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THE JOHNSONIAN

Nov. 5, 2026 Winthrop University

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES ACROSS CAMPUS

The Disabled Student Union shared a video on Instagram, focusing on concerns.

Featured on Page 2

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ON THE RISE

Winthrop women's basketball showcases new faces and talent this season.

Featured on Page 3

ACTIVISIM BEYOND A HASHTAG

With mid-term elections approaching, people speak up through social media.

Featured on Page 5

President Trump holds midterm rally near Winthrop University before Election Day

Trump visited Rock Hill, SC to campaign for Darline Graham after speaking at Clemson University less than two weeks.



Photo by Chase Duncan

Sign at the construction site of Winthrop's new residence hall

Chase Duncan
Copy Editor

President Donald Trump told South Carolina voters to vote for Darline Graham and not for the "Dumbocrats" if they want the economy to stay as strong as it has been during his second term.

"Our economy is roaring, but if the Dumbocrats win they will burn it all down," Trump said.
"It'll end all those jobs. … income levels just came out, record setting income, individual income at a record setting level. Nobody's ever seen those numbers."

Hundreds of people waited in line outside the Rock Hill Sports & Events Center in the chilly autumn morning weather on Oct. 29 to hear Trump, along with other prominent conservative speakers, motivate South Carolinians to vote Republican for SC Senate.

The president told attendees at the event to put aside their personal disagreements with the Republican candidates and vote like his name is on the ballot, or as he puts it, "because I am on the ballot."

"When I'm on the ballot, for whatever reason, 49.2% more people show up… All of these things we've done, all of these incredible successes… We're not even that close to two years. There's never been two years like this for any other president," Trump said.

Graham spoke to the crowd before Trump came on stage to speak about why she is the right person to win South Carolina's Senate and said that her Democrat opponent Annie Andrews is too radical for S.C.

"Annie Andrews isn't running to serve you, and she's certainly not running to represent South Carolina's conservative values," Graham said. "She's running for celebrity status, drinking cocktails with the Hollywood and Washington liberals who are bankrolling her campaign. They're just pouring tons of money into her."

Graham said that she wants to take her love for her state and values to the United States Senate, where it is "desperately needed."

"When I think of South Carolina, I think of three things: God, family and country… I am a proud conservative Christian who will fight every single day for your family. Democrat Annie Andrews is the most radical liberal candidate in the history of South Carolina. Like they say out in the country, she is just plain old batshit crazy," Graham said.

Trump's most pronounced reason for why voters should elect Graham is the economic development his administration has achieved by placing

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"Everybody's got a secret:" Behind the scenes of Covenant

Winthrop Theatre brings horror, faith and black culture to the stage

Samiyah Heyward
Staff Writer

At the Johnson Theatre, Winthrop's Department of Theatre is set to perform Covenant, a southern gothic thriller and black horror play written by York Walker. Taking place in a small town in Georgia during the Jim Crow era, this show explores themes such as hidden trauma, rumors, faith, systemic racism and the thin veil between the divine and demonic.

Samiyah Jeffery, senior theatre performance major and director of the play, explained her process in choosing the play.

"Originally, I had a completely different play chosen. It was more family oriented and comedic while still commenting on serious topics concerning the black community, but I couldn't get the rights to that show," Jeffery said. "Because of this, I decided to jump off the deep end and do horror as I realized it's so rare to see live horror plays, making black horror plays even more rare to see. This is how I found Covenant."

Jeffery went on to explain the meaning behind the play, emphasizing the role of religion and how the line between faith and desire can be ignored

"It shows the differing perspectives on religion in the black household depending on the generations that live within it. The elder versus the young perspective clashes throughout the play as pieces of the past unfolds before us all [...] It is a common experience for black youth to experience a heavy inclusion of religion from elders and this is meant to bring about the question of how religion has been utilized [and] weaponized in the black household." Jeffery said.

