



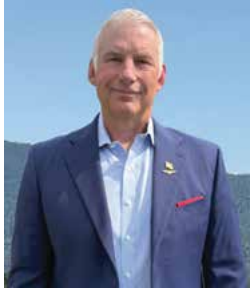
THE DEFENDER

Edition No. 14

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When Government Grows, Freedom Pays the Price

From the Boston Tea Party to modern Federal, State and Local tax burdens, history warns that unchecked government expansion and endless demands for revenue eventually exceed the public's willingness to pay.



When Americans work harder each year, they reasonably expect their earnings to provide greater security, not less. Yet many citizens believe they are caught in a damaging cycle: government expands spending, inflates the money supply, weakens the purchasing power of the dollar, and then raises taxes to cover the rising cost of government programs. In effect, families pay twice: first through inflation, which erodes savings and wages, and again through higher taxes designed to sustain the very spending that contributed to the problem.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman argued that the fundamental fiscal problem was not insufficient tax revenue but excessive government spending. Dr. Friedman observed that while voters frequently preferred balancing budgets through spending cuts, policymakers often preferred tax increases instead. He maintained that before asking taxpayers for more money, government should first reduce expenditures, eliminate inefficiencies, and limit the growth of spending. In contrast to Dr. Friedman, government often treats tax increases as the default solution. That one-sided approach is increasingly viewed as unsustainable by citizens already struggling with housing, healthcare, food, energy, and education costs. According to Dr. Friedman, "Congress tends to prefer tax increases to spending cuts," despite public preference for reducing spending first. This is true of our State and Local government as well.

History demonstrates that taxpayers will not indefinitely accept burdens they consider unfair. The Boston Tea Party of 1773 was not simply about tea; it reflected resistance to government taxation imposed without meaningful representation. The event helped ignite the American Revolution. The Whiskey Rebellion of 1791-1794 erupted when frontier farmers opposed a federal excise tax they viewed as oppressive and disconnected from their realities. The French Revolution of 1789 was likewise fueled by heavy tax burdens, government debt, economic hardship, and public frustration with ruling authorities.

These examples differ, but they share a common lesson: when governments repeatedly demand more from citizens without first demonstrating fiscal discipline, public trust erodes. Americans today are not calling for revolution, but many are demanding accountability. They want government to manage resources responsibly, prioritize essentials, and prove existing funds are being used effectively before seeking additional revenue.

As presented in the 2026 Spokane County Republican Party Platform Values, Principles, and Resolution #4 *Affirming Taxpayer Protection, Taxpayer Relief, and Sound Fiscal Policy*, the Party recognizes that government excess, financed through inflation and continual tax increases, imposes an unsustainable burden on working families, retirees, and small businesses. Republicans have long promoted themselves as the party of fiscal discipline and limited government, yet recent actions too often suggest those principles are treated as campaign slogans rather than governing values. Tax increases supported by Republicans are no less harmful than those supported by Democrats when used to fund unchecked government growth without meaningful spending restraint.

Accordingly, the Spokane County Republican Party opposes any new tax or tax increase not paired with verifiable spending reductions, elimination of waste and fraud, consolidation of redundant programs, and prioritization of essential services. Therefore, **We The People** of Spokane County demand a five-year moratorium on all new taxes and tax increases, including school levies, fire district levies, public safety levies, and related measures.

Government must demonstrate fiscal responsibility through spending reductions before requesting additional resources. The taxpayer is not an unlimited source of revenue. Government must live within its means, just as Spokane County families must. **Cut First, Then Ask for More.**

God Bless,
Rob Linebarger
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Defending Faith, Family & Freedom

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HALEY TALKS TRUTH



Don't Sleep On The Arts

by Haley Barkman

2026 Lincoln Day Speech Contest Champion

While you all know that I am a writer through my contribution to this monthly newsletter, but what you may not know is that this isn't my usual style of writing. My first love is any kind of fiction, whether it's writing novels, short stories, or flash fiction. For this reason, I, along with most of my Gen Z peers, am highly interested in the state of the arts, but not in the way you may think.

