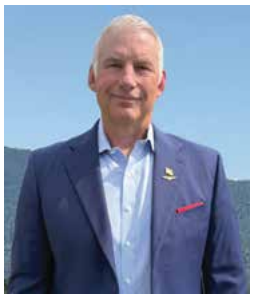
The Defender

Edition No. 15 November 2026

2026 Election Cycle Debrief
Hard Work, Strong Results, A Job Well Done

Months of hard work, dedicated volunteers, and grassroots commitment paid off. The results are in, and there's plenty to celebrate.



As of Monday, November 9, the Spokane County Elections Office reports approximately 3,400 ballots remaining to be counted in the November 3, General Election. With several races already called and candidates announcing victories and defeats, I believe it is safe to congratulate our winners and reflect on some important accomplishments over the past several months.

The Spokane County GOP's primary focus remains local elections. Our candidate vetting and endorsement process began in May, when then-Candidates Chair John Scherling and an outstanding team of committee members and volunteers organized a series of candidate forums before the Primary Election. These forums gave voters across the Spokane area an opportunity to meet candidates, hear their positions, and make informed decisions. It was the first effort of this scale that I have seen from our Party, and it was a tremendous success. My sincere thanks to John Scherling, the Candidates Committee, our volunteers, and every candidate who participated.

In July, we held our midterm precinct caucuses followed by the Spokane County GOP Convention August 22, where delegates adopted the 2026 County Party Platform and resolutions supporting the Platform's core values and principles. Convention delegates also endorsed our slate of Republican candidates for countywide, legislative, and congressional offices.

These were entirely volunteer-driven events, led by Vice Chair Carolyn Hall with support from our leadership team and many dedicated volunteers. Together, they strengthened our local political process, built momentum for our candidates, and clearly established the Party's identity and priorities heading into the General Election.

We then turned our attention to getting Republican high-propensity voters to return their ballots, particularly in races we expected to be close. Our Get Out The Vote effort, made possible by your generous donations and participation in fundraisers such as Lincoln Day, targeted 8,600 multi-voter residences. By last Friday's Ballot Return Report, those postcards had generated 22,065 accepted Republican ballots, approximately 2.6 ballots per contact. I'm calling that a success.

The results speak for themselves. Spokane County voter turnout reached 62%, and Republican candidates swept every contested countywide race. Congratulations to Commissioner Suzanne Schmidt, Prosecuting Attorney Preston McCollam, Clerk Dave Lucas, and Auditor Michael Cathcart.

Congratulations as well to legislative candidates Jonathan Bingle and Alan Nolan in the 6th; Rob Chase and Hillary Pham in the 4th; Joe Schmick in the 9th; and Senator Shelly Short in the 7th. All won competitive races.

Finally, congratulations to Congressman Michael Baumgartner, who will be returning to the US House of Representatives for a 2nd term.

These victories belong not only to the candidates, but also to the volunteers, donors, committee members, precinct committee officers, and grassroots Republicans who gave their time, resources, and energy to this effort. Thank you. Your work mattered, and the results show it.

God Bless,
Rob Linebarger
Chair@SpokaneGOP.com

Haley Talks Truth



The Sacred Practice of Thanksgiving

by Haley Barkman

2026 Lincoln Day Speech Contest Champion

The stereotype of political debates over Thanksgiving dinner – changes when we re-focus on the purpose – thanksgiving.

The reasons to be thankful for this country outweigh our reasons to hate or fight over it

Dr. Suess' story, How the Grinch Stole Christmas! strips Christmas of all its noise and distractions to reveal what "Christmas is really about." But the story never discloses that Christmas is about celebrating God's plan to bring humanity back into right relationship with Him—but some of you may call me "the Grinch" for pointing that out. I am, however, both a lover of Suess' book and a fan of the concept of stripping a cultural practice down to reveal what is essential about it—what is necessary to make that practice what it is supposed to be.

Because Thanksgiving is an American holiday, it is important for Americans to repeat this practice and ask themselves about "What Thanksgiving is really about." It's time to re-focus on the essential parts of what the holiday is, and what we are really celebrating.

The distractions of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is marked by dozens of all-American traditions: football games, food, family photos in coordinated outfits. It's also marked by stereotypical family drama: fights over new boyfriends, passive aggressive remarks about your career choice, and of course, political tension.

Many of these things are good. Some are bad. Both can be distractions from the most important practice that should happen during your Thanksgiving celebration: Giving Thanks (It's in the Name!).