She added, "I view religion, Christianity especially, as something that has carried us through enslavement, acting as a beacon of hope. In the later generations however, it began to become a form of restriction for the youth [...] Change is inevitable so we must learn how to carry our values and traditions on in a manner that allows room for the evolution of our community," Jeffery said.

Covenant is rooted in a variety of meanings that are anchored to black culture and history, but the rehearsals are where the story gets built.

"[Rehearsals] naturally add on stress and require more time and dedication to get everything ready and done for the show," Jeffery said.

She further explained the process behind the production and the amount of time and effort is required to piece the plot together during tech week.

During the beginning of rehearsals, cast members walk through an imaginary grid for a physical and vocal warm up in order to help them embody their characters. From there they proceed to do two tap ins, one for connection and another to check in with boundaries, to ensure that rehearsals run according to plan.

"This is also where they can state that

Continued on Page 3



Photo via ClubEleven

Winthrop's Inspire soccer team celebrates post game

Winthrop's Inspire Soccer Team gives athletes with intellectual impairment a national stage

In its first season, the volunteer-run team has flown across the country, built friendships and set a model for inclusive sports in Rock Hill.

Natalia Barthel
Staff Writer

Winthrop University now fields a team in the Inspire Soccer League, the first nationwide, year-long competitive league for athletes with intellectual impairment, and the team is changing what sports look like for the Rock Hill community.

"This team is about so much more than soccer," said Mikaela Sites, the Inspire team lead at Winthrop. "It's about creating opportunities for athletes to challenge themselves, build friendships, develop confidence, become part of a team and experience things they may not otherwise experience."

Sites helps lead the team and recruits students in WinthropLife, which is the university's program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. LIFE students live on campus, take classes and work in the community as they earn a certificate. Several of them play for the team, and Sites said athletes outside the program have also expressed interest in joining the team.

Training began over the summer, with Winthrop's women's soccer team and coaching staff helping to launch the program through initial training sessions and recruiting. Winthrop soccer alumni are also volunteering as coaches to support the team through the season.

"One of the strengths of our coaching staff is the variety of backgrounds and experiences that each

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Bailey Wimberly | Editor-in-Chief

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Police Blotter

Chase Duncan
Copy Editor

Student argument turns into knife standoff, no one harmed

The Winthrop University Police Department investigated an purported altercation between two Winthrop students living at The Courtyard on Oct. 19.

Upon contact with the students, WUPD officers determined that a confrontation occurred after student #1 entered student #2's apartment and intentionally damaged personal property belonging to student #2. In response, student #2 entered student #1's apartment and waited for them to return, upon which the two verbally confronted one another and escalated to displaying knives to one another.

The two were referred to the Dean of Students for review and potential disciplinary action.

WUPD catch bike/scooter thief with bait bike

A WUPD officer responded to the area near West Thomson Hall on October 19 in reference to an alert indicating that a bait bike had been moved out of its deployment. The officer was able to monitor its location and locate the subject using the bike's tracking system. Following the investigation, the subject was arrested and charged with larceny of a bicycle and the bike was recovered.

Student pedestrian struck and pinned by another student's vehicle, no life-threatening injures

A WUPD officer responded to the area near Cherry Road and Richland Street in reference to a collision involving a motor vehicle and a pedestrian, who were both Winthrop students.

The pedestrian was travelling westbound on his bicycle on Cherry Road when the driver attempted to turn right into the Cherry Road parking lot, striking the pedestrian's bike and trapping them under the vehicle. The victim was transported to Piedmont Medical Center for further treatment of his injuries, which appeared to be non-life threatening.

President Trump visits Rock Hill Cont.

tariffs and bringing in international businesses, which she would continue to support if elected.

"Consumer spending is way up. Business investment is at record levels. Investment in new equipment exploded by 21%... you know why that is? It's the tax credit you get under the great Big Beautiful Bill the businesses get. But even more important is because of the tariffs. Because all these companies are coming in, they're flooding America."

