

24/25

# THE FOLEY INSTITUTE

The Thomas S. Foley Institute  
for Public Policy and Public Service



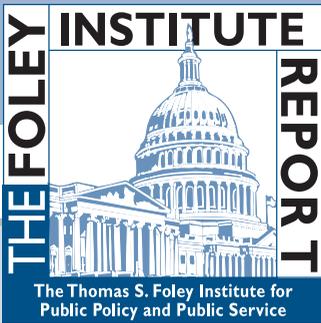
# THE FOLEY REPORT



WASHINGTON STATE  
UNIVERSITY



Leon E. Panetta  
receives Foley  
Distinguished Public  
Service Award.  
See page 4



## Director's Note



**Director Cornell W. Clayton**  
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Established at Washington State University in 1995, the mission of the institute is to foster congressional studies, civic education, public service, and public policy research in a non-partisan, cross-disciplinary setting.

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Sam Reed Distinguished Professor,  
Civic Education and Public Civility

**Travis N. Ridout**  
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You will find this edition of the Foley Report is little longer than normal. That is because we changed the Report's publication schedule to reflect academic rather than calendar years. So, this year's edition contains stories from 2024 as well as from spring semester of 2025.

Perhaps the most exciting news from this past year and a half is that the institute presented the first two Thomas S. Foley Distinguished Public Service Awards. When Tom Foley established the institute in 1995, he said: "In a cynical age, we must summon people to a vision of public service. For, in the end, this ethic determines whether we will have citizens and leaders of honor, judgment, wisdom, and heart. These are the qualities the institute must nurture and advance, helping this nation become what it has always been destined to be, the best hope of a free people to live in an open and just society." Recognizing and honoring that vision of public service through an annual award is even more important today.

The first recipient of the Distinguished Public Service Award was General James N. Mattis, who accepted the award in April 2024. Our second recipient, Leon E. Panetta, was honored this past April.

Beyond their many accomplishments, Secretary Panetta and General Mattis are both known for their honesty, integrity, and their ability to bridge political divides and achieve meaningful progress through bipartisan collaboration. Their lifelong commitment to public service and leadership exemplifies the values Tom Foley wished to inspire when founding the Foley Institute 30 years ago. You can read more about the award ceremonies and the awardees on pages 4-5.

In addition to these stories, this issue of the Report is full of articles about other institute programs and activities over the past year and a half. These included a remarkable public lecture series focused on the 2024 general election (pp 6-12), cohosting a live televised debate of candidates for Washington's Fifth Congressional district opposite, significant lectures and discussions about the conflicts in the Middle East (p.13) and the Ukraine (p.19), important events about election integrity and restoring confidence in election administration (p.14), as well as our usual stories about our student interns, graduate research fellows, and other public programs and partnerships.

I hope you enjoy reading about the institute's many activities and events. The work of the institute is enabled by people like you. So, let me thank all who have supported the institute and its programs in the past and encourage others to join us in keeping Foley's legacy alive. Your support makes it all possible (see the back cover for how to lend your support).



## The Foley Institute partners with KHQ to host live-televised debate between candidates for Washington’s 5th District

On October 21, 2024, the institute partnered with Spokane’s NBC affiliate state KHQ News to host a live broadcast candidate debate between Republican Michael Baumgartner and Democrat Carmela Conroy on the Pullman Campus of WSU. The event attracted a large audience of students, faculty, and the wider

community, and provided an opportunity for 5th district constituents to hear more about the candidates that were seeking to replace U.S. Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers, who decided to step down after 20 years in the seat previously held by Speaker Foley.

## A discussion with the authors of a new book about Tom Foley



Kenton Bird (left) is professor emeritus in the School of Journalism and Mass Media at the University of Idaho and John Pierce (right) is vice chancellor emeritus at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. He also served as dean of the College of Liberal Arts at WSU and oversaw the founding of the institute.

On March 27, 2024, the institute hosted **Kenton Bird** and **John Pierce** to speak about their new book, *Tom Foley: The Man in the Middle*.

The authors said Speaker Foley’s deep commitment to bipartisanship and institution building contrasts to today’s polarized and angry politics and discussed how Foley became a strong, driven leader in Congress. Talking about the years leading up to his election, Bird described Foley as an “intellect” who spoke well and was charismatic, and they both emphasized his commitment to bipartisanship by recounting occasions where Foley worked across the aisle to pass legislation.

Pierce and Bird said that a central theme in the book was Speaker Foley’s commitment to Congress as an institution believing in Congress as a supreme, lawmaking body. Foley, the authors said, is still highly respected by former colleagues and by the citizens and leaders of both parties in the 5th Congressional District.

# Foley Distinguished Public Service Award 2025

The Thomas S. Foley Award for Distinguished Public Service is awarded annually to an individual who has demonstrated integrity and courage in their commitment to public service and whose body of work has had a lasting impact. The institute is grateful to **Dr. Edmund and Mrs. Beatriz Schweitzer** for their continuing benefactor support of the Foley Distinguished Public Service Award. We thank Avista and also Howard Wright for their patron level of support.

On April 24, 2025, **Leon E. Panetta** was honored for a remarkable career spanning more than 50 years of public service. First elected to Congress in 1977, he served 16 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, before being appointed in Director of the Office of Management and Budget under President Clinton 1994. Following his White House service, he established the Panetta Institute for Public Policy at California State University, an institute, which, much like the Foley

Institute, is dedicated to preparing future leaders in public service.

In 2009, Panetta again answered the call to serve, this time as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency under President Obama, where he led the CIA's operation that killed Osama bin Laden. In 2011 he was named Secretary of Defense, an office he served in until 2013 playing key roles overseeing the conclusion of the Iraq War and expanding counterterrorism operations.