An American Holiday

We celebrate Thanksgiving every year because of our greatest American leaders, like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, established it as a day to give thanks for the blessings of America and America itself.

So, when your relative (you know the one) throws down the gauntlet for the annual political debate, consider answering instead with your thankfulness for all your blessings, but especially the blessings that come from being in our great country.



Independence Requires Something From Us

by Jonathan A. Plumb, author of the newly released book "The Making of A King" available at Amazon.com.

The midterms are over. Win or lose, do we sometimes put too much of our hope for a better future in the people we elect? Do we catch ourselves thinking, "My candidate won. Now I just have to wait for things to get better"?

Some of what I'm about to say has been said before, including in these pages. But I think we need to be reminded of it regularly, especially after an election. Our responsibility to our communities doesn't end when we cast a ballot.

Elections matter, but even the best people in office can only do so much. They're limited by constitutions, laws, procedures, and the people they have to work with. We shouldn't expect them to solve every problem, and we shouldn't wait for them to try.

We Republicans believe in smaller government and greater independence. But that independence requires something from us. It requires us to take care of ourselves where we can, and to help take care of those who can't.

That means volunteering our time and our talents. It might mean helping a struggling family, working with a local charity, or checking on a neighbor who has nobody nearby. There are needs around us that we can do something about without waiting for a government program.

If we leave those needs unanswered, we shouldn't be surprised when people look to government for help.

And our willingness to help shouldn't depend on how someone voted. Our Democrat friends are still our friends. Their children, their hardships, and their hopes matter just as much as ours. Christ's commandment to love our neighbors doesn't come with a party affiliation.

When we serve someone, we have an opportunity to know them beyond whatever political disagreement first caught our attention. Sometimes that's where a stronger community begins.



I want the people we elect to do their jobs well. But there is work for the rest of us, too.

If we want our communities to depend less on government, we have to give them more reason to depend on each other.

Liberty's Sentinel



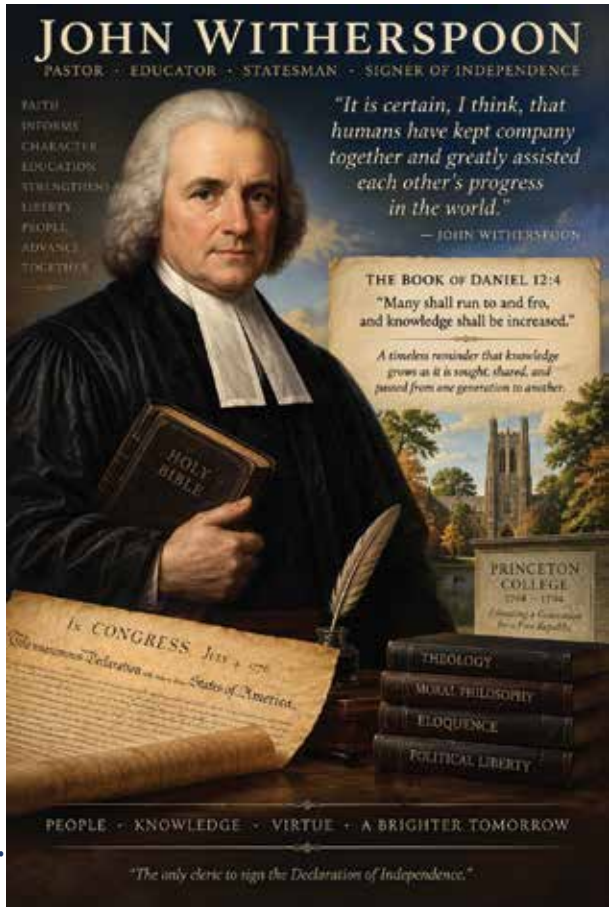
"In the beginning of a change the patriot is a scarce man, and brave, and hated and scorned. When his cause succeeds, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot." [Mark Twain]

John Whitherspoon - Faith, Fellowship, and the Progress of Liberty

Among the figures of the American Revolution, few united Christian theology, classical learning, education, and republican government as completely as John Witherspoon. Born in Scotland in 1723, Witherspoon became a Presbyterian minister and, in 1768, president of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. He later represented New Jersey in the Continental Congress and became the only practicing clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Witherspoon observed, **"It is certain, I think, that humans have kept company together and greatly assisted each other's progress in the world."** His words reflected a central conviction: people advance through association, education, cooperation, and ordered society. In Congress on July 30, 1776, he similarly argued that American union was essential not only to independence but to the states' future "security and improvement."

