

# Benton County

## Official Local Voters' Pamphlet

August 1, 2023 Primary Election



**BENTON COUNTY WA**  
**Auditor | ELECTIONS**

### Registration Deadlines:

These deadlines apply to new registrations & voter updates!

**Mail:** July 24

**Online:** July 24

**In-Person:** August 1

**Military & Overseas Ballots**

**Mailed:** June 14

**Ballots Mailed:** July 12

### Additional Resources:

Local Election Information  
[www.bentonelections.com](http://www.bentonelections.com)  
(livechat feature available)

County Information  
[www.co.benton.wa.us](http://www.co.benton.wa.us)

State Election Information  
[www.sos.wa.gov](http://www.sos.wa.gov)

Campaign Finance Information  
[www.pdc.wa.gov](http://www.pdc.wa.gov)

Published by the Benton County Auditor

### Ballot Drop Box Locations:

**Courthouse**

620 Market St., Prosser

**Benton City - City Hall**

1009 Dale Ave., Benton City

**West Richland Library (Drive up)**

3803 W. Van Giesen St., West Richland

**West Richland - City Hall (Drive up)**

3100 Belmont Blvd., West Richland

**Jefferson Park (Drive up)**

Symons St., Richland

**WSU Tri-Cities (Drive up)**

2770 Crimson Way, Richland

**Benton County Voting Center (Drive Up - In Parking Lot Streetside)**

2600 N. Columbia Center Blvd., Richland

**Benton County Voting Center (Inside)**

2618 N. Columbia Center Blvd., Richland

**Badger Mountain Community Park (Drive up)**

350 Keene Rd., Richland

**Benton County Campus (Drive up)**

7122 W. Okanogan Pl., Kennewick

**Kennewick - City Hall (Drive up)**

210 W. 6th Ave., Kennewick

**Finley Middle School (Drive Up - In Parking Lot Streetside) - NEW**

37208 S. Finley Rd., Kennewick

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Dear Benton County Voters,

We are pleased to present the 2023 Benton County Local Voters' Pamphlet for the August 1, 2023, Primary Election! This summer you are going to have an opportunity to shape the future of our community by participating in the election process. You will be voting on measures that affect you, your family, and your neighborhood. When you vote, you have a direct say in our government at the local, state, and federal level.

This pamphlet is designed as a reference tool to help you make informed decisions. Inside you'll find useful information about voter registration, deadlines for returning your ballot, and ballot drop box locations. This pamphlet includes statements and photos from candidates that have submitted information about their candidacy and information about the local ballot measures that may be in your district.

Benton County will be sending every eligible household in the county a copy of this guide.

Please note that we do not make edits or corrections to any statements.

To be eligible to vote in this primary election, you must be a registered voter and live in one of the participating districts.

**Your Signature Matters!** Two of the most common reasons ballots are unable to be processed are that they are returned without a signature or with a signature that does not match what we have on file. DON'T LET THAT BE YOU. Please follow the tips found on page 4 regarding signing your ballot before it is returned.

We want to help every eligible person register to vote and every registered voter receive their ballot. The earlier the Elections Division is contacted by individuals who need a replacement ballot, want to register to vote and receive a ballot, or have related issues, the more options there will be available to provide assistance. You can call us at (509) 736-3085, send an email to [elections@co.benton.wa.us](mailto:elections@co.benton.wa.us), visit our website – [www.bentonelections.com](http://www.bentonelections.com), or come in to one of our offices at:

Benton County Voting Center, 2618 N. Columbia Center Blvd., Richland, WA  
Auditor's Office, Benton County Courthouse, 620 Market St., Prosser, WA

Both offices are open weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., and on Election Day 8:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

The Benton County Elections Division is dedicated to assisting all voters, candidates, and jurisdictions in the election process while ensuring elections are conducted securely, accurately, and transparently in compliance with the laws of the State of Washington. I hope you find this Voters' Pamphlet useful, and of course, do not hesitate to contact my staff or me with any questions.



Brenda Chilton  
Benton County Auditor

## To register to vote, you must be:

- A citizen of the United States.
- A legal resident of Washington State.
- Not serving a sentence of total confinement under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections.

## Three ways to register:

- Online - [www.VoteWA.gov](http://www.VoteWA.gov)
- By mail - Call us at (509) 736-3085 and we will mail you a form.
- In Person -  
Benton County Courthouse, 620 Market St., Prosser  
Benton County Voting Center, 2618 N. Columbia  
Center Blvd., Richland

## Ballot Return Deadline:

Election Date	By Mail	Drop Box or In-Person
August 1, 2023	Postmarked by August 1, 2023	By 8:00 p.m. August 1, 2023 (Election Day)

## Tips to ensure your ballot is counted:

1. If you are not sure what signature we have on file, take a look at your Driver's License. Many people register to vote when they apply/renew their Driver's License, so that is the signature we have on file for you.
2. The signature on your ballot does not need to be perfect or in cursive. It just needs to be consistent and match what we have on file.
3. Sometimes signatures change. If that's the case, don't worry! We will send you a letter and a form to update your signature. If we have a phone number on file for you, we will also call you to remind you to return your form.
4. If you would like to update your signature for future elections, simply scan the QR code to print a voter registration form. You can mail the form back to us at the address listed on the form.



***A registered voter who will reach the age of 18 on or before the date of the November General Election is now eligible to vote in the Primary Election. These voters are called "Primary Only Voters".***

## Are you mailing your ballot?

Check the collection time!

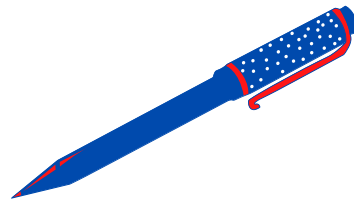
To account for delivery standards and to allow for contingencies, the USPS recommends voters mail their ballot at least 1 week prior to Election Day. If you are unable to do so, we recommend that you use one of the conveniently located drop boxes.