"You have the most number of jobs, people working than you've ever had. I could read a few of the numbers and just walk off the stage and say,'Vote for Darline Graham, I'm leaving now'. I don't have to waste a lot of time because after I give you some of the basic numbers, the rest is just fluff. The rest is just a little entertainment for you," Trump said.

The president derided Andrews as a "vicious anti-gun radical" and referred to her stance on transgender issues by using the derogatory nickname "Tranny Annie."

"Tranny Annie is a mutilizer, a rabid advocate for taxpayer funded child sexual mutilation… She is too crazy, too dangerous and too radical to serve in the United States Senate, and certainly not from this state," Trump said.

Trump said the number one way to keep his administration's agenda progressing as strongly as it has been is to vote for Graham, a choice that he believes will also make her late brother and former S.C. senator Lindsey Graham proud.

"If you want to keep this growth going, you must vote Republican and you must vote for a really amazing person, Darline Graham. …Your brother's looking down, and he's going to be Tuesday night. Let's make Lindsay really happy and proud," Trump said.

Near the end of his speech, Trump invited members of the Winthrop men's golf team on stage to shake their hands and compliment them on being a "very good looking group."

Cole Rouse, a junior finance major, was one of the players who went on stage with the president. He said he attended the event to support Trump and the Republican party ahead of the election.

"I thought Trump was great. I thought everyone that came before him was great too, really delivering a take home message to the voters before Tuesday," Rouse said. "[Trump] was super cool, he's an awesome guy, I shook his hand. Everything, the good things people say about him, is true."

During the rally, students from various Winthrop clubs and organizations gathered at the intersection of Dave Lyle Boulevard and East White Street alongside local organizations to protest Trump's appearance in Rock Hill. Counter-protesters carried handmade signs and graphics, and some gathered near the cemetery on West White Street across from the event.

Junior mass communication major Kenya Hines attended the Trump rally to write about it for one of her classes.

"It was very interesting, to say the least," Hines said. "You see a lot from the outside and on the news, seeing it in the media, but actually being there to see it happen in real life, it's very… it's scary, I'm not gonna lie. It's very scary to say the least, and I'm very worried."

The president's appearance in Rock Hill was one of the last of over 25 rallies he has held in October 2026, according to NPR.



Photo by Jackson Stanton

Protestors and signs fill the street outside of Trump's rally

Accessibility issues on campus disrupts the day-to-day activites of students

Recurring issues with accessibility on Winthrop's campus has driven students into outrage.



Photo by Zoey Molina

The avoiding gluten section at Thomson dining hall, which is inaccessible to wheelchair users

Ta'Ni Miller
News Editor

An Instagram reel posted by the Disabled Student Union gained traction amongst Winthrop students and staff after it addressed concerns of accessibility issues across campus.

The video mentioned issues such as inaccessible shelving and placement of food, utensils and cups in the Eagle Eatery located in the Thompson Residence Hall. It also highlighted a lack of alternative food choices for students.

Winthrop requires students who live on campus to purchase a meal plan. Students with dietary restrictions or food preferences expressed that they should be given more options if required to purchase a meal plan.

Students with gluten free restrictions, severe food allergies and religion based dietary restrictions have a limited choice in dining options.

Students have witnessed that the section in the dining hall that houses alternative food options is often not stocked during most hours of the day.

In addition to food issues in campus dining spaces, issues of old infrastructure and problematic maintenance to sidewalks have been raised.

Many existing doorways, elevators, and ramps have frequent service issues, making it difficult for people utilizing mobility aids to navigate safely on campus.

One highlighted example in the video included ledges on doorways and sidewalks that can create a dangerous situation for wheelchair users. Such roadblocks can cause the user to lose grip on their items or cause the chair to fold.

Layne Collins, freshman elementary education student, is one of the founders of the Disabled Student Union and was featured in the instagram reel.

