

Benton County Democrats

Youth Rising!

March 2018 Newsletter



If you have suggestions for the newsletter please let us know at newsletterchair@bencodems.org.
For more information about Benton County Democrats, visit <http://www.Bencodems.org>

Message from the Chair

I'm excited to report that the combined Convention and Caucus was a success! Not only did we approve the new Benton County Platform, but we elected all 6 delegates we were allotted and have 3 alternates as well!! This is a welcome sign that our participation is strong, and that Benton County will have strong representation when it comes to the State Platform.

Also of note, the March For Our Lives rally was truly inspiring!! An impressive group of students from all over the Tri-Cities came together to highlight the importance of safety in our schools, and the need for common sense legislation. Voters were registered and a petition to allow the CDC to research gun violence was signed by over 178 people. Over 2,000 people attended! These students have started a movement that should embolden the rest of us when it comes to holding legislators responsible for their inaction.

Highlighted Events

Climate Advocacy Training Workshop

Saturday, April 7 at 9AM

Shalom United Church of Christ

<https://www.facebook.com/events/192477671522835/>

Climate Science on Tap

Monday April 16 7PM – 9PM at D's Wicked Cider 9312

W 10 th Ave., Kennewick

<https://www.facebook.com/events/148106476012360/>

19th Anniversary of Columbine

Friday April 20

A national WALKOUT commences at 1PM

Hanford High School; other events TBD

<https://www.nationalschoolwalkout.net/>

Celebration of Science

Saturday April 21 10AM-3PM at John Dam Plaza

<https://www.facebook.com/events/181096402642411/>

Freedom Project: Difficult conversations

Saturday April 28 10AM – 4PM at United Way of Benton and Franklin counties 401 N Young St, Kennewick

<http://freedomprojectwa.org/nvc2/>

The Climb

Saturday April 28 5PM at Badger Mountain Trailhead Park

<https://www.facebook.com/events/178027212977982/>

Political Facts of Note

Millennials, the generation born between 1981 and 1996, have typically been quite detached from politics when compared to other generations. For example in 2014 46% of millennials were looking forward to the midterm as compared to 60% for baby boomers. This is unfortunate since, according to years of polling, they are also the most liberal generation in American history and are the single largest group of voting age adults.

However, as with many things, Trump seems to be changing this. In a poll conducted last month 60% of millennials were excited for the midterm, only slightly lower than the 62% of baby boomers. It's hard to read that as anything other than Trump waking up millions of voters to the necessity of political participation.

What has Dan Newhouse (R-WA4) done for Us lately?

By Richard Badalamente

This is a recurring column in the newsletter. In it we'll introduce examples of legislation sponsored/co-sponsored, or otherwise supported by Mr. Newhouse that might make one question just who our representative thinks he's representing.

In January 2017, Rep Dan Newhouse co-sponsored H.R. 38, a bill to allow concealed carry reciprocity. This bill amends the federal criminal code to allow a “qualified individual” to carry a concealed handgun into or possess a concealed handgun in another state that allows individuals to carry concealed firearms. Additionally, the bill specifies that a qualified individual who lawfully carries or possesses a concealed handgun in another state: (1) is not subject to the federal prohibition on possessing a firearm in a school zone, and (2) may carry or possess the concealed handgun in federally owned lands that are open to the public. Given that Nicolas Cruz, who shot to death 17 students and wounded 15 others last Valentine’s Day, passed a background check, would he be ex post facto considered “qualified?”

March for Our Lives

A March for Our Lives event was held at 3pm at Howard Amon Park in Richland on March 24. Approximately 2000 people were in attendance, including a few counter-protesters. The event was supported by Love Army Tri-Cities, Benton County Democrats (See the press release at <http://www.bencodems.org/docs/PressRelease03212018.pdf>), Tri-City Democrats and Benton County Republicans (see their press release at: www.bentoncountygop.com/).



A series of compelling presentations were made by the students and others. Some of the participants engaged the counter protesters in conversation, which the counter protesters appreciated. We should all be very proud of the positive interactions that were had.