Official Ballot Drop Boxes are open until 8:00 p.m. on August 1, 2023.

Benton County election staff employees are trained by the Washington State Patrol Fraud Division. They compare your signature on the return envelope to the signature we have on file for you.

# YOUR

# Signature



# MATTERS

Sometimes signatures change. If that's the case, don't worry! We will send you a letter and a form to update your signature. If we have a phone number on file for you, we will also call you to remind you to return your form.



Need a reminder of what signature we have for you? Take a look at your Driver's License. Many people register to vote when they apply/renew their Driver's License, so that is the signature we would have on file for you.

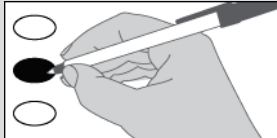


**Official Ballot**  
Primary Election  
Benton County, Washington  
August 1, 2023

SAMPLE

**Instructions**

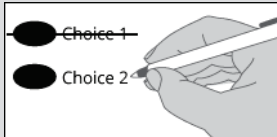
**How to vote**



Use a dark blue or black ink pen to completely fill in the oval next to your choice.

Vote for one in each race or measure. If you vote for more than one, no votes will be counted for that race or measure.

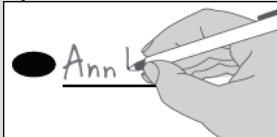
**How to correct a mistake**



To make a correction, draw a line through the entire choice.

You then have the option of making a different choice by completely filling in another oval.

**Optional Write-In**



To vote for a candidate not listed for that race, fill in the oval to the left of the "Write-In" and print the name on the line.

**How to return your ballot:**

Insert ballot into security sleeve.

Insert security sleeve into the ballot return envelope.

Sign and date the voter declaration using the instructions on the return envelope.

**NOTE:** WAC 434-230-015 prohibits the use of a Power of Attorney to satisfy the signature requirements on the return envelope. If unable to sign, voter should follow the instructions on the return envelope for having two witnesses.

Return your ballot using any of the methods listed on your return envelope.

**Local Offices  
Non-Partisan Offices**

**Port of Benton**  
Commissioner District 2  
6 year Short & Full Term

- Christy Rasmussen
- Cliff Dyer
- Scott D. Keller
- Write-In

**City of Prosser**  
Mayor

- Gary Vegar
- Randy Taylor
- Harold Lewis
- Write-In

**City of Richland**  
Council Pos. 6

- Marc Newman
- Kent Madsen
- Kurt H. Maier
- Write-In

**School District  
Non-Partisan Offices**

**Richland School District**  
Director No. 3

- Nino Kapitula
- Tony Gonzalez
- Chelsie Beck
- Write-In

**Richland School District**  
Director No. 4

- Kari Williams
- Aaron C. Riggs
- Katrina Waters
- Write-In

**Richland School District**  
Director No. 5

- Gene Nemeth
- Jill Oldson
- Matthew J. Bishop
- Write-In

**Benton County Drop Boxes**

**Courthouse:** 620 Market St., Prosser

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**Who donates to campaigns?**  
View contributors for candidates and measures

**Public Disclosure Commission**

www.pdc.wa.gov  
Toll Free (877) 601-2828

Please Vote Both Sides  
Recall Measures on Back

**Richland School Board,  
Director Position 1 Recall**

**BALLOT SYNOPSIS OF RECALL CHARGES  
AGAINST AUDRA BYRD, RICHLAND  
SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 1**

The charges that Audra Byrd, Richland School Board, Position 1, committed misfeasance, malfeasance, and/or violated her oath of office allege that she:

1. Violated the Open Public Meetings Act by voting at a special meeting taking final action on a matter, to wit: masking optional, that had not been included in the published public meeting agenda.
2. Voted to make masks at schools optional, in knowing violation of the law and in excess of the powers of a school board, even after warnings from the State and from legal counsel.
3. Violated District Policies and Procedures by failing to assure compliance with law and policy.

**DIRECTOR AUDRA BYRD RESPONSE TO  
RECALL CHARGES**

We urge you to vote No on the recall. The recall is based on political motives and false accusations and is attempting to undermine the election process. No judge ruled that any law was broken.

As a mother of 6+ children, Audra was elected to give families their voice back. February 2022, all states in the continental US, except WA, had ended mask mandates or established an end date. Local establishments did not force masks because risk was low. Our students were in crisis and their mental illness rates were skyrocketing. Our schools tragically experienced more suicides during those two years than ever in our district's history. Parents, teachers, and students pleaded for mask choice. The board petitioned state leaders, but they ignored us. The Health Department confirmed our Covid rates were low, and Audra could not stand by and watch our students suffer any longer. She acted, and the board majority voted to make masks optional and give students relief.

This recall is a pure political attack. The recall leader stated the recall is to "fix the mistake of the election". Your vote was no mistake. The recallers are using lies and deception to remove the three conservatives on the board.

Audra is working to make schools places where student education and safety are prioritized, parent voices are heard, children are Not indoctrinated, and social and political agendas are Not pushed. Vote No on the recall and allow Audra to continue advocating for our students, teachers, and parents!

Should Audra Byrd be recalled from office based upon these charges?

- Recall Yes  
 Recall No

**Richland School Board,  
Director Position 3 Recall**

**BALLOT SYNOPSIS OF RECALL  
CHARGES AGAINST MISIPATI SEMI  
BIRD, RICHLAND SCHOOL BOARD,  
POSITION 3**

The charges that Misipati Semi Bird, Richland School Board, Position 3, committed misfeasance, malfeasance, and/or violated his oath of office allege that he:

1. Violated the Open Public Meetings Act by voting at a special meeting taking final action on a matter, to wit: masking optional, that had not been included in the published public meeting agenda.
2. Voted to make masks at schools optional, in knowing violation of the law and in excess of the powers of a school board, even after warnings from the State and from legal counsel.
3. Violated District Policies and Procedures by failing to assure compliance with law and policy.