The Disabled Student Union is a proposed student club awaiting approval by SGA whose goal is centered around "creating community for disabled and able-bodied students," said Layne. "We want to create a safe space to talk [about] accessibility so we can make a more aware and connected place."

Due to these issues on campus, students with mobility aids do not feel comfortable or safe navigating to classes. Students should feel comfortable and able to traverse campus without the need for assistance from others.

Emma Grace Davidson, Office of Accessibility Representative in the Student Government Association (SGA) who serves as a bridgeway for students with disabilities to voice concerns to upper faculty and staff, is another founder of the Disabled Student Union.

She explained that the union was formed to help address issues of ableism and help educate others on why accessibility is important.

"I am always on Instagram posting questions if I need to get in contact with anyone. I am also working closely with our ADA coordinator here." Davidson said.

The ADA coordinator is an official who works closely with the university to ensure that they are in compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

SGA also hosts campus safety walks throughout the year where they identify hazardous roadblocks on campus.

Davidson shared that some of her efforts in this position include getting handicap parking spots added around campus and issuing notices for uneven sidewalk terrain. These notices go to the university and are then flattened for wheelchair users.

"In my opinion, accessibility should never be optional. It makes students comfortable and Winthrop advertises that it is a place for all, so it should be. That is why I am willing to speak up and speak to anyone I need to," Davidson said.

When asked if a proposed deadline

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AC&T

November 5, 2026

Winthrop Theatre's "Covenant" cont.

they do not want to do anything intimacy related during the run. Afterwards, they do a complete run of the show and I, as the director, may stop them to fix various things".

Jeffery went on to speak about how individuals in the crowd may relate to the characters, along with the message she wants to convey amongst the audience.

"I don't want to give too much away for the sake of the audience seeing the show for themselves, but the connections between each character has an entire history of its own both implied and stated throughout the play. When getting a glimpse into their past, their actions have so much more meaning to it as it completely controls their everyday life mannerisms," Jeffery said.

"I want the audience to reflect on how one's own desire or faith overpowers their life and those around them."

Covenant is set to open its doors on Nov. 4 and close on Nov. 8. Tickets are five dollars for Winthrop students and senior citizens and ten dollars for general admission.



Photo via Winthrop Theatre

Presented by Winthrop Theatre: "Covenant"

Fun local fall activities in the York and Charlotte community

How to both celebrate the season and support the local community.

Gabriela Griggs
AC&T Editor

As the leaves on campus begin to turn from green to orange, it's obvious that summer is finally at its end. The best way to celebrate is by participating in local, fun autumnal activities. There are plenty of events to participate in the York County area, ranging from classic pumpkin patches and farmstands to even campus events.

Peak foliage for both the Rock Hill and Charlotte area is estimated to be from early to mid November, with November 14 as a rough estimate. That makes this month the perfect time to explore various parks, lookouts and other outdoor spaces to see some of the fall colors and season take shape.

Allison Creek Park, located in Lake Wylie, is a major local campground with many walking trails. Located at 2499 Viesta Road, York, this park is known for its breathtaking views of the changing leaves and is just a 25 minute drive from campus.

Anna Springs Close Greenway, a local nature preserve, has much to offer this fall season. While these trails are more optimal for biking and hiking, they provide beautiful views of local nature and fall colors. The Greenway is located at 250 Dairy Barn Lane in Fort Mill.

Besides trails, there are other ways to get up close to autumnal scenery.

In York, Windy Hill Orchard and Cidery hosts weekend hayrides. These rides go through the orchard and typically run from noon to 4 in the afternoon. The orchard also hosts fire pits, apple celebrations and serves pumpkin donuts all throughout the month of November.

Windy Hill also has live music from local artists throughout the weekend. Visitors can swing by the cider bar and try seasonal drinks, purchase seasonal food and drinks from the farm stand and listen to live performances.

Windy Hill Orchard and Cidery is located at 1860 Black Highway in York. Various routes to the location can also be found on their website, but averages about a 30 minute drive from campus.