This idea has a striking biblical parallel in the Book of Daniel. Daniel 12:4 declares that **"many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."** Although evidence does not establish Daniel as the direct source of Witherspoon's quotation, the connection fits his intellectual world. He believed true religion supported "public prosperity and national happiness."



Other Revolutionary leaders shared aspects of this outlook. Benjamin Franklin championed useful knowledge and institutions; Thomas Jefferson considered education essential to republican self-government; and John Adams praised Witherspoon as a "clear, sensible" preacher and "Son of Liberty."

Witherspoon's educational influence was important. His Princeton students included James Madison, later a principal architect of the Constitution and coauthor of The Federalist. Through teaching and statesmanship, Witherspoon embodied his principle: knowledge passes between generations, character sustains liberty, and free societies prosper through cooperation.

For Witherspoon, history, Scripture, education, and Revolution converged on one enduring truth: **liberty depends not on individual brilliance alone, but on faith, knowledge, virtue, fellowship, and citizens working together for the common good.**



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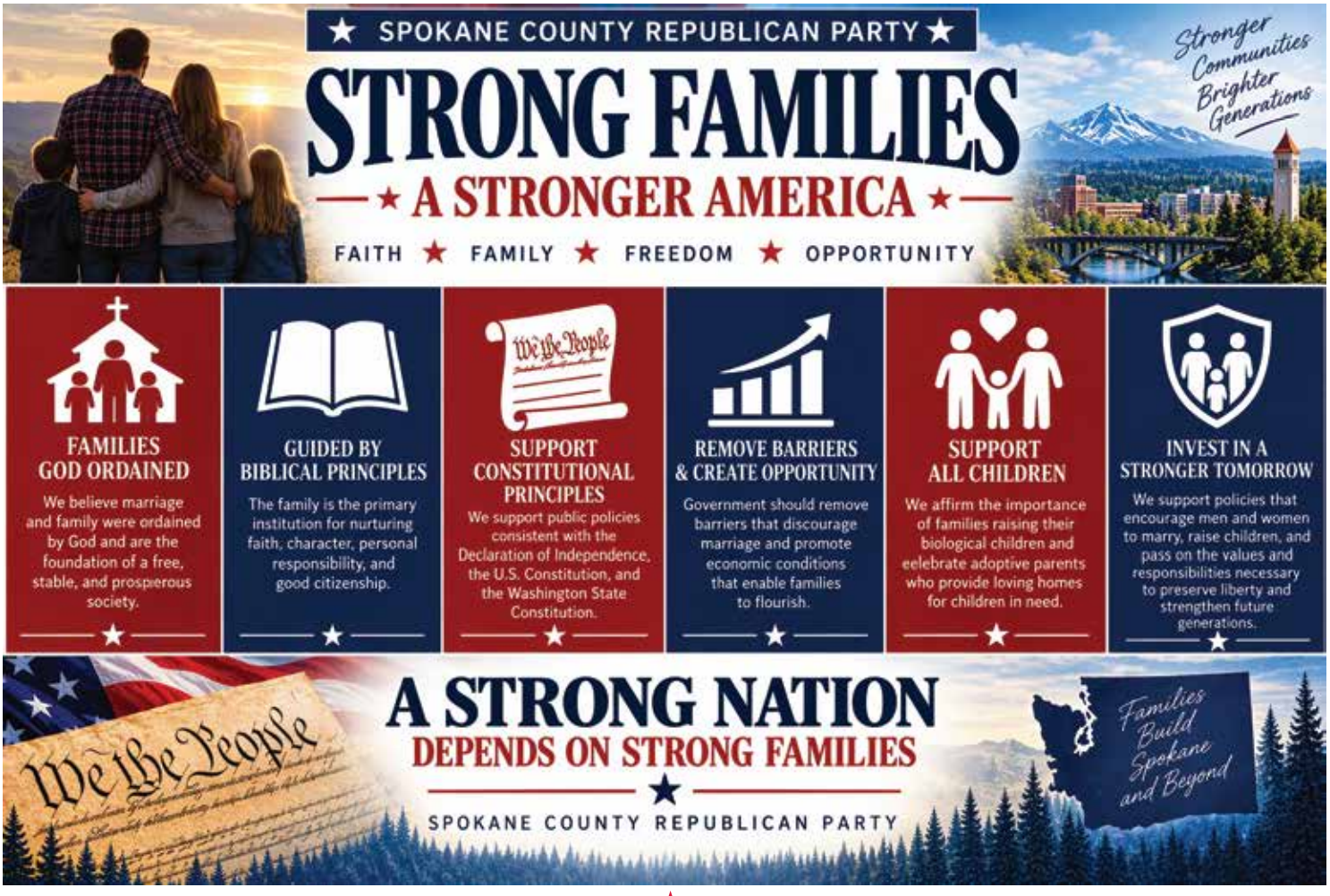
Platform Principles

