LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BENTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

VOTER

November 2026

info@lwv-bf.org
https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties

President's Message – Polly Parton

Thanks to all who registered voters, worked the elections, observed, encouraged fellow citizens to cast their ballot and provided valuable voter information. Voter engagement events are year-round while forums/debates and our new **Get Out The Vote** efforts (GOTV) are more time limited. Watch for a summary in December from the new GOTV committee. A special thank you to Bev Johnson-Torelli for organizing the forums recorded at WSU Tri-Cities with NWPB. Our members are fully engaged and actively defending democracy by educating, registering and empowering our voters. If you haven't been involved and are interested, please let us know.

Our Holiday Party is Sunday 12/6 at 1-3 pm at Polly Parton's home. Please save the date as we have a timely speaker and enjoy light snacks (thank you members) while catching up with fellow members, spouses and guests. More details will follow about this event.
RSVP to Polly or email pparton@lwv-bf.org

Table Talk with Mr. Gabriel Portugal – Christine Grantham

Our October Table Talk was a great evening. Fiesta Mexican restaurant was a great choice for this venue, the food was delicious and the service was excellent. More than 35 members and guests were in attendance. It was wonderful to see one another in person and catch up with our fellow members.

Mr. Gabriel Portugal was our October Speaker. Mr. Portugal is currently the National Vice President of the League of United American better known as LULAC. He is a former teacher, principal, activist and an advocate for the Latino Community for over 30 years. He is a respected figure in Washington's Latino community blending decades of grassroots activism through his strategic legal and political action. He has been a champion for women's empowerment, education and voting rights and worked tirelessly on the DREAM ACT. Part of his leadership has been to advocate for underserved communities while mentoring others to participate in change.

Quote For The Month – "There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." By Margaret J. Wheatley

Mr. Portugal gave us a glimpse of what is happening in the Latino community through results of a recent survey he conducted along with a slide show and excellent presentation. The survey was an enlightening view of what challenges this segment of our population is experiencing. Currently 8 out of 10 Latinos are not voting. Considering the current climate of the indiscriminate deportation process we can only speculate how that is impacting this community. We can hope that the future will bring less tension and uncertainty. It is apparent that we have more work to do more to engage with our Latino neighbors and friends to encourage them to participate in the voting process. Thanks to Mr. Portugal we are now aware of the challenges our neighbors currently face. It was an excellent program!

Hope to see you all at our next event!

Naturalization Ceremony - Beverly Johnson-Torelli

A Naturalization Ceremony is scheduled for November 17, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building in Richland. The address is 825 Jadwin Avenue. It will be held in the auditorium on the first floor. The Honorable Edward F. Shea will be presiding, and the Kamiakin choir will be performing. There will be approximately twenty-five new citizen applicants. Our League will be assisting them in voter registration, along with staff from the Benton and Franklin Auditors' offices. The Sons and Daughters of the Revolution are usually on hand with refreshments, pins, etc. as well. If you would like to join me along with Elaine Hetherington, Chris Grantham, Michele Pirotte, and Pattie Blakeman, please RSVP at sasjoh@aol.com.

Communications Corner – Judy Golberg

Happy election season, fellow League members! Within days, we will know the outcome of this current election. We can finally sit back and take a break-but not for too long! With two months left in the year, we can review what we've accomplished, be thankful for our fellow League members, and celebrate the season.

Mapping out our "League year" finds us moving swiftly from month to month- educating, learning, promoting, or protesting the many issues we hold dear. To arrive at those issues, we hit the ground running in January. In our efforts to assure democracy remains our form of government, members will be asked to gather at the beginning of the year to discuss topics we feel should rise to the top. We call this process *Program Planning:* we'll look at both the state league positions, as well as local ones. (For a refresher on our positions, please visit our webpage at https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties/positions/). Program planning starts out by gathering ideas, and presenting those ideas to our membership at the annual meeting in May. We elect delegates to the state convention, who debate and approve state positions and carry out other state league business.