Historically, the Republican party has been perceived as a force against the arts. Now, whether this is fair (decrying excessive government funding of public art institutions is not the same thing of being against the arts) doesn't change how the party is perceived.

If the Republican party throws out the arts entirely, they miss out on a massive opportunity to include and encourage the next generation towards goodness & truth.

Gen Z cares about art as creators. Social media has trained us (for better or worse) to curate, to make things, and to take creative risks. We care about making things that last because they are human-made, high-quality, and beautiful. We are averse to AI created art, or low-quality, cheap, or overly sentimental art because it's not authentic or real. Therefore, Gen Z isn't worried so much about government funding in the arts as they are worried about your investment (relational or monetary) in them. They aren't looking for an excess of government funding; they are looking for personal and small-scale investment.

Now what I'm not saying is that you should give young artists cash so you can manipulate them to your political purposes. I'm also not saying that the party needs to give a blanket green light to government funding of the arts. I'm talking about a change in culture at the individual level. If you dismiss the arts entirely, you hand over a beautiful and huge part of who we are as people, especially Gen Z, to people who will manipulate young people for their purposes.

History has shown us that the arts will persist no matter what. We can either understand this and work to support what is true and beautiful in the arts, or we can separate ourselves from them and let others twist them into what is ugly and false.



PLATFORM PRINCIPLES

Fiscal Restraint and Limited Government Spending

The Spokane County Republican Party affirms that government is a steward of taxpayer resources and has a duty to spend public funds wisely, responsibly, and transparently. We believe that every dollar collected from taxpayers should be used only for legitimate and essential public purposes authorized by the United States Constitution, the Washington State Constitution, and applicable law.

Guided by the principles of stewardship, accountability, and responsible management, we support fiscal restraint at the local, state, and federal levels of government. We believe government should live within its means, maintain balanced and sustainable budgets whenever possible, reduce unnecessary debt, and protect future generations from the burden of excessive government spending.

We further believe that government should perform only those functions that are fundamentally necessary to protect the rights, safety, and well-being of the people and that cannot be more effectively, efficiently, or economically provided by private individuals, families, businesses, charities, churches, or other private-sector institutions. We oppose wasteful spending, duplicative programs, excessive bureaucracy, and the expansion of government into areas better served by the free market and civil society.



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]

Thomas Paine - Author of America's Founding Argument

Few individuals shaped the American Revolution as dramatically as Thomas Paine. While leaders such as George Washington commanded armies and Thomas Jefferson drafted foundational documents, Paine won the battle for public opinion. His pamphlet *Common Sense*, published in January 1776, transformed the idea of independence from a radical proposal into a popular cause. Through powerful arguments and accessible language, Paine convinced ordinary colonists that breaking away from Great Britain was not only justified but necessary. Historical evidence makes clear that *Common Sense* was one of the most influential publications of the Revolutionary era, and it remains essential reading for Americans today.

Before the publication of *Common Sense*, a majority of colonists still hoped to reconcile with Britain despite years of tension and conflict. Paine challenged this hesitation directly. He argued that monarchy was an unfair and outdated form of government and criticized King

George III for violating the rights of the colonies. Rather than writing for wealthy elites, Paine used plain language that farmers, merchants, artisans, and laborers could easily understand. As a result, *Common Sense* spread rapidly throughout the colonies. Historians estimate that it sold more than 100,000 copies within a few months, an extraordinary number for the eighteenth century. The pamphlet's widespread circulation helped persuade thousands of colonists to support independence.

Historical events demonstrate Paine's influence. When *Common Sense* appeared in January 1776, the Continental Congress had not yet declared independence. By July 4, 1776, Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. Although many factors contributed to this decision, historians widely regard Paine's pamphlet as a major catalyst. John Adams later acknowledged that Paine's writing had a significant impact on public sentiment. By encouraging colonists to see themselves as Americans rather than British subjects, Paine helped unite diverse groups behind the revolutionary cause.