Although November might be a sparse season for produce, there are still plenty of upcoming annual events on and off campus to celebrate the changing season.

Farther from campus, however, in the "North End" area of Charlotte, Goodyear Arts will be hosting their Fall Residency Showcase. This opens the gallery to all to witness the art being created by the current resident artists of the gallery.

This showcase will feature works by local artists Simon Lane, Destiny Turner, Asha Iman and Jodi Mattiaccy. The reception will be hosted on November 6, from 6 to 9pm. The gallery will be hosting the exhibition throughout the month of November, officially concluding on the 28.

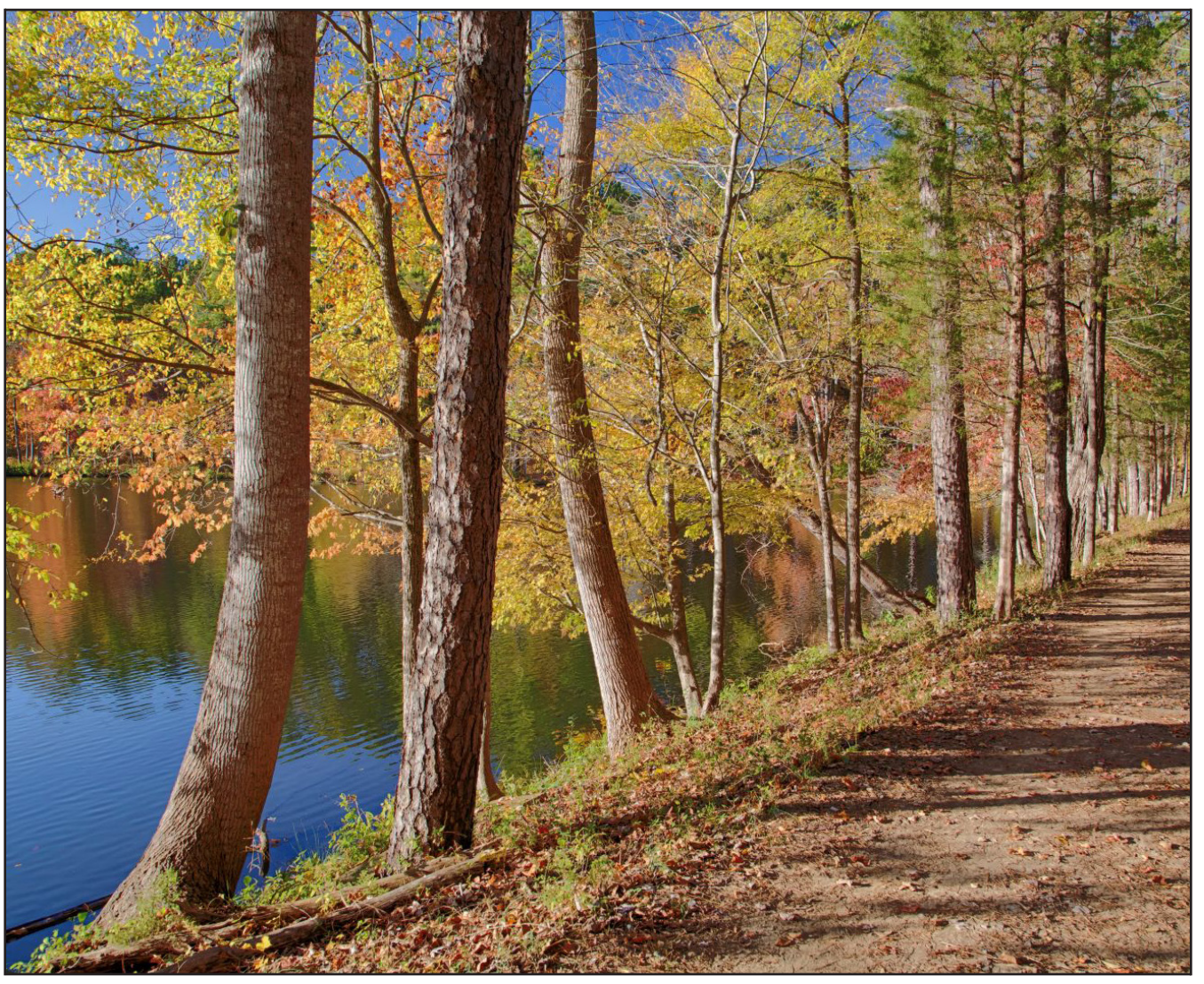
Goodyear Arts is located 301 Camp Road #200 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