*Pictured clockwise from top left:*  
Kevin Schilling, Cornell Clayton,  
Dr. Edmund Schweitzer, David Condon,  
event sponsors, Rep. Michael Baumgartner,  
anthem singer JaNese Howard,  
WSU President Elizabeth Chilton.

# Foley Distinguished Public Service Award 2024

Our inaugural award was presented to **General James N. Mattis** in Spokane on April 9, 2024. Born in Pullman, General Mattis was raised in southeastern Washington. After graduating from Central Washington State College, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, where he served over 40 years, first as an infantry officer, rising through the ranks until becoming a four star general in 2007, and serving as Supreme Allied Commander Transformation with NATO, and as the Commander of U.S. Central Command.

General Mattis retired from military service in 2013 and was selected as a Davies Family Distinguished Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. However, he was called back to public service in January 2017, to serve as the nation's 26th Secretary of Defense. Mattis served as the nation's 26th Secretary Defense with distinction, until he resigned and returned to the Hoover Institution in 2019.



*Pictured clockwise from top left: Heather Foley, Gen. Mattis, Dr. Edmund Schweitzer, David Condon, anthem singer EmmaRose Sullivan, the award, guests at dinner, members of the Foley Advisory Board, Gen. Mattis signing his book, members of WSU Pullman ROTC.*



# The 2024 presidential election series

During the fall of 2024, the institute hosted a lecture series on the 2024 presidential election featuring some of the nation's leading political experts and commentators. Students and the wider WSU community heard about important issues in what was one of the most consequential elections in recent history.



## Welcome to the 2024 Election!

On August 27, **David Lublin** from American University and perhaps the nation's leading expert on political parties, introduced the fall series with a talk about the state of U.S. parties and trends in partisanship over the past decade.

Professor Lublin discussed the growth of partisan polarization in the U.S., including the emergence of echo chambers in social media, gerrymandering and disproportionate representation, in addition to broader issues with the current electoral system.

He also explained how electoral reforms, such as ranked choice voting, could decrease polarization and lead to more representative electoral outcomes.

*David Lublin is professor and chair of the Department of Government in the School of Public Affairs at American University.*

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## Election integrity

On September 3, **Liz Howard** from the Brennan Center for Justice spoke about recent challenges to election administration and integrity and what can be done to reassure voters and restore faith in our democratic processes.

Ms. Howard noted the need for increased election security in the post-2020 political climate, discussing the nature of violence and threats against election officials and how their safety has become a concern in recent years. She described how artificial intelligence could spread of misinformation and impact election results; showing a false AI video of herself to prove how easy it is to create disinformation.

Howard implored the public to be active and responsible advocates for election integrity, and emphasized how important it is to rely on trusted sources and to think before engaging with social media.

*Liz Howard is Director of Partner Engagement at the Brennan Center for Justice.*



# The 2024 presidential election series

## Presidential rhetoric

On September 10, the institute hosted **Pavielle Haines** from the University of Idaho, who spoke about partisan uses of patriotism and patriotic rhetoric in American politics.

Professor Haines discussed how each party has historically used patriotic appeals and argued that by maintaining ownership over patriotism as a partisan issue, Republicans have been able to shape it in their image and gain electoral advantages by invoking a sense of national identity.

Haines concluded by discussing how Trump's rhetoric is fundamentally changing the meaning of patriotism within the Republican Party, constructing a narrative that "real Americans" must build defenses against cultural threats, while Democrats are trying hard to reclaim a more traditional form of patriotism as an issue and close the patriotic credibility gap.

*Pavielle Haines is assistant professor of political science at the University of Idaho.*



## The GOP and past and current elections



On September 14, the institute welcomed **Seth Masket** from the University of Denver and leading expert on conservative politics and the GOP to speak about the future of the Republican Party.

Professor Masket identified Donald Trump as the inheritor of a conservative populist tradition in US politics, citing his strong anti-immigration rhetoric, conspiratorial views, and authoritarian legal beliefs. Masket then described a series of interviews he conducted with state and local Republican Party leaders, many of whom said they supported Trump because they felt he was being unfairly treated by the media and legal system.

He noted that Trump's nomination was never really in doubt, and that county level party leaders mostly reflected the will of their constituents. He emphasized that what once distinguished

Trump supporters, a conservative populist message and world view, is now in the mainstream of the party and Trump has successfully reimagined the Republican Party in his image.

*Seth Masket is professor of political science and the director of the Center on American Politics at the University of Denver.*

# The 2024 presidential election series

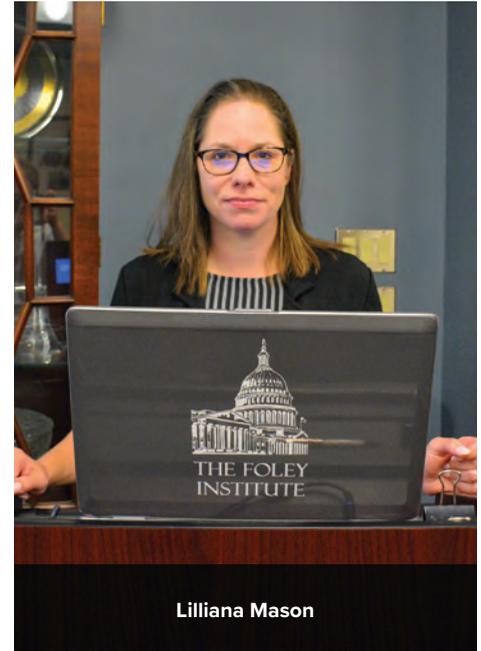
## Radical partisanship

On September 24, the institute hosted **Lilliana Mason** from Johns Hopkins University and one of the nation's leading scholars on political polarization and political violence. Professor Mason explained how social sorting along lines of identity and place has dramatically impacted American politics and led to “us versus them” ideologies and radical partisanship.