**DIRECTOR MISIPATI SEMI BIRD  
RESPONSE TO RECALL CHARGES**

I acted in the best interest of student health and welfare. Giving mask choice to students who we suffering and dying was a top priority. I met with the Benton County Director of Health, and was assured that my actions would not cause further stress on our hospital system, but was also informed that the mental health complications caused by the masks needed to be taken into consideration. I did not violate OPMA as decided by Superior Court Judge Norma Rodriguez. I stand for doing what's right and respecting the United States Constitution. These mandates ruined lives and was a violation of our constitutional rights

Should Misipati Semi Bird be recalled from office based upon these charges?

- Recall Yes  
 Recall No

**Richland School Board,  
Director Position 4 Recall**

**BALLOT SYNOPSIS OF RECALL CHARGES  
AGAINST KARI WILLIAMS, RICHLAND  
SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 4**

The charges that Kari Williams, Richland School Board, Position 4, committed misfeasance, malfeasance, and/or violated her oath of office allege that she:

1. Violated the Open Public Meetings Act by voting at a special meeting taking final action on a matter, to wit: masking optional, that had not been included in the published public meeting agenda.
2. Voted to make masks at schools optional, in knowing violation of the law and in excess of the powers of a school board, even after warnings from the State and from legal counsel.
3. Violated District Policies and Procedures by failing to assure compliance with law and policy.

**DIRECTOR KARI WILLIAMS RESPONSE  
TO RECALL CHARGES**

*Join us in voting NO RECALL for Kari Williams!*

Kari strongly believes that parents, not the government, know what is best for their children. She voted to give families a mask-choice option to allow parents to choose what was best for their own family situation. We need our elected school board members to have the courage to always support the families of our community!

It is a school board member's job to think of our students first and foremost. Kari has been working to put our students' needs first since she was elected in 2019. Our students were suffering both academically and emotionally due to the forced school shutdowns and forced masking. The mask-choice vote was taken two years after the pandemic started, at a time when public health experts all over the country were speaking out about the negative impacts of universally masking our school-aged children. At the time of our mask-choice vote the large majority of states in the US had removed the mask requirements within their schools *and their children were thriving!* Even Washington State's Superintendent of Public Instruction stated it was time to remove the mask mandates in Washington schools. Kari could not sit back and watch as many of our children were unnecessarily suffering—she stood up and did the right thing for our children.

*Let's stand together and vote NO RECALL to retain Kari Williams who has the courage to do what is best for our community's children.*

Should Kari Williams be recalled from office based upon these charges?

- Recall Yes  
 Recall No

Please Vote Both Sides



# Christy Rasmussen

### Elected Experience

Port of Benton Commissioner Pos. 2 Appointed November 2021

### Other Professional Experience

Instructional Technologist at Energy Northwest. Former public school administrator and educator in Pasco and Richland School Districts. Served as Principal at Christ the King Catholic School. National presenter on school innovation topics.

### Education

Heritage University, M.Ed Educational Administration, Eastern Washington University, BA Education, Central Washington University, BA Office Administration, Attended Marcus Whitman Elementary and Hanford K-12 School

### Community Service

Tri-Cities Sunrise Rotary President, Paul Harris Fellow, Board member Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, Hanford Communities and Energy Communities Alliance. Past board member Perfect Image Leadership Foundation, Safe Harbor and My Friends Place, Rural Families Farmworkers

### Statement

The mighty Mid-Columbia Basin has blessed me and my family with excellent educational opportunities, stable housing and comfortable family wage careers. My blended family of five children and seven grandchildren choose to reside here, and they propel my deep commitment to this community.

For me, it is vital that I listen to our community and lead with conviction to ensure decisions and actions reflect its collective values. I have over 30 years of volunteer service as I truly believe in service above self; and leading by example is my legacy for family and community. I bring this same dedication to my Port of Benton position.

As the incumbent, I champion our economic development and our daily efforts to maintain and develop our current industry-base, while actively recruiting new industries. We must remain laser-focused on retaining affordable power rates with reliable, baseload sustainable "all the above" energy generation and this demands relentless advocacy of our hydropower generating dams.

As commissioner, it's essential that I support the hiring and retention of highly capable and dedicated staff who expertly collaborate with cities, counties, tribes and government agencies to execute the Port of Benton's mission in our community.

We are better together!

### Contact

(509) 219-2666; Rasmussenportofbenton2@gmail.com



# Cliff Dyer

### Elected Experience

No Information Submitted

### Other Professional Experience

Professional Pilot, Commercial Pilot License, Flight Instructor, Certified Aircraft Mechanic, Certified Aircraft Inspector

### Education

No Information Submitted

### Community Service

Young Eagles Flight Organizer, Church Security and Usher, Food Bank donation organizer

### Statement

In 2019 the Port's management completely changed their direction and fundamental mission away from fostering small business development. Instead, they are now entirely focused on supporting Government entities and seeking green energy grants and contracts. Due to the Port's actions and decisions, my business partner walked away for a more secure future for his family. After 20 years of service to Richland Airport I can no longer operate Sundance Aviation and now forced to sell my business.

The Port's new direction has also taken them from a decades long balanced budget to nearly 9 million dollars in debt. 4 million of this debt was used to construct a building to house Hanford Government Documents. This effort yielded only one full-time job. What's worse, when there is no longer a need for document storage this building design is not conducive for anything else without major modification and expense.

Finally, I am truly saddened and tired of our elected officials such as the Port Commissioners putting their job security above serving their constituents and community. I can no longer sit on the sidelines and complain. With your support I will get the Port back to its original mission, supporting our community.