On November 13 and 14, the Dance program will be performing a series of dances choreographed by both faculty and guest choreographers. This event is a great opportunity to see what the department has been working on this far into the semester.

Around mid- November, the annual Fall-One Acts will be hosted in Johnson Theatre. These productions are directed and put on by performing arts students and are a favorite of the fall season. This festival has been hosted annually since the 1999-2000 academic year.

Both events will be hosted in Johnson Theatre and offer discounted ticket prices for students, alongside cultural event credit for attendance.

There are many ways to celebrate the changing season, both on and off campus, while also supporting local farmers, vendors, and artists. Whether you'd rather go on a trail, listen to live music, or visit an exhibit there are plenty of activities and events to engage with.



Anne Springs Close Greenway Trail view and path

Photo via Anne Springs Close Greenway



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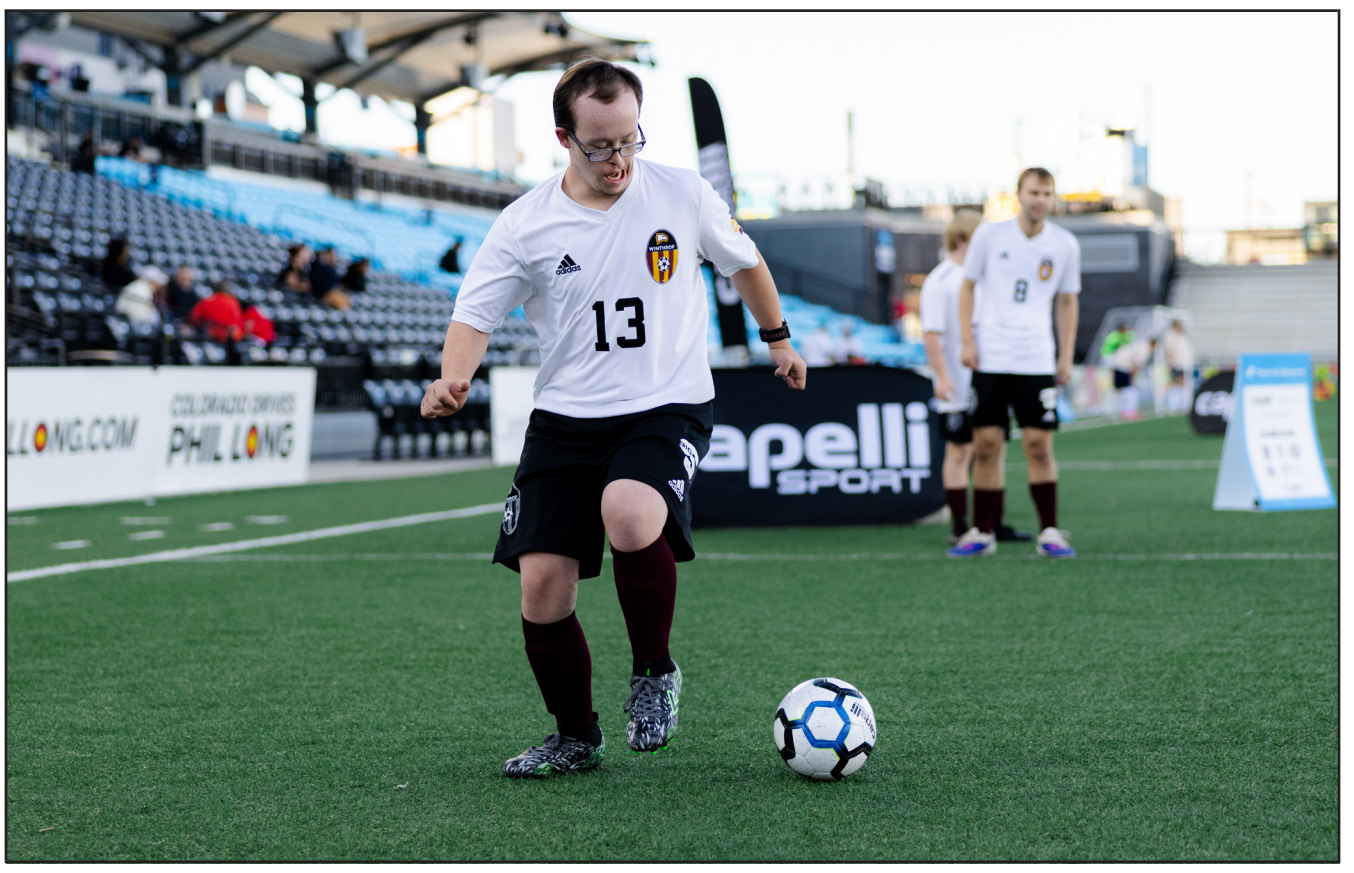
Winthrop Inspire soccer league Cont.