There are so many ways to get involved with League. Want a little adventure? Consider attending the State Convention in Spokane at Gonzaga University June 10-13. Along with our

voting delegates, observers are welcome too. It is an excellent way to learn more about our organization, meet members from across the state while discussing the hot topics of the day. Want to stay local? Consider attending our monthly Business and Planning (aka the Board) meeting. All meetings take place on Zoom, so you can attend in your PJ's! There are in-person table talks, program planning, committee meetings, and socials. Whatever your schedule may be, there's something to get involved with. We would love to get to know all of you better!

Wishing you all a very happy Thanksgiving from the Communications Committee - we are thankful for YOU!

The committee meets the last Monday of the month at 6 pm on Zoom. For more information: Contact jgolberg@lwv-bf.org



NO KINGS RALLY – Judy Blair, Jane Serrada, Elaine Hetherington, JoAnn Evans, Carla Chiotti and all in tee shirts from Elaine!



CBC Voter Registration – Judy Blair with engaged students

2026 Candidate Forums-Thank You! - Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Thanks go to everyone who contributed to the 2026 Benton-Franklin Candidate Forums! Brianna Harty helped invite candidates to participate. Polly Parton presented the introductory statement and greeted candidates as they arrived, along with Carla Chiotti, Jo Anne Dimond, and Margie Bass. Judy Golberg and the communications committee posted the forums on our League's website where they can be viewed on YouTube or find the KTNW-HD TV (PBS) schedule. Of course, we couldn't do it without our partners at NWPB! From the production crew to the moderator, Tracci Dial, they do a great job. (You can also find the Congressional District 4 Candidate Forum on YouTube and KTNW-HD TV. Thanks go to AARP, NWPB and moderator, Matt Loveless.)

Resistance Is Not Partisan - Richard Badalemente

Opposing government oppression is not inherently partisan, no matter what organization undertakes to do so. Resistance to tyranny is a foundational principle of a democratic republic.

Freedom of speech, due process, and protection from unlawful coercion—are codified in universal human rights declarations and constitutional frameworks. Denying or abusing these rights harms individuals across all political ideologies.

A healthy democratic republic requires vigilance against the concentration and abuse of power, regardless of which party currently holds office. Critique of authoritarian tendencies protects governance mechanisms that keep *all* parties accountable.

Framing opposition to government oppression as "partisan" is often an authoritarian tactic used to delegitimize principled dissent, deflect accountability, and divide the public.
Defending basic human dignity and liberty is a shared civic responsibility.

Alphabet Soup – A QCD From Your RMD Beats a DAF and No Itemizing Needed - Richard Badalemente

There's lots to celebrate as we reach the end of the year: World Vegetarian Day, Election Day, Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, Cyber Monday, and Make Up Your Mind Day (December 31). This last, unofficial, holiday is important for those of you who pay taxes, and don't we all. It is the last day for you to finalize charitable donations for the 2026 tax year. This is true whether you use Donor Advised Funds (DAF) for your charitable contributions, or a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).
Our state League encourages those of you under 72.5 years old to use a DAF in making contributions to the LWVWA 501 (c) 4 account in the name of LWV of Benton-Franklin Counties. If you contribute to a DAF account and take an immediate charitable income tax deduction, you must itemize to realize this deduction, along with any others for which you're eligible.

Those of us with an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) who've reach 72.5 must take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), because we haven't yet paid income tax on the money in our IRA and the IRS is hungry for the dough. You must take your RMD by December 31 every year.

RMDs can be used for charitable giving through something called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). This allows you to give up to $100,000 directly from your IRA to a charity or non-profit, like the League of Women Voters Education Fund, a 501(C)(3), without paying taxes on that amount, while still meeting your RMD requirement.

From the perspective of a donor like myself, who utilizes Qualified Charitable Distributions and does not itemize, a QCD is vastly superior to a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF). On the other hand, a

DAF can be funded with a wide variety of assets that donors often want to unload for tax reasons, such as appreciated stocks.