The importance of *Common Sense* extends far beyond the eighteenth century. Its central message, that **citizens should question authority and demand accountable government**, remains relevant to this day. Paine urged readers to think critically rather than blindly accept tradition, a lesson that is just as valuable today as it was during the Revolution.

For these reasons, *Common Sense* should be required reading for all Americans, including immigrants who seek to become Americans. It is far more than a historical artifact; it is a powerful explanation of the principles and values upon which the United States was founded. Thomas Paine's words helped transform a collection of divided colonies into a united people willing to fight for liberty, self-government, and individual rights. Understanding America requires understanding the ideas that created it, and no document explains those ideas more clearly than *Common Sense*. For native-born citizens, it serves as a reminder of the nation's founding ideals and the responsibilities that accompany freedom. For immigrants pursuing the American dream and citizenship, it offers valuable insight into the political philosophy, civic values, and spirit of independence that define the American identity.

By making *Common Sense* required reading for all Americans, the nation would strengthen civic understanding, encourage informed citizenship, and preserve the principles that have sustained American democracy for nearly 250 years. The same courage, reason, and commitment to liberty that inspired the Revolution remain essential today, making Paine's work not merely a document of the past, but a guide for America's future.



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Education, Not Regulation

by Jonathan A. Plumb

In psychology, there is a well-known phenomenon called the Forbidden Fruit Effect. The idea is that restricting something can make people want it more. The prohibition itself becomes part of the attraction.

Researchers have observed this in children's responses to restricted snacks (Fisher and Birch, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 1999) and in experiments where restrictive age labels made video games more appealing to young people (Nije Bijvank et al., Pediatrics, 2009).

As a teacher, I learned the cost of restrictions firsthand. Every rule required enforcement. Using cellphones as an example, every confrontation consumed time and attention that should have belonged to the lesson.

So I took a different approach.

I told students I would teach them when and how to use their phones responsibly, including researching answers for assignments. I treated them like adults capable of exercising judgment.

If they gave me their attention and completed what I asked, they earned a five-minute break. They could check their phones, play games, or twiddle their thumbs. That time was theirs. Misusing devices during instruction meant not earning the break.

The first week required considerable coaching. Afterward, students increasingly reminded one another to put their phones away. They wanted to protect their shared privilege. Clear expectations, consequences, and mutual trust helped produce one of the most disciplined classrooms in my school.

Eventually, students cited my policy when challenging restrictions in other classrooms. Unfortunately, my principal required me to adopt the same policy as everyone else. I watched cooperation deteriorate. I wish the approach that had worked had been allowed to continue.

I firmly believe that the same principle can extend to the population, if done correctly. Treat the People as intelligent adults. Explain risks, teach responsible use, and give them the opportunity to exercise sound judgment. I believe we can advance safely in many areas with far less supervision than government assumes.

Restrictions carry an enforcement bill: staff hours, public money, monitoring, and penalties. Resources that could educate and solve problems become tied up policing restrictions. We should ask whether that expense produces a benefit education could achieve more effectively.

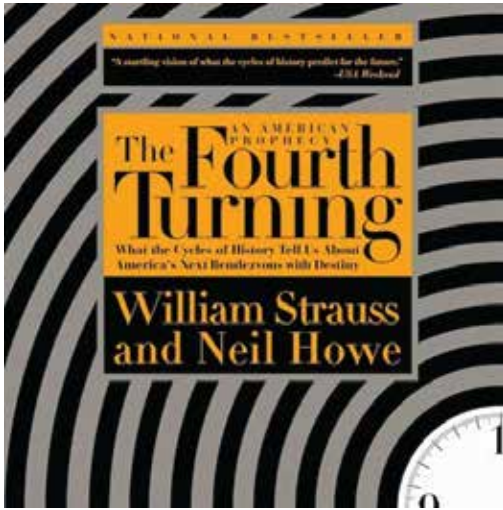
Government has a responsibility to protect people's rights. It should also cultivate their capacity to govern themselves. Before City Hall reaches for another prohibition, it should ask what teaching, trust, and cooperation could accomplish.