### Contact

(509) 946-2515; CD103056@gmail.com



# Scott D. Keller

### Elected Experience

None

### Other Professional Experience

Seventeen years Executive Director, Port of Benton, Twelve years Airport Director, Port of Benton, Banking: Mortgage Loan Officer, Commercial Lending, Marketing Officer

### Education

Bachelor of Science in Economics, Professional Port Managers Certification

### Community Service

Board of Directors, Tri-Cities Visitor/Convention Bureau, Sam Volpentest Entrepreneurial Award, Rotarian of the year, Board of Directors, Washington Airport Managers Association, Chairman, Hanford Area Economic Development Committee, Board Member, Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors, Great Prosser Balloon Rally, Committee Member, Cool Desert Nights, Member, Prosser Chamber of Commerce, Member, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, Member, American Association of Port Authorities

### Statement

As someone who has worked for the Port of Benton for 30 years, I understand the importance of the Port and its role in our local economy. The Port provides jobs, attracts businesses to our region, and helps small businesses thrive and grow to become successful contributors to our economy.

One of my top priorities as commissioner will be to get the Port's focus back to supporting small business development. By working closely with local Government partners, we can create a business-friendly environment that encourages growth and innovation.

As commissioner I will ensure the Port operates in a transparent and accountable manner. We need to make the best decisions possible on where all our tax dollars are being spent.

Finally, I believe that it is important to protect the natural resources that make our region so special. I will work to ensure that the Port operates in an environmentally responsible manner, and that we take steps to minimize our impacts wherever possible. I am committed to working collaboratively with my fellow commissioners, Port staff, and the community to achieve these goals. I am dedicated to serving our community and would be honored to have your support this November.

### Contact

(509) 731-3607; Scottkeller4comm@gmail.com

## Local Voters' Pamphlet

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## Gary Vegar

### Elected Experience

none

### Other Professional Experience

Prosser entrepreneur and businessman; I own and operate two multifaceted family businesses in Prosser, a brewery, and a family style restaurant and Saloon. For twenty-eight years I served several school communities as a vocational electronics instructor, coach, athletic director, high school principal, assistant superintendent teaching and learning.

### Education

SPU, Educational Leadership; University of Hawaii, Master Education Leadership; EWU, BA Education, Industrial Technology; K-12 Prosser graduate.

### Community Service

President, Historic Downtown Prosser; Vice President, Prosser Rotary; Past Vice President, Prosser Chamber; Past Secretary and Trustee, Princess Theater Board; Past President, Stanwood Camano Kiwanis; Prosser School District Study and Survey and Strategic Planning Committees.

### Statement

Born and raised in Prosser, I offer unique professional experiences serving twenty-eight years in public education with twenty years of educational administration and fifteen years' experience as a small business entrepreneur and owner of a brewery and family Saloon. I have successfully administered all facets of public and private enterprise. My leadership style is collaborative. I will facilitate citizen engaged shared decision-making using effective communication strategies including face-to-face.

My mission as mayor is to provide improved city leadership building mutually supportive relationships throughout our city and county while advocating for Prosser at the State and Federal levels.

My purpose is to provide leadership and vision for Prosser creating a better future for our residents, enhancing our charming downtown and traditional neighborhoods while we carefully plan new growth and public safety. I will lead conversations between city and county that promote sharing government resources working together in the Benton County Courthouse.

When elected, our city will execute fiscally conservative practices, provide outstanding city services, work together as a community promoting economic development and growth and facilitate city policies and programs that improve the quality of life for city and 99350 residents. Join our campaign "Live Long in Prosser" garyvegar@msn.com (509) 840-0564

### Contact

(509) 840-0564; garyvegar@msn.com

No Photo  
Submitted

## Randy Taylor

### Elected Experience

I have served on the city council, I have served as Mayor

### Other Professional Experience

No Information Submitted

### Education

No Information Submitted

### Community Service

United Good Neighbors past drive chairman and president, States Day Chairman, Long Range planning committee for the Prosser Schools District, Prosser School District strategic planning

### Statement

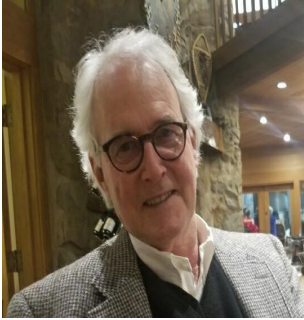
I would be honored to serve the citizens of Prosser as Mayor.

My philosophy on leadership of Prosser is that we cultivate new business in a way so as to grow the city financially while maintaining our small-town charm. I support Historic Downtown Prosser, Chamber of Commerce and Prosser Economic Development Association. I am proud of our support of the Boys and Girls Club, Prosser Library, Prosser Historical Museum, Princess Theater and others. We value our partnerships with Benton County, the Port of Benton, Prosser School District and several Yakima and Tri-Cities based organizations. Being mayor is a management role. I manage the city team, budgets and partnerships among others. The city council sets policy and the budget. The mayor works with staff, the public and the council to deliver those policies and priorities. We need to keep our crime rate low while keeping high levels of service. I will be working to bring county jobs back to Prosser, so we can have balanced services to the west side of Benton County. I love my city and want to work together to make it a great place to visit, work and live.

Please re-elect me Mayor of Prosser

### Contact

randy.taylor4358@gmail.com



## Harold Lewis

### Elected Experience

Nominated for Seattle City Treasure; Elected President of Seattle University Graduate School of Business; Elected to the King County Unincorporated Area Council, representing 37,000 residences; Appointed to the Board of Directors at University of Washington Wallingford Medical Clinic.

### Other Professional Experience

Senior Budget Analyst for City of Seattle; Regional Economist for Army Corps of Engineers; Senior Transportation Planner for King County. Adjunct Professor at CWU School of Business.

### Education

University of Washington BA Degree Sociology; Seattle University MBA Degree; Northwest Wine Academy Certification.

### Community Service

Participated in fund raising for Prosser Boys and Girls Club; Leader of 2 different rope teams summiting Mt. Rainier, 1987, 1988.