Mason described the process of moral disengagement and how political violence is justified when one side sees the other as a threat, as evil, or even non-human. Data from her studies has shown that political violence is on the increase and is asymmetric, with violent acts coming mostly from far right groups and individuals. Her data revealed a large rift with the Republican party. Those who accepted political violence as sometimes legitimate were overwhelmingly 2020 election deniers and intolerant of minority views, while more moderate Republicans were more likely to be more tolerant of differing views and to reject acts of violence.

She concluded by emphasizing the importance of anti-violent messaging from partisan and prioritizing pro-pluralist voices on the right.

*Lilliana Mason is an SNF Agora Institute Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University.*



## Race, immigration, and the election



On September 25, the institute welcomed **Terri Givens** from the University of British Columbia and a leading expert on race and politics for a talk on how race has influenced immigration policy.

Professor Givens described how conservative politicians, both in the United States and across Europe, have increasingly focused on immigration as a key issue. However, while both right- and left-wing parties have favored more immigration control, conservatives have better positioned themselves as the defenders of stricter immigration enforcement. The difference between the two parties lies in their attitudes toward immigrant deterrence and immigrant integration. In recent years, conservatives have shifted increasingly toward how to deter immigration and less on how to successfully integrate recent immigrants. This policy shift, she said, has made legal entry into the country more difficult and dangerous, resulting in more deaths of immigrants attempting to enter the country through improper channels.

Givens concluded by discussing similarities between the influence of immigration and race in recent U.S. elections and in politics across Europe, especially the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom and the growth of right-wing anti-immigration parties elsewhere in Europe.

*Terri Givens is professor of political science at the University of British Columbia.*

# The 2024 presidential election series

## State elections

On October 1, **Louis Jacobson** from Politifact and a leading commentator on state and national election campaigns spoke on the relationship between state level and national level campaigns in the 2024 election.

Mr. Jacobson outlined the common threads that have shaped the landscape of the 2024 election. The lack of competitive seats at every level of elected office, he noted, results in single party dominance over state legislatures and governorships, which is now the case in 82% of all states.

He noted that Americans are evenly divided, a result of shifting voter demographics where suburban residents are becoming more democratic and rural areas becoming more conservative. The presidential race, he said, is relatively static, with very few competitive states or counties. He identified three primary variables by which a state's partisan leaning can



be predicted: education level, race, and level of urbanization.

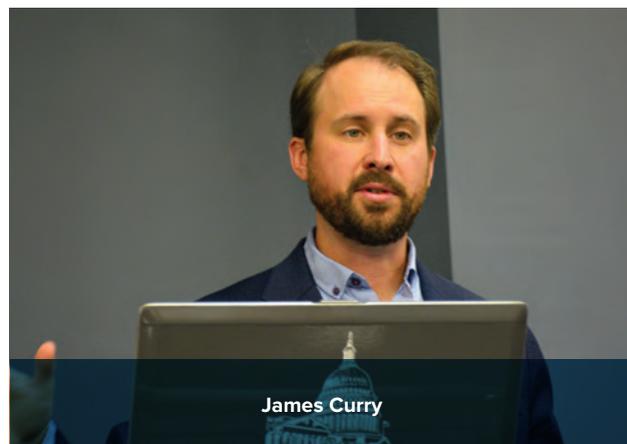
Finally, Jacobson discussed possible structural changes that may come after the 2030 census and reapportionment. His data suggested that some currently Republican-controlled states such as Texas and Florida were shifting towards Democrats while some traditionally blue states such as California and Oregon are shifting towards Republicans.

*Louis Jacobson is chief correspondent for PolitiFact.*

## Congress

On October 8, **James Curry** from the University of Utah and a leading congressional scholar visited the institute to discuss the likely makeup of the 119th Congress.

Professor Curry argued that the election would most likely lead to divided government again, with the Republicans taking control of the Senate and Democrats winning a majority in the House. While divided government has become a common result in recent elections and is often accused of producing policy gridlock, Curry noted that the policy process in Congress has actually seen little change, and that partisan compromise is more common than thought. In fact, while the sheer number of bills passed has declined over time, the size and breadth of bills passed has increased significantly, he argued, indicating that the same amount of policy is being passed, but is concentrated into fewer bills.



He concluded by suggesting that while elections often have important consequences, it is also the case that policymaking within Congress is generally constrained and mostly requires bipartisan majorities.

*James Curry is professor of political science at the University of Utah.*

# The 2024 presidential election series

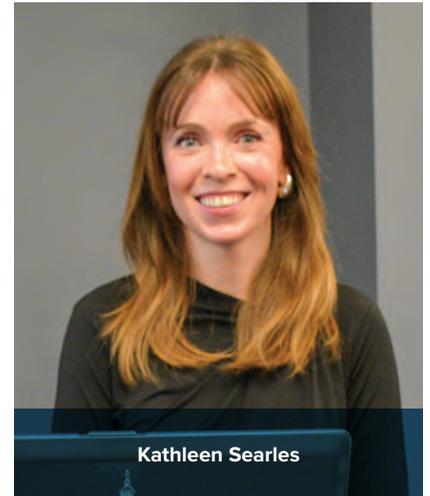
## Media and politics

On October 15, the institute was pleased to host **Kathleen Searles** from the University of South Carolina and leading expert on media and politics to speak on media's role in the 2024 election. In his introduction, Professor Clayton welcomed Katie back to WSU, from where she received her Ph.D. in political science in 2011.