Moving Forward:

In an effort to set an example to our lawmakers and the rest of the country, the Benton County Democrats and Republicans are forming a Bi-Partisan Task Force to address guns and violence in our schools. A group of diverse and qualified people from our community will come together to discuss, and hopefully develop, potential legislation to submit to our representatives. If you are interested in giving input to this Task Force, please email chair@bencodems.org



The Epidemic of Gun Violence in America

By Richard Badalamente

More people in the United States are killed, or kill themselves by firearms than in any other advanced country in the world. There were 61,527 incidences of gun violence in America in 2017 (not including suicides), accounting for 15,593 deaths, an average of 1300 per month. There were 346 mass shootings in 2017. As of this writing, there were already 34 mass shootings in 2018. There are more mass shootings in America than in any other country in the world.

NRA lobbyists and members of Congress should watch on closed circuit TV as ER doctors frantically sort through the bloody goo of shredded tissue, shattered bone, and macerated organs trying frantically save a life. Would they then have the audacity to repeat their hackneyed refrain, "Guns don't kill people, people kill people?"

People with guns kill people and today's modern firearms kill more people, faster. Apologists for the AR-15 argue that it is "only semi-automatic," i.e., firing the rifle requires a trigger pull for each shot. That's true, but they automatically reload between shots and a shooter can empty a 30-round magazine in 15 to 30 seconds, depending on who's bragging.

Going back to when I retired from the U.S. military at the end of 1981, more semi-automatic handguns had been used in mass shootings than semi-automatic rifles, like the AR-15. However, the AR-15 has become de rigueur for those seeking maximum carnage. AR-15s have been used in five of the six deadliest mass shootings in the last six years in the U.S.

The 1994 Federal Assault Weapons Ban, signed by then President Clinton, outlawed 19 types of military-style assault weapons. A clause directed that the ban expire in 10 years unless Congress specifically reauthorized it, which, of course, it did not.

Under federal law, one must be 21 to buy a handgun from a firearms dealer. Eighteen year-olds can buy an AR-15. Younger buyers can purchase any gun (including an AR-15) from unlicensed gun dealers. To fix this loophole, Washington waives sales tax on transactions with unlicensed sellers when a background check is performed.

Gun laws and their effective enforcement vary from state to state. There is a 3-day waiting period in Florida to purchase a handgun, but no waiting period to purchase an AR-15, the weapon used in the MSD High School mass shooting last Valentine's Day.

Washington gun laws require a 5-day waiting period before purchasing handguns. No such waiting period is required for semi-automatic rifles, such as the AR-15, although a bill before the Senate would change this.

In 2016, Washington voters approved Initiative-1491, Extreme Risk Protection Orders. It is now 7.94 RCW. It temporarily prevents individuals who are at high risk of harming themselves or

others from accessing firearms by allowing family, household members, and police to obtain a court order when there is demonstrated evidence that the person poses a significant danger, including danger as a result of a dangerous mental health crisis or violent behavior. Florida doesn't have such a law. Perhaps if it did, an unimaginable tragedy might have been averted.

We can't know with certainty how many lives might be saved if Congress took seriously their responsibility to serve the people by enacting sensible measures to combat gun violence. What we can know for sure, is that enough members of Congress take NRA money so seriously that the chances of passing meaningful legislation is slim to none. Only by replacing these politicians with those who have a moral compass will we finally see our nation on a path to curing its epidemic of gun violence.

PCO Committee Activities

Precinct activities are happening! The State Party's Canvass Host program is up and running, along with the Rise & Organize training program which is setting records in attendance and volunteer recruitment! There is State Party support for a "Race in Every Place" as well as Benton County Democratic Party support for "A Place for Every (volunteer) Face".

The Benton County Democrats want to help every volunteer participate in fulfilling and successful activities to support our party. This isn't a "one size fits all" approach at all; if you don't do phones we have other stuff that needs to be done. If you do do phones that's great too! (See? Flexibility! Inclusion! Success!)

Get Involved:

Have questions? Want to support this rising Blue Tide? Send email to: orgchair@bencodems.org

Looking Ahead:

Weekly training webinars for Canvass Host Training. Register online at:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/3707901042513693186>

PCO filing for election:

May 14 to 18, 2018. Forms online at: <https://www.bentonauditor.com/Candidate-Filing>

Planning groups are needed for Cinco de Mayo parade and a County Fair booth.