### Statement

The City of Prosser was built on a strong work ethic and productive working relationships with our community and regional partners. Harold will provide the leadership needed to build on the strengths from the past and encourage new strategic development to make Prosser more vibrant, successful, and livable, without raising taxes. As Mayor, Harold will focus on controlled urban growth (no rubber stamping of plans), no new property taxes, improve on public safety & security (will seek existing structures for new police station); keep gang and homeless activity out of Prosser; seek federal & state funds to restore infrastructure (streets, safe drinking water, pedestrian walkways); assure that Prosser citizens do not pick up the final construction cost of Prosser Memorial Hospital (Bond); work with the Economic Development Council and Port of Benton to promote Prosser wine community & businesses (make The Clore Center functional again); and make affordable housing a reality.

Harold has an extensive background in Federal, State, County and City government work and has held positions of leadership in government. He was raised in Cle Elum, Washington. Graduated from Seattle University and the University of Washington,

### Contact

(509) 823-3937; haroldlewis1315@gmail.com

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## Marc Newman

### Elected Experience

No Information Submitted

### Other Professional Experience

Enlisted U.S. Army Veteran

### Education

Enlisted after High School

### Community Service

As a Leadership Tri-Cities Graduate, Marc worked on learning the inner workings of the Tri-Cities, their current state, and potential for growth. As a former member of Richland's Economic Development Committee, Marc collaborated on strategies to enhance economic growth. Initiating programs, attracting investment, creating job opportunities, and addressing local business challenges. Now, as a City Council member, Marc aims to leverage this knowledge to support local businesses, spur new investments, and build a thriving economy that benefits everyone in Richland, fostering a prosperous community for all.

### Statement

Marc Newman, an Enlisted U.S. Army Veteran, Screen Actors Guild member, and a small business owner, running for the Richland City Council. His service at Walter Reed Army Hospital, where he was able to serve our nations' heroes during their most vulnerable moments, commitment to entrepreneurship, and influence in the hospitality industry underscore his dedication to service, growth, and community.

He believes that Council seats are about people, not politics. This shapes his dedication to fostering economic growth, enhancing community involvement, and promoting transparent governance. He is dedicated to ensuring Richland prospers, offering unwavering support to local businesses, encouraging citizen participation, and advocating for open communication between the council and the community.

Together with his wife Kaitilin, they have made Richland their home to raise their family after relocating from New York. Their children thrive in the Richland School District, reinforcing his personal connection to our community. He is committed to creating a city where everyone feels a sense of purpose and are inspired to contribute to its success.

Marc is not just running for a council seat; He is running with a vision to help lead Richland into a brighter, more thriving, and prosperous community.

### Contact

(509) 850-9763; [general@newmanforcouncil.com](mailto:general@newmanforcouncil.com)



## Kent Madsen

### Elected Experience

No Information Submitted

### Other Professional Experience

No Information Submitted

### Education

No Information Submitted

### Community Service

I am a Richland native, devoted family man, and accomplished business leader. Happily married to an amazing wife and blessed with 4 children and 14 grandchildren. Successful career spanning top-performing roles with renowned companies like General Electric, Sara Lee Corp and Canon Solutions America. Recognized for sales excellence and business management. Dedicated years of service on the Richland Planning Commission, including four as Chairman. Appointed by City Council for vital projects like the Columbia Park West Master development plan. A committed leader, passionate about fostering growth, safety, and a vibrant community for all Richland residents.

### Statement

I'm Kent Madsen, a principled, accessible, and honest candidate for the Richland City Council. I embrace America's core values of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

During my previous 14 year tenure on the Planing Commission I diligently prioritized transparency, fairness, responsibility, and Commission excellence. It is with great honor that I present myself as a candidate, seeking your invaluable support through your vote.

I believe in conservative principles, I am steadfast in my commitment to upholding our cherished values. Every decision I make will be guided by fiscal prudence, accountability, public safety for our families and children and a genuine dedication to ethical governance, ensuring the prosperous future of our beloved city.

Accessibility and accountability are the cornerstones of effective representation. I firmly believe that elected officials must be readily accessible to their constituents. Your concerns, ideas, and aspirations will always be given the highest priority, and I promise to be a steadfast advocate for your needs, faithfully representing your interests.

Together, we can shape the trajectory of Richland, embracing a future defined by integrity, honesty, and a resolute commitment to our conservative ideals. I am immensely grateful for your consideration and ask for your trust and support.

### Contact

(509) 302-7545; [wkmadsen@msn.com](mailto:wkmadsen@msn.com)



## Kurt H. Maier

### Elected Experience

None.

### Other Professional Experience

I've collaborated with people from all walks of life at Google, IBM, the University of Maryland, PNNL, and other organizations, in Nashville, Indianapolis, Baltimore, Kabul, and more. I'm a veteran of the United States Army. I've worked as a telephone repairman, an auto mechanic, a roofer, a chicken farmer, a manager, and a professional cook, but mostly as a supercomputing engineer.

### Education

Bachelor's of Science, Middle Tennessee State University.  
Currently pursuing a Masters of Science in Data Analytics from Western Governors University.

### Community Service

Richland Public Library Board of Trustees member from 2017 to 2022. Chair from 2020-2022.

### Statement

I believe in living within my means, and I believe in the values that made America the greatest country on Earth. Richland needs a council with a problem-solving mentality. We need housing affordable enough that our families can live here. We need a city code that encourages local businesses, instead of tying them up with red tape. And we certainly don't need to turn the city into a rest stop for out-of-town commuters.

If elected to City Council, I would lead the same way as at my job -- find out directly from the source what people need to succeed, and work hard to make sure they get it. I believe that Richland deserves a city council focused on governing Richland; not on political party games, not on getting elected to higher offices, not on using the office as a platform to tell people what to think or how to run their businesses.

Does the council member you voted for have a lot of absences? If you missed that much work, would you still have a job? Whoever you vote for, hold them accountable! Let them know you expect them to show up. It's literally the least they can do.