Education, not regulation, should be our first instinct.



BOOK REVIEW – THE FOURTH TURNING

The Fourth Turning Revisited: Crisis, Renewal, and the Future of America



Strauss and Howe's prediction of a coming national crisis appears strikingly prescient, why modern technological and cultural realities complicate their theory, and how faith, servant leadership, and renewed commitment to "We The People" may offer a path toward America's restoration.

In the opening chapter of *The Fourth Turning* (1997), William Strauss and Neil Howe argued that America was entering a period of civic decline despite economic prosperity and victory in the Cold War. Although Americans felt increasingly self-reliant, trust in institutions such as government, religion, media, and civic organizations was eroding. This imbalance fostered greater individualism, political polarization, cultural fragmentation, and a growing belief that major national problems were becoming harder to solve.

To explain these trends, Strauss and Howe proposed a theory of recurring historical cycles. They argued that Anglo-American history moves through four repeating “turnings,” each lasting roughly a generation. A First Turning, or High, is marked by strong institutions and social cohesion. A Second Turning, or Awakening, emphasizes personal and spiritual transformation while challenging established authority. A Third Turning, or Unraveling, features declining trust in institutions, rising individualism, and social division. Finally, a Fourth Turning, or Crisis, brings major upheaval that reshapes institutions and creates a new civic order.

The authors classified post-World War II America, from Truman through Kennedy, as a First Turning. The cultural upheavals of the 1960s through the early 1980s represented a Second Turning, while the Reagan era and subsequent “Culture Wars” reflected a Third Turning. By 1997, they believed the nation was nearing the end of this Unraveling phase.

Strauss and Howe argued that similar patterns appeared throughout American history. They compared the 1990s to the 1920s, 1850s, and 1760s, periods characterized by weakening institutions, social conflict, economic disruption, and political tension following major national successes. Each era preceded a transformative Fourth Turning: the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the combined crises of the Great Depression and World War II. According to the authors, such periods fundamentally reshape a nation’s institutions, social contract, and collective identity.

Based on these parallels, Strauss and Howe predicted that a new Fourth Turning would begin in the early twenty-first century. They anticipated a catalytic crisis involving economic or political upheaval, intensifying social conflict, and potentially war or authoritarian responses. At the same time, they argued that crises can create opportunities for renewal. If successfully navigated, a Fourth Turning can restore civic trust, establish a new national consensus, and create institutions capable of addressing problems that once seemed unsolvable.

What Has Changed Since 1997?

Nearly three decades later, many of the disruptions Strauss and Howe anticipated have occurred. The September 11 attacks, prolonged wars, the 2008 financial crisis, growing political polarization, declining trust in institutions, social unrest, and the COVID-19 pandemic created an extended period of uncertainty. In that respect, their prediction of a crisis era appears notably prescient.

(continued on Page 7)



WHAT IF LEADERS PRIORITIZED GOD AND PEOPLE

(continued from Page 6)

However, key developments unfolded in ways the authors could not have foreseen. The internet, social media, smartphones, and artificial intelligence have transformed society more profoundly than generational shifts alone can explain. Digital information systems often amplify outrage, tribalism, and misinformation, while globalization and technological change continue to reshape labor markets and communities.

Perhaps most importantly, recent history suggests that crises do not automatically produce unity. Rather than fostering broad consensus, major disruptions can deepen divisions and create competing narratives about reality itself.

What Might the Future Hold if Leaders Prioritized God and “We the People”?