Professor Searles argued that common criticisms of the news media are that they do a poor job of explaining and encouraging democracy and are too biased. At the same time, she noted, there is an expectation for news to be entertaining and so news content produced by privately owned companies tends to seek profits, whether through seeking a loyal audience or providing entertainment value.

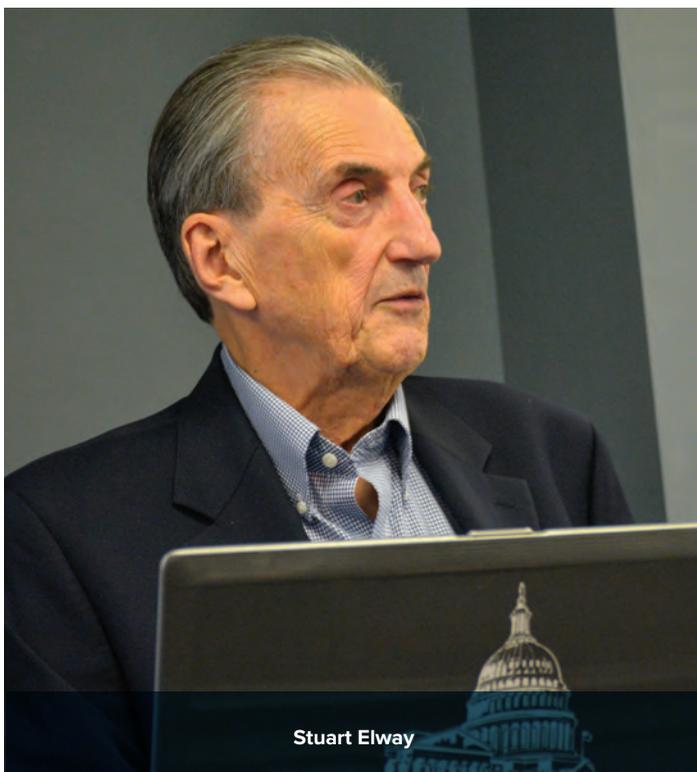
Searles explained that despite their negative perception, horse race polls often can be a good way to inform the public of the state of the election in a quick and easy-to-understand format. Searles also said that news media

is often responsive to criticism and willing to make changes to aid the democratic process. One example from her own research she shared was that after she presented evidence to news companies that showing images of long lines in articles or stories about elections actually discouraged voting, those companies began removing such images from their coverage.



*Kathleen Searles is the Olin D. Johnston Chair of Political Science at the University of South Carolina.*

## Washington State races and polling



On October 22, the institute hosted pollster **Stuart Elway**, who discussed the history of party preference in Washington and how the state has moved over time towards being a blue state dominated by the Democratic Party.

Elway explained how Washingtonians have become sorted, moving into single-party counties on either side of the so-called “Cascade Curtain”, separating eastern and western Washington. He also discussed how this process increased polarization and demonization of political adversaries. In particular, this sorting has transformed urban areas in the state into densely Democrat-populated districts, diluting the voting power of Republicans, and leading to a state-wide shift towards Democratic party control.

Elway concluded his talk by predicting a near sweep for Washington State Democrats in state-wide races and the presidential election in 2024.

*Stuart Elway currently directs the Cascade PBS/Elway Poll.*

# The 2024 presidential election series

## AI and campaigns

On October 29, **Emily LaRosa**, a doctoral student at Michigan State University working on the political implications of AI, spoke at the institute.

LaRosa provided the audience with an overview of what constitutes artificial intelligence and how the technology could be most effectively utilized as a data analysis tool rather than an arbiter of decision-making.

Turning to how AI is being applied to political campaigns, she explained how it is used in ad targeting, content creation, and for internal decision-making for a campaign. Its use in campaigns creates a series of ethical dilemmas, particularly around data privacy and the manipulation of opinions.

LaRose concluded her talk with possible ways to address those ethical concerns, including



increased regulation, as well as improved transparency and accountability mechanisms.

*Emily LaRosa is a doctoral candidate at Michigan State University.*

## The Supreme Court and the election

On October 31, the institute welcomed **Scott Lemieux** from the University of Washington who spoke on the role of the Supreme Court.

Professor Lemieux provided an overview of the ideological direction of recent Supreme Court decisions in the context of the current polarized political environment. He noted that Senate confirmation votes for justices of the Court, which in the past were often unanimous, have increasingly been sharply divided along partisan lines. As a result, he said, justices have increasingly been appointed based on political ideological considerations rather than their professional credentials.

Lemieux then went on to discuss different scenarios for the Court's future role depending on who won the 2024 election, predicting that if Trump won, the current 6-3 court (which leans



Republican) would act as a partner, rather than a check, on the administration.

*Scott Lemieux is associate teaching professor of political science at the University of Washington.*

# The 2024 presidential election series



## Democracy, polarization, and the 2024 election

On November 12, **Samara Klar**, a leading scholar on partisan polarization from Arizona State University, gave the final talk of the election series.

Professor Klar explained that while partisan attachments have hardened in recent decades the majority of voters do not identify themselves as partisans. This may be due to the stigma attached to partisan identity. For example, her research has found that independents were generally viewed among respondents as more attractive and trustworthy than self-identified partisans. The stigma towards those outwardly identifying with a political party contributes to further polarization and animosity between the parties. This, she said, leads to affectively polarized voters who harbor negative views towards those in the other party.

She concluded that as a result of affective polarization, the 2024 election cycle demonstrated several notable patterns, including the penalization of the incumbent party and a broader disdain for all political elites and institutions.