### Contact

(443) 208-8385; khm@americanimperium.com

## Local Voters' Pamphlet

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## Nino Kapitula

### Elected Experience

None

### Other Professional Experience

Nino is a former insurance professional at State Farm where she gained experience in sales, marketing, communications, conflict resolution, behavioral science, negotiations, and management. In 2013 Nino decided to dedicate herself to family. Nino and her husband have built successful local businesses, where she acquired experience in budgeting and financial planning. Nino serves as director for project development and design for Providence Land LLC. Together they continue to expand their vision and serve the needs of their community.

### Education

Pasco High School

### Community Service

Co-founder/Board member for Dream Again Hope and a Future Foundation that works with orphanages in third world counties.

### Statement

Growing up in a single parent household in the socialist communist country of Moldova, the poorest country in Europe, I stood in bread lines so we could eat. My mother sought a better life for her daughters and brought us to the United States when I was 13. I now have school age children; I care about our schools. My mother showed me how a dream for a better future and hard work leads to success. I will promote schools that are willing to put in the work so our children receive the skills and academics they need for success.

Washington parents are faced with fear for their children's future. We should have the right to know what is being taught in the classroom, fully transparent about teaching and learning materials. We should have the right to speak up when we disagree. I will work to close the gap between parents and teachers to rebuild a broken trust. I know what freedom is, I know how to work hard, and I love this country in all its diversity.

Children are the future! Let us stand united in raising Bright Children for a Bright Future!

Endorsed by Benton County Republican Party

### Contact

(509) 610-9211; ninoforrichland@gmail.com



## Tony Gonzalez

### Elected Experience

10 years as a school board member for Grandview School District (1994-2004).

### Other Professional Experience

Board member for Life Options Pregnancy Center in Grandview.

### Education

Mabton High School Graduate, Licensed Electrician

### Community Service

Assisted with Levy and Bond committees in the Grandview School District. Assistant AAU Basketball Coach for 5th grade girls.

### Statement

My name is Tony Gonzalez. I've been married to my wonderful wife, Marci, for 42 years. We have two married daughters and four amazing grandchildren, two of which attend Richland elementary schools. Our other two grandchildren will be moving to the Tri-Cities this summer and will attend Richland schools as well.

In 2018, we moved from Grandview to West Richland. We have attended events at my grandchildren's schools and have been immensely impressed with staff and administrators. Richland schools have always had a reputation for high quality education producing high quality graduates. I believe I can continue this tradition.

I believe safety, quality of education, improving test scores and financial responsibility are of the utmost importance. Also crucial in our current culture is that parents of students must be heard. I want to lead the charge of a common sense approach that will unify the district, bring stability and sensibility.

My farm working parents strongly encouraged their children to get a good education, and my Christian faith has shaped me to be a voice for all. We must continue the mission of safe and secure schools while providing the best education possible to each and every student.

### Contact

(509) 439-5270; mtgonz@charter.net



## Chelsie Beck

### Elected Experience

None

### Other Professional Experience

Chemist (2012-current)

### Education

Ph.D in Chemistry from Washington State University, M.S. in Chemistry from Washington State University, B.S. in Chemistry from University of West Florida

### Community Service

Destination Imagination Coach, YMCA baseball coach, Cub Scout Pack Treasurer, White Bluffs Elementary classroom volunteer

### Statement

I am running for school board because I believe we have a responsibility to provide our youth with the skills they need to succeed in life. My goal is to return the focus back to education and help prepare our students for the future.

My appreciation for public education started at a young age, watching my mother work hard to move from paraeducator, to Hanford High School teacher, to Special Education administrator. I have two children attending our schools, so the quality of our schools is very important to me and my family. I live in Richland because of the reputation of our school district.

My goal is to work with parents, students, and school staff to understand the needs of all students and work to support them. I will approach this with an open mind and I look forward to learning from you how best to support our students. I understand that there is a limited budget. In my job I have experience managing multi-million-dollar budgets. I will do my best to listen to you, prioritize, and make fiscally responsible decisions.

Please join me in focusing on what is best for our kids.

### Contact

(509) 593-3382; Beck4rsd@gmail.com

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## Kari Williams

### Elected Experience

Current Richland School Board Director #4 and Current Richland School Board President.

### Other Professional Experience

Elementary School Teacher, Member of the Instructional Materials Committee (IMC) for Richland School District, Co-chair for Richland Citizens for Good Schools during 2013 bond issue campaign, continuing classroom volunteer.

### Education

Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Teaching and Learning from the University of Utah, Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies both from the University of Utah, current Washington State Teaching Certificate.

### Community Service

Leader within her church's women and youth organizations and actively involved in service opportunities through her church.

### Statement

Please join us in reelecting Kari Williams!

Education is Kari Williams' lifelong passion. Kari, the current Richland School Board President, earned her Master's degree in Education while working as a public school teacher. Now a stay-at-home mom of five children who attend elementary, middle, and high schools within the Richland School District, Kari is deeply invested in the success of our schools. Kari's first priority has been and will always be students.

Kari believes parents are vital for student academic success. During the frustrating COVID shutdowns, she was the only board member who gave a voice to families by fighting to open our schools to give our students an in-person learning option. Kari will continue to champion her initiative to overcome COVID learning losses by prioritizing every child reading on grade level. She will also continue to support our community's family values as she pushes the district to keep our classrooms a place where all children feel safe to learn and where the instruction is focused on teaching our children how to think—not what to think.

Support student success by voting for Kari!

### Contact

(509) 539-4040; kari4rsd@gmail.com



## Aaron C. Riggs

### Elected Experience

None

### Other Professional Experience

23 years as an IT professional (Kadlec, City of Richland, Energy Northwest). 11 years as an Active Duty Marine. 14 years and counting as an Army Reservist.

