 17 week of ~ Primary candidate forums exact dates TBD

June 18, 6:00pm ~ Candidate forum for Attorney General WSU-TC Auditorium

June Board Meeting Date TBD

lwv.of.bf@gmail.com

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and Franklin Counties
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OFFICERS:

President: Diane Molleson
1st Vice President: Peggy Gregory
2nd Vice President: Sue Thornton
Secretary: Carla Chiotti
Treasurer: Shirley Sonnichsen

ELECTED DIRECTORS:

JoAnne Dimond
Leona Hassing
Karen Miller
Janet Nail
Polly Parton
Lora Rathbone

APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

Ruvine Jimenez
Sabiha Khan
Mary Shaw

VOTER EDITOR:

Peggy Gregory