person brings to the program," Sites said. "Our head coach has a background in psychology, some of our coaches have personal connections through loved ones with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), and many of our staff members have extensive experience playing or working in soccer."

All coaches complete SafeSport training and background checks, and the team has started working with a local sport psychologist to support athletes' well-being.

"Coaching this team requires more than just knowledge of the game," Sites said. "It requires patience, adaptability, effective communication and an understanding that every athlete has different strengths, needs and abilities."

For some athletes, this season has been a collection of many firsts. Sites said players flew on an airplane or stayed in a hotel for the first time as the team traveled. Her own first trip with the team, to Spokane, Washington, showed her how much the league means to its athletes.



Hunter Rondina warms up before his match

Photo via ClubEleven

She was able to meet players from all across the country and watched as staff and volunteers cheered for every single participant.

"There is a wonderful balance between competition and community," Sites said. "The athletes take tremendous pride in representing their teams, and there is a strong level of competition, but it never comes before sportspersonship or supporting one another."

Sites called the first season a proof of concept. "We hope people recognize that these athletes are not simply participating in soccer for the sake of recreation; they are competitors, teammates and representatives of Winthrop who deserve the same opportunities to grow, compete and benefit from sport," she said.

Athletes play at no cost, and the team works to keep it that way. Winthrop set a $30,000 operating budget, and a grant from the Inspire Soccer League covers part of it.

The team raises the rest of their funding through donations in sponsorships. "We want to ensure that finances are not a barrier preventing our athletes from participating and having these experiences," Sites said.

Businesses and organizations can become sponsors or offer in-kind support, and individuals can donate. Community members can also show support by helping to spread word about the team.

The team plans to keep growing, reach more athletes and establish Winthrop and Rock Hill as leaders in inclusive athletics.

"We are incredibly proud of what we have built during our inaugural season, but we are just getting started," Sites said.

Fans can see the team at home Nov. 21-22 at the Eagle Field, when Winthrop hosts its first fixture, which includes the league's All-Star Game and Championship Weekend. The team will share ticket and event details on Instagram at @winthropISL. Anyone who wants to join or support the team can email Sites at sitesm@winthrop.edu.

Winthrop Women's Basketball Opens Season Against Newberry

Winthrop Women's Basketball's future looks bright with new players and top talent.