### Education

Associate of Science Pierce College, Bachelor of Science Western Governors' University

### Community Service

Board Member Richland National Little League, Youth Baseball Manager and Coach, Youth Basketball General Manager, Richland Schools Guest Teacher/Learning Facilitator

### Statement

I have great confidence and a solid belief in the transformative power of education. The future success and well-being of our children and our society are at stake. I am committed to ensuring that our school district provides a safe and exceptional learning environment for all students. As a parent of 4 RSD students, I have firsthand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities our students face. I will advocate for access to quality educational resources and opportunities, ensuring that every student has the tools they need to succeed. I will work collaboratively with teachers, parents, administrators, and community members to create a supportive learning environment where all students feel safe, valued and empowered.

I am committed to promoting literacy initiatives focusing on Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. I will advocate for cost-effective curriculum, integrating technology effectively, and providing professional development for teachers. Transparency, accountability and parents' rights are also very important to me. I will actively seek input from all stakeholders, communicate openly, and make informed decisions that align with the best interests of our students, parents and community. With your support, I am confident that together we can elevate our school district to new heights.

Endorsed by the BCRP.

### Contact

(509) 816-0900; riggs4rsd@gmail.com



## Katrina Waters

### Elected Experience

Washington State Academy of Sciences (2021); Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2023)

### Other Professional Experience

Scientist with a large research institution in the area (2004-present); Manager of 200+ person organization (2015-2022); Joint Faculty appointments with University of Washington and Oregon State University; Service on advisory boards for several federal agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency, Food & Drug Administration, and National Institutes of Health.

### Education

BA with honors, Chemistry, Biology minor, Ripon College, WI; PhD, Biochemistry, University of Wisconsin at Madison.

### Community Service

Scouts BSA leader: Webelos Den Leader, Committee member, Assistant Scoutmaster, Merit badge counselor. Team treasurer for soccer team.

### Statement

I am a mother of 3 RSD graduates, a leader in my profession, and a volunteer youth leader. I believe we can find common ground through mutual respect and understanding to increase the Board's effectiveness and direct the district in delivering the best education for our youth. As a Board member, I will work to ensure that RSD meets the needs of all students and staff, ensure fiscal responsibility, lobby for sufficient funding and effective use of taxpayer money. My priorities are supporting our educational mandates including special education, the physical safety and mental health of students and staff, and improving communication and collaboration between stakeholders. I have found success as a leader in a large Richland-based research organization and on advisory boards for multiple federal agencies by confronting unfunded mandates, competing priorities, and mission creep through accountability and collaboration with very diverse sets of perspectives and values. My decade of service to youth programs (Scouts BSA, sports) and personal experience with the school system also prepare me to serve the community through the RSD Board. I am committed to find unity in the Board with accountability and transparency to effectively support our children, our staff and our community.

### Contact

(509) 903-5896; waters4rsd@gmail.com

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## Gene Nemeth

### Elected Experience

Homeowners Association Board Member

### Other Professional Experience

Gene is a retired 26-year Navy Captain who enlisted and went on to command both a ballistic missile submarine and a submarine support organization. For the past 7 years, Gene has successfully led nuclear facility operations and readiness for a Hanford site contractor. Gene has experience leading change, developing a continuous improvement culture, and understands the impact public education has on a student's future success and the local community.

### Education

Penn State University, BS Electrical Engineering; Old Dominion University, MS Engineering Management

### Community Service

Benton Franklin County Special Education PTA; RSD Special Education Task Force

### Statement

Gene and his wife of 26 years are weary of school board decisions that did not prioritize student outcomes, include parent input, or address lost learning. The district lost focus on student outcomes, resulting in *less than half of today's students being proficient in core subjects*.

Gene's vision to reverse the trend is to Transform our district into an Academic Center of Excellence. Gene is uniquely qualified because as a parent of four children, all with disabilities, he experienced the decline yet successfully navigated general, special, and gifted programs. 33 years of successful Navy and corporate leadership, demonstrates he can lead this change. Your vote puts Gene in position to establish this vision.

Gene is committed to establishing high expectations for student achievement and special education, advocating for parent rights, implementing measurable goals, spending more time monitoring goals, increasing transparency and accountability by frequently communicating results, listening to educators and what they need to succeed, ensuring all stakeholders, including students, are engaged in the plan to achieve excellence, and tying budget priorities to student outcomes. Vote for Gene and help *Transform our district into an Academic Center of Excellence*.

Endorsed by the Benton County Republican Party.

### Contact

(509) 593-8986; nemeth4rsd@gmail.com



## Jill Oldson

### Elected Experience

Richland School Director June 2018 - Present

### Other Professional Experience

Washington School Directors Association (WSSDA) Leadership Cohort 2019, WSSDA Legislative Committee, District Area 11, WSSDA Federal Relations Network Vice President, RSD Board of Directors, serving as Vice President and President, RSD substitute paraeducator, White Bluffs Elementary PTO 2008-12, Hotel Marketing Executive, 1988-1996 (Los Angeles - Seattle), Corporate Account Manager Metropolitan Travel 1996-1998

### Education

AA - National College, Rapid City, South Dakota - 1986, BA - Psychology, California State University Fullerton, 1992

### Community Service

Community in Schools Benton Franklin County Board of Directors 2018-2020, Boys and Girls Clubs of Benton Franklin County Board of Directors 2020-Present

### Statement

I have dedicated the last 18 years of my life to our community schools. I spend time in our schools, talking with teachers, students, and stakeholders to understand their unique needs. As a board member, I have used this information to inform my decisions for ALL students.

I believe the parent/guardian has the ultimate say in their child's education. Students with good parental/guardian involvement are more academically and emotionally successful. The board's responsibility is setting policy and direction to ensure that ALL students are represented to reach their full potential in an environment that meets their specific needs. My core values include mental health, special education, academic success, transparency, accountability, fiscal responsibility, and local control.

My experience, willingness to listen, objectivity, and open-mindedness will help lead the district to set high standards in education for ALL kids. We have the leadership, staff, and community to give our students what they need to be happy, successful contributing members of any community. I am asking for your support in re-electing me to share my passion and commitment to representing ALL students in Richland School District.