*Samara Klar is professor of political science at the University of Arizona.*

## Watch our events!

If you are unable to make it in-person to Bryan Hall, most of our events are recorded and available to watch. Go to YouTube and search for Foley Institute, or scan this QR code.

Many of our events are recorded, and available to watch again.

Go to **YouTube** and search for **Foley Institute**

[www.youtube.com/@FoleyInstitute](https://www.youtube.com/@FoleyInstitute)



## Other 2024 events: Middle East politics

### Israel and Palestine: Understanding the conflict



On February 1, WSU political science professor **Jacob Lewis** facilitated a discussion about the war in Gaza between **Dana El Kurd**, a scholar of politics in the Arab world, and Jewish scholar **Avishay Ben-Sasson-Gordis**. The discussion was held in front of a large audience in the CUB Auditorium in Pullman.

El Kurd explained the relationship between Palestinians, Hamas, and Gaza. She said many Palestinians saw the October 7 attacks as result

of feelings of political disempowerment and a crushed civil society in Gaza. Detailing the history of Israel-Palestine relations, El Kurd said she feared the Israeli reaction in Gaza to the October 7 attacks were the beginning of what might also happen in West Bank and Jerusalem.

Sasson-Gordis discussed Israeli interpretations of the conflict and how it was informing their military response to attack. He said the majority of Israeli Jews experienced a deep sense of insecurity and rage following October 7, and explained Israelis' feelings of justification to respond with overwhelming force against Hamas as the aggressors the war.

*Dana El Kurd is assistant professor of political science at the University of Richmond, Avishay Ben-Sasson-Gordis is a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University, and Jacob Lewis is associate professor of political science at WSU.*

### Lessons (Un)learned: The roots of Middle East violence

On February 29, WSU professor **Lawrence Pintak** spoke about ongoing violence in the Middle East.

Drawing from his first-hand experience as a reporter during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Professor Pintak shed light on the broader implications and historical context surrounding the region's present turmoil.

He discussed U.S. involvement throughout pivotal events, such as the invasion of Lebanon, and subsequent international and American accountability for the resulting atrocities. The Beirut Marine barracks bombing of 1983, he suggested, was the birth of modern anti-American terrorism in the region. He concluded the talk by discussing the current state of Gaza, arguing that persistent exposure to violence fosters radicalization, breeding a generation of terrorists.



*Lawrence Pintak is professor and founding dean of the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at WSU.*

# Other 2024 events: Election administration

## Bipartisan electoral reform and the 2024 election

On January 22, the institute hosted former Washington Secretary of State, **Kim Wyman**.

Wyman acknowledged that going into the 2024 election, the United States is living in one of the most politically polarized times in the nation's history. She addressed the importance of an honest, secure, and transparent election process to American democracy. This, she said, is now at risk due to polarization.

Wyman continued by saying that voting should be a seamless process, emphasizing that early voting and voting by mail systems are safer than in-person balloting, allowing more individuals to cast ballots and participate in democracy. Wyman also discussed ways to enhance confidence in election administration, such as support for voter ID laws so long as they are accessible to everyone financially and otherwise.

*Kim Wyman served as Washington State's 15th Secretary of State from 2013–2021 and worked in the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency during the Biden administration.*



## Election integrity symposium in Olympia, Washington

On February 23 the institute held its annual event in collaboration with the Washington Secretary of State's Office in Olympia, moderated by Secretary of State, Steve Hobbs.



L-r to right: institute director Cornell Clayton; John Keller, United States Department of Justice; Secretary of State Steve Hobbs; Liz Howard, the Brennan Center for Justice.

The discussion addressed election integrity with reference in the 2024 presidential election. All of the panelists pointed to the challenges facing election officials across the country, and highlighted the alarming trend of harassment and threats directed towards these officials.

Liz Howard emphasized the urgent need to address the safety of local election officials, while John Keller focused on the importance of educating the public about the election process and providing greater transparency. Many citizens, he said, remain unaware of the rigorous procedures and safeguards in place to ensure fair and transparent elections such as ballot verification and ballot auditing.

A recurring theme was the crucial role of civic engagement in safeguarding election integrity, and all speakers emphasized the importance of volunteering with election officials and actively participating in democratic processes.

## Other 2024 events: Law & courts

### Rural Access to Justice and the Washington State Bar



On January 25, the institute hosted **Hunter Abell**, president of the Washington State Bar, and **Rusty McGuire**, a local attorney, who spoke to pre-law

students about practicing law in rural areas of Washington State.

Abell explained the challenges of encouraging lawyers to practice law in rural areas where salaries and firms are smaller. Consequently, he said, there is a dearth of lawyers serving the state's rural communities, often as few as one per county. McGuire, on the other hand,



discussed the myriad benefits of rural practice such as a lower cost of living and closer relationships with clients.

Finally, they both emphasized the invaluable connection that rural lawyers form with the community they serve and the greater sense of fulfillment one may have in practicing law.

*Hunter Abell is president of the Washington State Bar Association, and Rusty McGuire is a partner with the Carpenter, McGuire and DeWulf law firm.*

### Washington Supreme Court Chief Justice discusses AI and the Courts



On March 27, the institute hosted Washington State Supreme Court Justice **Debra Stephens** for a discussion around how artificial intelligence is impacting the legal system and courts.

After defining AI, Justice Stephens explained the many ways it is being used in the practice of law, such as in the drafting documents/emails, developing litigation strategies, and legal research. She also explained the executive order put into place by the Biden Administration which, mirroring European Union policies, attempts to categorize types of AI use and the risks associated with them.