A key limitation of *The Fourth Turning* is its tendency to explain national change primarily through generational cycles rather than moral and political choices. While history may reveal recurring patterns, Scripture teaches that nations rise or fall according to the character of their people and leaders. Proverbs 14:34 states, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people,” suggesting that a nation’s future depends less on historical inevitability than on its commitment to truth, justice, and responsible self-government.

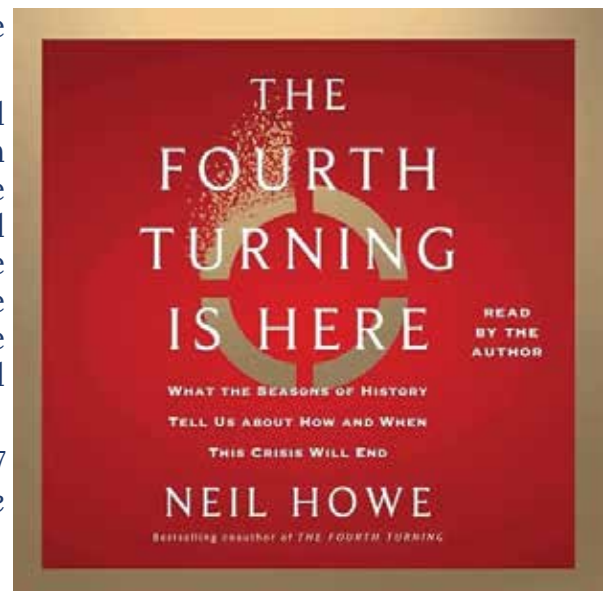
Many Americans feel increasingly distrustful of political leaders who campaign on promises to defend families, strengthen communities, secure borders, preserve constitutional liberties, control spending, and expand opportunity, only to govern in ways perceived as disconnected from those commitments. The resulting decline in trust reflects a broader belief that political survival, special interests, and institutional power too often take precedence over the needs of ordinary citizens.

From a biblical perspective, this represents a crisis of stewardship. Scripture teaches that leaders are entrusted with authority to serve others. Jesus taught that “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant” (Mark 10:43), while Ezekiel condemned leaders who neglected the people in their care (Ezekiel 34:2-4). Many voters see similarities between these warnings and a political culture frequently perceived as focused more on power than service.

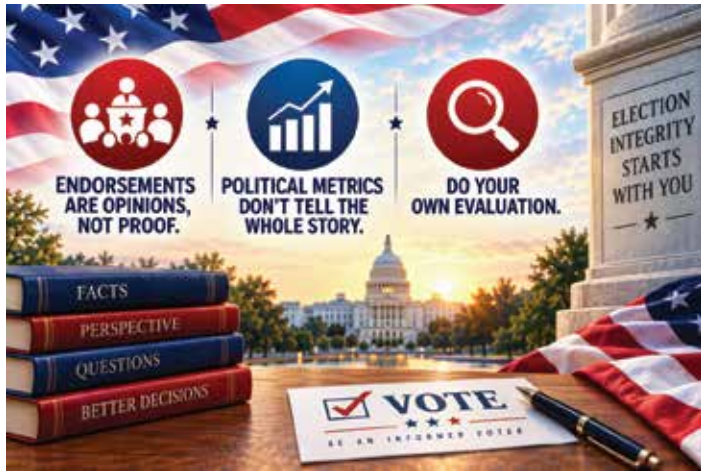
Yet a different future remains possible. If leaders embraced servant leadership and genuinely prioritized “We The People,” policy could focus on strengthening families, educational excellence, religious liberty, safe communities, economic opportunity, fiscal responsibility, and the rule of law. Success would be measured not by electoral victories but by whether families are stronger, communities are healthier, and future generations are better positioned to flourish.

Ultimately, the central question is not whether America is destined to complete another historical cycle. The more important question is whether citizens and leaders will recommit themselves to the principles that sustain free societies: faith in God, personal responsibility, servant leadership, strong families, and equal justice under the law. As Psalm 33:12 declares, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.” From this perspective, America’s future will be shaped less by generational destiny than by the character and choices of its people and leaders.