In any event, it's time to vote, and to pay taxes. Get informed, and make the right decisions

Overview of 'What's Next' from LWVWA, A Summary of Washington State Presidents Call - Polly Parton

DEI Survey: will go to members in November. Due December 15. (Please fill out and send back)

Consensus discussions:

- Housing Study Update – January/February 2027
- Tribal Study Update – February/March 2027

- **Pixel Perfect-ish**: Phone photography essentials training. Please register on the events calendar for The Edit – Polish & Post: Dec. 1 from 6-7:30 pm.

- **The League's core story (aka elevator pitch):** "The League of Women Voters helps people participate in democracy by registering voters, providing trusted election information, protecting the freedom to vote, and turning civic concern into action.

- **Advocacy**

  ***Lobbying with the League* – 2027 Legislative Session – SAVE THE DATES!**

  - Nov 30, 2026 - Protecting a Democracy under Siege - LWV priority issues: protecting the budget & revenue
  - Dec 2, 2026 – Environment
  - Dec 7. 2026 - Social and Economic Policy
  - Dec 9, 2026 – Overview of Lobby Day, connecting with legislators; preparing for and scheduling meetings. Overviews of the Issues in the legislative session
  - All Sessions are 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

  - ***Preparing for Action Webinars***
    - Dec 16, 2026 - 6:30 - 8 p.m. - Process to set up meetings with YOUR Legislators
    - Jan 9, 2027 – 2-4 p.m.– Speak up School – learn how to talk with your Legislator
    - Jan 10, 2027 – Begin reading LWVWA *Legislative Action Newsletter* (published every Sunday during Legislative Session)

  - ***Taking Action***
    - Jan 11 to April 25, 2027 – Legislature in Session in Olympia – read the *Legislative Action Newsletter* and take requested actions!
    - Feb 9 – League Lobby Day on Capitol campus, Olympia WA

LWVBF Treasurer's Report – September 2026

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

As of September 30, 2026

		Income:		
Checking is	$7,822.63	Dues	344.24	
Savings is	1,857.68	Contributions	248.52	
Total	$9,680.31	Savings interest	.02	
		Total income:	$592.78	Expenses: None

Membership Dues and Donations: In September we received dues from 5 new members and 23 returning members. We also received donations from 4 members. Thank you very much!

Expenses: None

Education Fund: The 501c(3) Education Fund received two donations in September, one from a member and one from a non-member. These two donations totaled $7000 bringing the balance to $21,019.28. Our league greatly appreciates the generosity of these two donors.

On September 27, an email vote by the board approved the use of $4150 from the Education Fund to finance the Get Out the Vote campaign. Polly has submitted a request to obtain this money from our Education Fund.

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; $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 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 October book was *The Dream Hotel* by Lala Lalami. The premise was government using AI for predictive policing mined from private industry sleep data. The resulting detainment in profit driven jail systems tramples on individual rights. This dystopian novel isn't completely unbelievable today.

Demon Copperhead (for November) reimagines the novel *David Copperfield* during the early opioid crisis. Southern rural poverty and failing foster care systems fuel young Damon's addiction. Can Damon escape the downward cycle that seems destined for him? December's book will be *Everlasting* by Alix E. Harrow.

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 – November

11/3 Rivers Edge Career Day Event

11/9 Monday – LWV Book Club 6 pm

11/17 Tuesday – Planning/Board meeting 6 pm

11/23 Monday – Horse Heaven Hills School tabling, 1-5 pm

11/30 Monday – Communications Meeting, 6pm (last Monday of each month)

12/6 – LWVBF Holiday Party, 1-3 pm (more details coming)

12/15 – NO Planning/Board Meeting

January 2028

1/16 or 1/23 Saturday – Program Planning

Email: info@lwv-bf.org
This is a new email address
https://my.lwv.org/washington/benton-franklin-counties

Instagram: lwv.of.bf
Facebook: League of Women Voters of Benton & Franklin Counties

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

Officers: 2026-2027 OFFICERS:

President: Polly Parton
1st Vice President: Michele 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:

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

Nominating Committee:

Brianna Harty - Chair
Emily Dirkes, Michele Pirotte