Justice Stephens concluded by saying one of the biggest concerns today is evidence admitted in court that does not have adequate authentication. She noted that authentication of digital evidence is a step the courts will likely take in the future.

*Debra Stephens has served on the Washington Supreme Court since 2007. She is currently serving her second term as chief justice.*

## Other 2024 events

### Do Humans have ethical obligations to the land?

On March 18, **Roberta Millstein** from the University of California, Davis, discussed Aldo Leopold's concept of land health and its implications around ethical environmental policies.

Leopold's background in ecology and conservation, Millstein said, led him to define a land ethic as the preservation and enhancement of land communities' ability to self-renew. Millstein elaborated on her interpretation of Leopold's ideas, focusing on his consistency argument, our ethical obligations to the land, and the importance of interdependence of all living and nonliving elements of a community.

She underscored the reciprocal relationship between humans and the land, and concluded by stressing the interconnectedness of animals, plants, and humans, arguing for a deeper reflection on our ethical responsibilities towards the land.

*Roberta L. Millstein is emeritus professor in the department of philosophy at the University of California, Davis.*



### Gender equality behind bars

On September 29, the institute hosted a panel to discuss the forthcoming book *Gender and Penalty Policies Across the Globe: A Feminist Approach*, which was published by Palgrave.

Those on the panel agreed that there was a gap in our understanding of gender equality in prison. Contributors to the volume analyzed both prisons and immigration detention centers, taking a comparative approach towards examining the conditions of incarcerated women. They addressed the challenges to achieving gender equality policies, including institutional norms, limited information, tendencies of feminist groups to stay away, the number of women in relation to men, and the number of women exposed to gender-based violence while incarcerated.

The group then summarized some of their case studies, which highlighted the inequality faced by women and the significant challenges involved in reforming



*The panel featured from l-r: Discussant Faith Lutze, WSU; coeditors Ana Ballesteros-Pena and María Bustelo, Complutense University of Madrid; and Amy Mazur, WSU.*

these systems and offered possible solutions, such as community-based responses, providing resources and services to incarcerated women, and protecting those rights that are already in place.

# Spring 2025 events

## Can beer save democracy?

On February 12, the institute hosted WSU philosophy professor **Michael Goldsby** who began his talk with a quote from Abraham Lincoln, whose belief was that the American people, “when provided with truth and beer” could meet any challenge.

Goldsby discussed the virtues of American democracy that make it worth saving, such as the ability to register both content or discontent with our leaders and policies, the rule of law, and the reverence for basic rights.

He argued that a ‘marketplace’ of ideas, where we can entertain a wide variety of pursuits, is crucial to democracy, but that polarization had eroded the common ground required for a true public square. Sharing a beverage, Goldsby argued, could be a solution to the hyperpolarization threatening our democratic institutions.

In conclusion, he suggested that drinking with others promotes civility due to the nature of

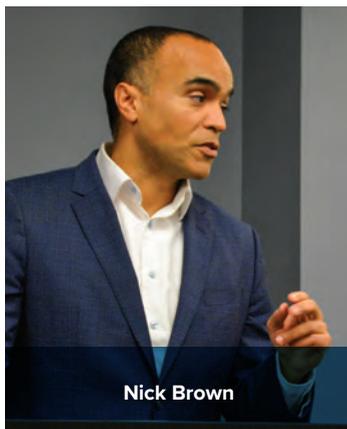
in-person dialogue, and he noted it can also foster revitalized interest in local politics.

*Michael Goldsby is associate professor of philosophy at WSU.*



## Defending Washington

### A conversation with the State’s Attorney General



On February 24, Washington State’s Attorney General, **Nick Brown**, spoke to students about ongoing litigation against the Trump administration and additional responsibilities of his office.

Brown noted that Washington was leading two legal challenges against Trump administration policies that restricted gender affirming care and against the revocation of birthright citizenship protections.

In addition, Washington has joined several lawsuits with other states around the federal financial assistance freeze, foreign aid payments, and Privacy Act violations.

Brown fielded questions from the audience, touching on Supreme Court decisions, mass layoffs in federal agencies, and the state budget deficit. He discussed the conditions that must be met for Washington to join a lawsuit and how his office selects and prioritizes cases. He concluded by assuring the audience of his office’s intention to keep the rights of Washingtonians and the Constitution at the heart of his practice.

*Elected to office in November of 2024, Nick Brown is Washington State’s 19th Attorney General.*

# Spring 2025 events

## Defamation, disinformation, and democracy

On February 27, the institute hosted University of Utah law professor **RonNell Andersen Jones**, who spoke about the threat political defamation lawsuits posed to First Amendment rights.

In the landmark 1964 case *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* the U.S. Supreme Court raised a high bar, preventing public officials from easily suing for defamation. The Court said the ability to criticize public officials was central to democracy and a core freedom protected by the First Amendment, even though it conceded that falsehoods would be inevitable in this free space.

In recent decisions, Andersen Jones said, the Court has indicated a willingness to reconsider that decision and make it easier for public officials to sue the media for defamation. While public officials are increasingly vulnerable to misinformation and unfair attack by politically polarized media, Professor Andersen Jones argued such disinformation often fails to meet the criteria of defamation because, although it contains lies, it typically lacks reputational damage

Nevertheless, such suits will have a chilling effect on political discourse and criticism of elected officials because media corporation fear the cost of litigation and possibilities of retaliation. Several recent high-profile defamation lawsuits, such as President Trump's defamation lawsuit against ABC News, she concluded, indicated how easy it was for defamation suits to be weaponized to chill democratic debate and discussion.