Neal Howe’s follow-up book published in 2023 expands on the 1997 release with predictions of what will come by 2030. Both are fascinating and highly recommended.



NAVIGATING ENDORSEMENTS



The Link Between Political Endorsements and McNamara's Fallacy

As election day draws near, voters are often flooded with endorsements from politicians, organizations, celebrities, media outlets, friends, and family members. While these endorsements can provide useful information, relying on them too heavily can lead to poor decision-making. A helpful framework for understanding this risk comes from McNamara's Fallacy, the tendency to base judgments primarily on what is easy to measure while overlooking important qualities that are harder to evaluate.

Originally associated with former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's reliance on statistics during the Vietnam War, the fallacy highlights a common mistake: assuming that measurable indicators tell the whole story. In politics, those indicators often include poll numbers, fundraising totals, social media followers, media attention, and endorsement counts. While these metrics offer valuable information, they do not reveal **essential leadership qualities such as integrity, judgment, competence, empathy, courage, or the ability to govern effectively.**

Political endorsements are especially vulnerable to this misunderstanding. Many voters view endorsements as proof that a candidate is qualified or worthy of support. However, endorsements are not direct measures of a candidate's ability. An endorsement reflects the values, interests, priorities, or strategic goals of the person or organization making it. Party leaders may endorse based on loyalty or political strategy. Interest groups may support candidates whose policies align with their objectives. Celebrities and public figures often endorse based on personal beliefs rather than expertise in governance.

The same caution applies to recommendations from friends, relatives, and colleagues. People naturally trust those they know, but a trusted person's endorsement remains a personal opinion shaped by their own experiences and biases. Using someone else's recommendation as a substitute for independent evaluation can oversimplify a complex decision.

To make more informed choices, voters should treat endorsements as starting points rather than conclusions. When considering an endorsement, ask: Why is this person or organization supporting the candidate? What interests or values do they represent? Does the endorsement align with the candidate's actual record, qualifications, and policy positions? What evidence supports the candidate beyond the endorsement itself?

The key lesson is simple: endorsements, polls, and other political metrics are pieces of evidence, not proof. Effective voting requires looking beyond popularity and public support to evaluate the qualities that are often hardest to measure but most important in leadership. By balancing measurable facts with thoughtful assessment of character, competence, and vision, voters can make decisions based on substance rather than signals.



2026 SAMPLE BALLOT

VOTE BEFORE NOVEMBER 3

★ **5th Congressional District**
Michael Baumgartner

★ **3rd Legislative District**
Rep Pos 1 Tony Kiepe
Rep Pos 2 Natalie Poulson

★ **4th Legislative District**
Rep Pos 2 Rob Chase

★ **6th Legislative District**
Senate Jeff Holy
Rep Pos 1 Jonathan Bingle
Rep Pos 2 Alan Nolan

★ **7th Legislative District**
Senate Shelly Short
Rep Pos 1 Andrew Engell
Rep Pos 2 Hunter Abell

★ **9th Legislative District**
Rep Pos 1 Mary Dye
Rep Pos 2 Joe Schmick

★ **WA Supreme Court**
Justice 01 Scott Edwards
Justice 03 David Stevens
Justice 05 Dave Larson
Justice 07 Todd A. Bloom

Spokane County Offices

★ **Commissioner District No. 4**
Suzanne Schmidt

★ **Treasurer**
Mike Volz

★ **Assessor**
Tom Konis

★ **Prosecuting Attorney**
Preston McCollum

★ **Clerk**
Dave Lucas

★ **Sheriff**
John F. Nowles

★ **Auditor**
Michael Cathcart

★ **District Court Judge Pos 2**
Deanna Crull

✓ **Initiatives - YES for all 3**

✗ **Levies - No on all that are a net tax increase without offsetting tax cuts**



BALLOT INITIATIVES



3 INITIATIVES → VOTE YES ON ALL THREE

WASHINGTON STATE
NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION 2026

I-001



**STRENGTHEN
COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN
PARENTS AND SCHOOLS**

**SCHOOL DISTRICT
PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**

- ✓ Protects parents' rights to review student records
- ✓ Requires schools to notify parents of medical services
- ✓ Re-enacts protections like opting students out of activities

✓ VOTE YES!