Contact: 509-546-1303 Email: Jill4RSD@gmail.com

### Contact

(509) 546-1303; Jill4RSD@gmail.com

No Photo  
Submitted

# Matthew J. Bishop

**Elected Experience**

No Information Submitted

**Other Professional Experience**

No Information Submitted

**Education**

No Information Submitted

**Community Service**

No Information Submitted

**Statement**

No Information Submitted

## Local Voters' Pamphlet

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**Contact**

mjbishoptc@live.com

Richland School District

### BALLOT SYNOPSIS OF RECALL CHARGES AGAINST AUDRA BYRD, RICHLAND SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 1

The charges that Audra Bryd, Richland School Board, Position 1, committed misfeasance, malfeasance, and/or violated her oath of office allege that she:

1. Violated the Open Public Meetings Act by voting at a special meeting taking final action on a matter, to wit: masking optional, that had not been included in the published public meeting agenda.
2. Voted to make masks at schools optional, in knowing violation of the law and in excess of the powers of a school board, even after warnings from the State and from legal counsel.
3. Violated District Policies and Procedures by failing to assure compliance with law and policy.

Should Audra Byrd be recalled from office based upon these charges?

RECALL YES

RECALL NO

### DIRECTOR RICHLAND SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 1, AUDRA BYRD, RESPONSE TO RECALL CHARGES

We urge you to vote No on the recall. The recall is based on political motives and false accusations and is attempting to undermine the election process. No judge ruled that any law was broken.

As a mother of 6+ children, Audra was elected to give families their voice back. February 2022, all states in the continental US, except WA, had ended mask mandates or established an end date. Local establishments did not force masks because risk was low. Our students were in crisis and their mental illness rates were skyrocketing. Our schools tragically experienced more suicides during those two years than ever in our district’s history. Parents, teachers, and students pleaded for mask choice. The board petitioned state leaders, but they ignored us. The Health Department confirmed our Covid rates were low, and Audra could not stand by and watch our students suffer any longer. She acted, and the board majority voted to make masks optional and give students relief.

This recall is a pure political attack. The recall leader stated the recall is to “fix the mistake of the election”. Your vote was no mistake. The recallers are using lies and deception to remove the three conservatives on the board.

Audra is working to make schools places where student education and safety are prioritized, parent voices are heard, children are Not indoctrinated, and social and political agendas are Not pushed. Vote No on the recall and allow Audra to continue advocating for our students, teachers, and parents!

#### Local Voters’ Pamphlet

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Richland School District

## BALLOT SYNOPSIS OF RECALL CHARGES AGAINST MISIPATI SEMI BIRD RICHLAND SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 3

The charges that Misipati Semi Bird, Richland School Board, Position 3, committed misfeasance, malfeasance, and/or violated his oath of office allege that he:

1. Violated the Open Public Meetings Act by voting at a special meeting taking final action on a matter, to wit: masking optional, that had not been included in the published public meeting agenda.
2. Voted to make masks at schools optional, in knowing violation of the law and in excess of the powers of a school board, even after warnings from the State and from legal counsel.
3. Violated District Policies and Procedures by failing to assure compliance with law and policy.

Should Misipati Semi Bird be recalled from office based upon these charges?

RECALL YES

RECALL NO

## DIRECTOR RICHLAND SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 3, MISIPATI SEMI BIRD, RESPONSE TO RECALL CHARGES

I acted in the best interest of student health and welfare.

Giving mask choice to students who were suffering and dying was a top priority. I met with the Benton County Director of Health, and was assured that my actions would not cause further stress on our hospital system, but was also informed that the mental health complications caused by the masks needed to be taken into consideration.

I did not violate OPMA as decided by Superior Court Judge Norma Rodriguez.

I stand for doing what's right and respecting the United States Constitution. These mandates ruined lives and was a violation of our constitutional rights

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Richland School District

## BALLOT SYNOPSIS OF RECALL CHARGES AGAINST KARI WILLIAMS, RICHLAND SCHOOL BOARD POSITION 4

The charges that Kari Williams, Richland School Board, Position 4, committed misfeasance, malfeasance, and/or violated her oath of office allege that she:

1. Violated the Open Public Meetings Act by voting at a special meeting taking final action on a matter, to wit: masking optional, that had not been included in the published public meeting agenda.
2. Voted to make masks at schools optional, in knowing violation of the law and in excess of the powers of a school board, even after warnings from the State and from legal counsel.
3. Violated District Policies and Procedures by failing to assure compliance with law and policy.

Should Kari Williams be recalled from office based upon these charges?

RECALL YES

RECALL NO

## DIRECTOR RICHLAND SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 4, KARI WILLIAMS RESPONSE TO RECALL CHARGES

*Join us in voting NO RECALL for Kari Williams!*

Kari strongly believes that parents, not the government, know what is best for their children. She voted to give families a mask-choice option to allow parents to choose what was best for their own family situation. We need our elected school board members to have the courage to always support the families of our community!

It is a school board member's job to think of our students first and foremost. Kari has been working to put our students' needs first since she was elected in 2019. Our students were suffering both academically and emotionally due to the forced school shutdowns and forced masking. The mask-choice vote was taken two years after the pandemic started, at a time when public health experts all over the country were speaking out about the negative impacts of universally masking our school-aged children. At the time of our mask-choice vote the large majority of states in the US had removed the mask requirements within their schools and *their children were thriving!* Even Washington State's Superintendent of Public Instruction stated it was time to remove the mask mandates in Washington schools. Kari could not sit back and watch as many of our children were unnecessarily suffering—she stood up and did the right thing for our children.

*Let's stand together and vote NO RECALL to retain Kari Williams who has the courage to do what is best for our community's children.*

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**BENTON COUNTY AUDITOR  
ELECTIONS DIVISION**  
PO BOX 1000  
Richland, WA 99352