RonNell Andersen Jones

*Professor RonNell Andersen Jones is a University Distinguished Professor and the Lee E. Teitelbaum Chair in Law at the University of Utah.*

## Counting on the youth vote?

On March 17, the institute held its annual symposium in collaboration with the Washington Secretary of State's office in Olympia, Washington, moderated by Secretary of State **Steve Hobbs**.

**Erin Heys** from the University of California at Berkeley discussed trends in youth voting. The 18-24 age group is consistently the least likely to vote and turnout among that group has been declining over time. **Steve Vuleta** from the Secretary of State's Office discussed the Civic Engagement Program in Washington State, which aims to bridge the gap between state government and those who experience barriers in engaging with democracy. He described avenues to civic engagement, such as educational and community involvement programs which help young people connect with political institutions. The symposium concluded with **Kendall Hodson** from the King County Elections Office



*Panelists l-r: Kendall Hodson, King County Elections Office; Steve Vuleta, WA Secretary of State's Office; Erin Heys, Deputy Director, Democracy Policy Initiative, UC Berkeley, and Secretary of State Steve Hobbs.*

discussing ways in which her office attempts to increase youth engagement through the classroom and through grants to community outreach programs.

## Spring 2025 events

### The Ukraine crisis and the collapse of the post— WWII world order

On March 28, the institute hosted WSU political science professor **Thomas Preston** to talk about the Ukraine crisis.

Professor Preston said that the post-WWII liberal world order, mostly constructed by the United States, was now being abandoned by the Trump administration in favor of a “realist” approach to foreign policy, as evidenced by the repudiation of Ukrainian security guarantees.

Discussing the situation on the ground in Ukraine, and how Western military aid was vital in enabling the Ukrainian defense against a superior Russian military, a roadblock to aid was now American domestic politics and opposition from Republicans. Preston described the change in American foreign policy as a “seismic shift”, less about isolationism as opposed to a nationalist populism concerned with increasing America’s power. He expressed concern that this would erode the U.S.’s reputation among its allies.



Preston concluded by assessing the possibility of a Ukrainian loss that would embolden Russia and potentially lead to further territorial aggression, while elsewhere, China might see the U.S. withdrawal as an incentive to tighten its grip around Taiwan and the South China Sea.

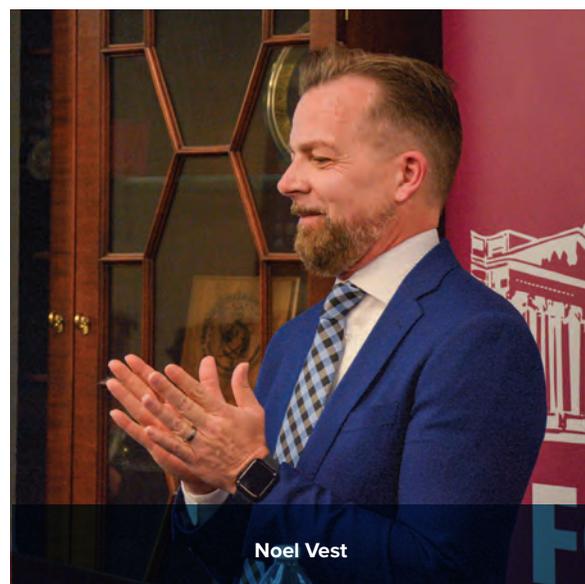
*Thomas Preston is C. O. Johnson Distinguished Professor of Political Science at WSU.*

### The fentanyl crisis and college campuses

On April 21, the institute hosted Boston University’s **Noel Vest**, who discussed his research on fentanyl-related deaths at universities. He noted that while most existing studies of the problem focus on prevention, a majority of college students are willing to intervene in an overdose but few know how to administer naloxone. A phased implementation of opioid prevention and overdose response programs is key to overcoming the fentanyl problem on campuses.

Vest concluded by examining the future direction of opioid overdose research and policy. He highlighted how Washington State is leading the way on policies around harm reduction and overdose prevention.

*Noel Vest is assistant professor at Boston University. He received his Ph.D. from WSU.*



## Cosponsored events

### Reporting from the state capitol

On March 4, 2025, the institute and the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication presented the 2025 Media and Politics Symposium on the declining media presence in Olympia covering state politics.

**Jennifer Henrichsen** from WSU provided an overview of her team's research on the local news ecosystem in Washington, which found the state was not immune to the challenges facing news outlets, with rural areas especially susceptible to a loss of local news outlets and reporters.

**Matthew Powers** from the University of Washington focused his comments on Olympia. His analysis of media in Olympia over the past several years found that the news landscape had transformed, with the press corps becoming younger and less male-dominated. At the same time, there had been a shift in content toward more human interest and stories such as environmental, hot button cultural issues, and less "turn of the screw" investigative reporting.



*Pictured l-r: Jennifer Henrichsen is assistant professor in the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, Matthew Powers is professor in the department of communication at the University of Washington and Benjamin Shors is professor of practice in the Murrow College of Communication.*

Finally, **Benjamin Shors**, from the Murrow College, responded that there is more availability of free political news than ever before, but that the bigger issue is trying to encourage the public to engage with it. He noted the general lack of trust in the media and suggested the need for more investment in news and journalism infrastructure to regain that trust.

### Politics and the trickster

On April 18, 2024, the institute sponsored a talk in collaboration with the WSU Political Science Club, featuring Humanities Washington speaker **Shepherd Siegel**.

Dr. Siegel spoke about the "Trickster" character type, a universal folktale archetype that commonly challenges societal values and beliefs. Historically, the political manifestation of the trickster came in the form of the court jester, as they could still play their trickster role, yet exert political influence on leadership. Tricksters are also effective at leading anti-establishment movements, as they tend to challenge the status quo and bring light to societal issues.