I-638



**PROTECT
FAIRNESS IN
GIRLS' SPORTS**

**PREVENT BIOLOGICAL MALES
FROM COMPETING**

- ✓ Upholds opportunities for women and girls in Title IX
- ✓ Enforces policies prohibiting defined biologically male competitors
- ✓ Restores fairness to athletes eligibility rules without banning anyone

✓ VOTE YES!

I-645



**REPEAL THE
INCOME TAX**

**ENDING THE UNCONSTITUTIONAL
9.9% INCOME TAX**

- ✓ Repeals the 9.9% tax on annual individual income over \$1M
- ✓ Prohibits taxes measured by or on individual income
- ✓ Protects families, entrepreneurs, and pass-through business owners

✓ VOTE YES!



VOTE YES YES YES!

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The Vital Insider



HLW's Next Generation Has Arrived!

SPOKANE, Wash. Nearly 10,000 people attended the conference, and by the end of the weekend, the team from HLW's Life & Love Network kept returning to the same phrase to describe the experience: "one gem after another." "The real value was not simply the number of people who passed the booth. It was the quality of the conversations," said Jeryl Reinbolt, HLW's Eastern Washington outreach coordinator. "We met people who immediately understood the need to build a culture of life, not merely respond to crisis after crisis." For HLW, the conference also marked another step in what the organization has described as its "HLW 2.0" era, a recent relaunch focused on broader engagement, leadership development and culture-building. The organization left the conference with promising new connections and follow-up conversations stretching across Washington, from Ocean Shores to Pullman and several communities in between. For HLW, the weekend appeared to represent more than another conference. It functioned almost as a grand reopening, one rooted in the organization's longstanding mission, but shaped for what comes next. Those familiar with HLW several years ago may notice a different organization today. In recent years, HLW has undergone a period of rebuilding and restructuring, creating new programs, developing partnerships, strengthening communications and putting new infrastructure in place for its next phase. For 55 years, HLW has advocated for the value and protection of human life. Today, the organization is carrying that mission forward

with a broader emphasis on culture-building, education, leadership development and engagement. What has not changed, leaders say, is the mission said Esther Ripplinger, President & Chief Executive Officer, HLW. One of the greatest highlights of the weekend was seeing four young adults serving alongside us at the HLW booth, "That alone was gold," said Ripplinger. They were not standing on the sidelines while another generation did the work. They were engaging attendees, communicating our mission, learning, making connections, and helping represent HLW themselves. That is exactly what the 55-year-old organization has been working toward. Earlier this year, HLW relaunched its statewide Oratory Contest. Our winner, Mary Crosby of Burlington, went on to attend the National Right to Life Academy for an intensive 10-day training program and later joined HLW as an intern. Today, we are intentionally creating opportunities for young people to research, communicate, serve, and lead. "We are not simply asking the next generation to inherit the movement someday. We are giving them meaningful opportunities to help build what comes next now," Ripplinger said, "...and we're just getting started!" Several new projects are also taking shape behind the scenes. They share a common purpose: filling gaps where the movement needs stronger tools, formation, relationships, and culture-building infrastructure. That is what this next chapter of HLW is about. We are building on 55 years of faithfulness while preparing people, partnerships, and systems for the work ahead.

Above, from left to right: Young people wearing Match for Life® swag bags – Lighting Up Pro-Life Projects Everywhere®; young volunteers Lydia and Brent working the HLW booth at Be Bold for Jesus in Spokane; Noelle, a minor volunteer whose face is concealed for privacy; and Noelle engaging with a passerby at the booth.

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