Benton County Convention and Legislative District 8 Caucus

On March 24 a combined Benton County Democratic Central Committee Convention and Legislative District 8 (LD8) Caucus was held at Desert Hills Middle School. Delegates for the State Convention were nominated and elected during the LD8 Caucus. The County Platform was approved during the County Convention portion of the meeting. The platform committee developed a values and principles based platform that was four pages in length (as compared with the previous platforms 32 pages). There was discussion about points related to energy policy, capitalism, corporate personhood, the universality of valuing freedom, democracy, human rights and equitable prosperity, and the strength of our military. The platform was approved by the body with relatively minor modifications. The new platform can be found at: http://www.bencodems.org/docs/Platform/FINAL_platform_2018.pdf

Roy Zimmerman

Roy Zimmerman will be bringing his unique brand of humorous folk music to the Community Unitarian Universalist Church in Pasco on June 7 at 7:30pm. The theme of the music has been resistance to many of the harmful things that have been going on in our government.

Suggested donation for attendance is \$20, but no one will be turned away. Proceeds will be divided between Tri-City Freethinkers and Tri-City Democrats.



Monthly Meetings

BCDCC E-Board Meeting

When: Monday, April 2nd 6:30 PM

Where: Round Table Pizza – George Washington Way

BCDCC General Meeting

When: April 18th 7 PM

Where: TBD

8 th LD General Meeting

When: April 18th 6 PM

Where: TBD

Tri-City Democrats

When: April 13th 6PM

Where: Benton PUD, 2721 W. 10th

City Council Meetings

Richland City Council

<https://www.ci.richland.wa.us/government/agendas-and-minutes>

Kennewick City Council – Calendar of Events

<https://www.go2kennewick.com/calendar.aspx?CID=23,14,27,26&showPastEvents=false>

Friendly Links

Benton County Democrats	https://www.facebook.com/bencodemys/
Franklin County Democrats	https://www.facebook.com/FranklinCountyWADems/
Tri-City Democrats	https://www.facebook.com/TriCityDems
Tri-Cities Young Democrats	https://www.facebook.com/youngdemstc/
4 th Congressional District Democrats	https://www.facebook.com/TurnThe4thBlue/
8 th Legislative District Democrats	https://www.facebook.com/8thLDWADems/
16 th Legislative District Democrats	https://www.facebook.com/WADems16LD/
CD4 Public Calendar	https://tinyurl.com/WA04Calendar
PFLAG Benton Franklin	https://www.facebook.com/PFLAGBF
Citizens' Climate Council	https://tinyurl.com/FB-CCC- TC
Indivisible WA-4CD	https://tinyurl.com/FB-WA04- Indivisible
Love Not Hate Tri-Cities	https://tinyurl.com/FB-LNH- TC
Our Revolution Tri City Progressive	https://www.facebook.com/TriCityWAProgressives/
Tri-City Free Thinkers	https://www.facebook.com/TCFreethinkers/ https://tricityfreethinkers.org
Working Families Party	https://tinyurl.com/FB-WFP

Ongoing Weekly Events

Living and Drinking Liberally in the Tri-Cities Tuesday - Dinner at 6:15, Main Group at 7:00
Isla Bonita Mexican Dining, 1524 Jadwin Ave., Richland WA

Protest Tuesday from 4 to 5 PM at John Dam Plaza

Postcard-writing Sundays from 2 to 4 PM at Ethos Bakery
<https://www.facebook.com/tricitiespostcards/>

Please share this newsletter

First off, thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. Every reader helps us to inform, organize, and motivate Democrats across the county. The past ten years have shown the importance of local politics; success of our local party is key to making a real difference here in Benton County.

To do that better we need your help. Our readership is currently small; in busy digital lives a publication like this one struggles to rise above the constant spam, tweets, and Facebook postings.

With that in mind we're asking you to forward the newsletter link and sign up to ten others who share your beliefs but may not have heard of it. Every new reader who uses the resources here to organize, who is energized by proof that there are others like them working for the cause, who is informed by the information on liberal causes and strengthened in their beliefs, every one of them brings us one step closer to turning Benton County blue.