In politics, Siegel suggested, they may not make the best leaders due to their boundary pushing nature and moral ambiguity.

*Shepherd Siegel is an author and activist.*



**Shepherd Siegel**

# Cosponsored events

## Adam Savage

On April 21, 2025, the institute collaborated with the ASWSU Campus Sustainability program to host a meet and greet with television personality and co-host of Mythbusters, Adam Savage, as part of a larger event for Earth Day.

The audience enjoyed stories from Mr. Savage, who then spoke individually to students, including the sustainability team pictured below.



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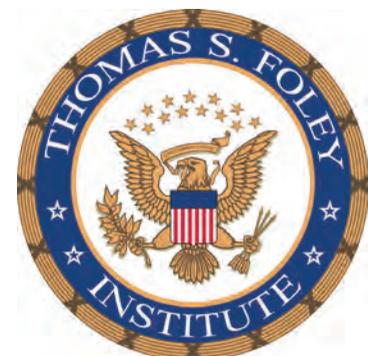
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# Undergraduate internships

The Foley Institute continues to place students in political science and public policy internships in numerous settings in Washington state, around America, and abroad. This update covers the period August 2024 to May 2025.

In 2024 and 2025, seven students interned at the Washington State Legislature in their excellent program: **Patrick Brower, Taye Jones, Brendan Marczuk, Asres Morris, Vendee Pannkuk, Arya Placensia, and Elani Scott.**

There were two international internships carried out: **Amelie Sulit** interned for Green Empowerment/ Sibol ng Agham at Teknolohiya (SIBAT) in the Philippines, and **Anika Wood** carried out an internship in Zimbabwe, for the Accountability Lab.

**Charles Finney** had an internship with Democracy First, and **Katie Astruon** and **Grace Vanderlay** interned with law offices (Grace also interned with Student Legal Services at WSU). **Shanaya Henderson** was an intern with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, based at the Evergreen State College.

On campus, several students had internships with Student Involvement's Cougs Vote program: They were **Sullivan Abrams, Olivia Corona, Filip Janousek, and Jacob Norris.**

Student Legal Services (SLS) and the Pre-Law Resource Center (PLRC) continue to provide good experience for pre-law students. **Eva Baydo-Bravo, Hannah Gaffney, Samuel Jang, Olivia Rodman, Grace Vanderlay, and Kaylie Wilson** all interned at SLS, and **Siju Apejaye, Zoe Dale, Lucas Issler, Tiernyn Purcell, Lila Rose Ziebarth, Grace Vanderlay, and Grace Van Zandt** were interns with the PLRC.

**Macy Yanega** interned with the Associated Students of WSU, **Camryn Jewell** had an internship with International Programs, while **Amaris Cupples** was a Student Ambassador for International Programs.

Finally, as always, the institute owes a debt of gratitude to our interns. Thank you to **Kendall Browder, Emily Frey, Jaesha Sherman, Emma Soderstrom, Hannah Wargo, and Nicholas Wong**, all pictured below with **Heather Foley and Richard Elgar.**



Intern Zoe Dale pictured with U.S. Representative Michael Baumgartner



Amelie Sulit with the SIBAT team in the Philippines



Thanks to the generous support of our donors, the institute is able to offer scholarships to our interns, including the Lance LeLoup Congressional Scholarship for internships in the U.S. Congress. Please contact us or visit us online at [foley.wsu.edu](http://foley.wsu.edu) if you would like to know more and/or are interested in contributing to our scholarship funds.

## Graduate fellowships

Each year the institute awards research fellowships to graduate students working on important public policy questions. These fellowships are available thanks to the generosity of **Scott and Betty Lukins**, **Alice O. Rice**, and the **Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Foundation**.



**Yin-Ru Chen's** (political science) research examines how gender mainstreaming (GM), an initiative launched by the United Nations in 1995, has been implemented in Taiwan. Using a mixed-methods approach, she analyzes the GM program

from both macro- and micro-level perspectives, revealing that the design of the GM program and its instruments play crucial roles in shaping implementation success and challenges.



**Anna Ivanova** (political science) researches the changing dynamics of Arctic governance by tracking who attends Arctic Council meetings and how that participation has evolved over time. Her project resulted in a new dataset

covering over two decades of meeting records (1996–2025), documenting the presence of member states, permanent participants, and observer states across ministerial meetings, working groups, and task forces, and reveals a growing role for non-Arctic actors in regional governance.



**Christian Maynard's** (sociology) research examines the effect of cannabis legalization on adolescent behavior and attitudes. His work emphasizes differences in use, by consumption techniques (edible, smoke,

vape) among adolescents, and explores granular policy provisions (e.g., dispensaries sales, duration of legalization) to identify trends in reported availability and perceived risk towards cannabis.



**Sreya Mukherjee's** (history) research conducted in the Willard Archives explores the socio-cultural and medical discourses surrounding alcohol consumption in late 19th and early 20th century colonial India, focusing on

the work of the Bengal branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). The WCTU played a key role in shaping public perceptions of liquor through vernacular temperance literature, periodicals, and reports. Her work analyzes the integral role women played in expanding the sway of temperance struggles and its impact on broader social issues, civic responsibility, and moral expectations.



**Sydney Smith's** (political science) research project examines how the rise of anti-gender movements in Europe has led to significant resistance to the ratification of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, a treaty aimed at preventing and

combating violence against women, in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Her comparative case study and process tracing investigates how critical actors—including political parties, anti-gender activists, and public discourse—have shaped opposition to the Convention.



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