Strong Families Through Marriage and Child-Rearing

The Spokane County Republican Party affirms that strong families are the cornerstone of a free, stable, and prosperous society. We believe that marriage and family were ordained by God and that children thrive when raised in loving, committed, and responsible families. Guided by Biblical principles, we recognize the family as the primary institution for nurturing faith, character, personal responsibility, and good citizenship.

Consistent with the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Washington State Constitution, we support public policies that encourage and strengthen marriage, family formation, and child-rearing. We believe government should remove barriers that discourage marriage, promote economic conditions that enable families to flourish, and recognize the vital contribution families make to the health and future of our nation.

We affirm the importance of families raising their biological children and celebrate the selfless commitment of adoptive parents who provide loving homes for children in need. We believe that both biological and adopted children deserve the security, stability, guidance, and support of a committed married family. A strong nation depends upon strong families, and we therefore support policies that encourage men and women to marry, raise children, and pass on the values and responsibilities necessary to preserve liberty and strengthen future generations.



SCRCC Organization Meeting

Saturday December 12, 2026

Mead Union Events Center

12509 N. Market St, Mead, WA 99021

Credentialing begins at 8:00 am

Meeting begins at 9:00 am

SCRCC Bylaw 4.1 Organization Meetings

4.1.1 Shall be held on the second Saturday in December of each even numbered year at an accessible location in Spokane County for the purpose of an Organization Meeting.

4.1.2 Shall be for the purpose of electing SCRCC Officers and Legislative District Leaders, and for other business, if required.

4.1.3 Only qualified elected PCOs or their proxies are entitled to vote at an Organization meeting.

If you would like to volunteer please contact Debbie Smith, Chair-assistant@ SpokaneGOP.com

The Proposed Order of Business and Meeting Rules will be available at SpokaneGOP.com two weeks prior to the meeting.

If you have any questions, contact your Subdistrict Leader or email Chair@SpokaneGOP.com

Guests are welcome to attend but may not participate in the official proceedings.

Media and Local Press are invited, please contact Chair@SpokaneGOP.com if you would like to attend.

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Four Pallets, One Mission: Multiplying the Impact

HLW's Breaking Barriers diaper drive reaches 40,000 diapers distributed across seven Washington counties.

SPOKANE, Wash. The sun was shining and smiles were plentiful as HLW's Life & Love Network™ distributed four pallets of diapers to more than a dozen pregnancy support centers and community organizations serving families in Spokane, Pend Oreille, Ferry, Stevens and Whitman counties. Spokane's Union Gospel Mission generously provided the pickup location. The distribution marked the third wave of Breaking Barriers — Washington's Biggest Baby Diaper Drive. Launched in Olympia in March 2026, the campaign has now distributed approximately 40,000 diapers across seven counties.

For some recipients, the timing was remarkable. Supplies were dwindling, and organizations worried about meeting families' needs when HLW's phone call came with an offer of diapers. The relief was evident.

"This is what happens when our supporters catch the vision," said Esther Ripplinger, president and CEO of HLW's Life & Love Network, formerly Human Life of Washington.

"We're not simply distributing diapers. We're connecting organizations, strengthening their work and multiplying their impact. Together, we're unifying the pro-life movement and building a culture of life and love," said Ripplinger. Pregnancy support centers often must ration diapers to serve as many families as possible. The Breaking Barriers campaign aims to change that by helping provide families with approximately a month's supply, giving parents one less worry.

The initiative reflects HLW's broader mission: connecting people, resources and organizations to accomplish more together than any could alone.

None of this would be possible without supporters who have embraced the vision. Their generosity does more than purchasing diapers. It strengthens frontline organizations, extends their reach and multiplies the impact of every gift.

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