Kellan Hudson
Sports Editor

The Winthrop Eagles women's basketball team l is back in action with their season debut on November 2nd, against Newberry. The team is looking for the local Rock Hill community and Winthrop student body to get out to games and support the team in as many ways as they can.

In the 2025-2026 season Winthrop made it to the Big South semifinal round, getting knocked out by High Point, who later went on to win the Big South. The team finished 15-17 last year overall and 7-9 in the Big South. In the preseason polls Winthrop was projected to place sixth in the Big South so the girls are eager to get revenge and make a new name for themselves in the Big South.

"The standard is still the same as last year. We have a bunch of new faces on the team now. We really don't know what to expect because everyone's new teams in the conference are new. They [all] got a lot of new players coming in," Junior Madison Ruff said. Ruff is from Sparta, Georgia and transferred from Mount Saint Mary's two years ago.

Of the women's basketball teams 14 players, only four of those players are returners from last year. The overhaul of the team by bringing in 10 new players will offer new dynamics and new talent. There are three new international players who have joined the team as well. Lucia Skvarekova from Košice, Slovakia, Laura Silva from Lisbon, Portugal and Marta Guilera from La Granada, Spain.

Ruff was named to the pre-season Big South First Team All Conference list and is expected to make a big impact on the court this year.

"I love to be the aggressor on the court. I love defense, I love to cause chaos and just bring the energy on the floor and to my teammates," Ruff said.

Ruff averaged 11.2 points per game last year and was named a Big South Honorable Mention Player. Ruffs nomination to the First Team All Conference Team shows the potential she has and how she's growing in her game.

"It means a lot," Ruff said. "Last season I won honorable mention so it's just an award I didn't expect. I am very grateful for it.



Tocarra Johnson (#25) reaches over several defenders

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Another asset the team has is their highly decorated Head Coach Semeka Randall Lay. Randall Lay is entering her sixth year as Winthrop's head coach. Randall Lay played at The University of Tennessee and won the 1998 National Championship prior to a four year career in the Women's National Basketball Association WNBA). Randall Lay's tenure will continue to grow stability and success within the program.

Ruff is optimistic about the team's performance this year. Their coach has reminded them that pre-season placings and rankings don't mean anything since no one can predict how anyone will play, especially with all the new transfers. "The preseason poll right now really doesn't count. We haven't seen teams play this year," Ruff said. "The doors are open for anyone to be placed in any position."

The first conference game for the Winthrop women's basketball team is against High Point on December 30th. All women's basketball games for Winthrop are free for any enrolled students so it is important to the community and the team's energy and success to get fans out to games to build excitement around the team. Ruff and the rest of the Winthrop women's basketball team are ready to compete and make a name for themselves. "I'm hoping everyone is just ready to lace up their shoes and go harder than they did the first two scrimmages they had," Ruff said.

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EDITORIAL

November 5, 2026

Activism beyond a hashtag: view, like, and repost

Kira Rich
Editorial Editor

The accessibility of social media has made it easier than ever to speak out against injustice. It allows users to share information, raise awareness, engage in political discussion and show solidarity with communities facing discrimination or oppression with just a few clicks. Issues that once struggled to receive traction can now gain attention by millions within minutes. But with activism becoming the norm amongst social media culture, an important question comes in: when does raising awareness just become performing concern?

Performative activism is when you publicly support a social or political cause, but your primary goal is to enhance your image, gain approval or appear socially conscious, rather than actually contributing to meaningful change. The concept isn't solely on social media, but it fosters an environment where activism can become more about visibility rather than action.

The problem isn't that people use social media to discuss important issues or current events. In fact, digital platforms have been useful for organizing protests, for the distribution of resources and for the amplification of voices that are often ignored by the traditional media. The problem is when sharing a post is the beginning and end of someone's involvement.

Reposting the same infographic or a temporary story displaying solidarity can create the illusion of participation without any real commitment. They can show that they care, get kudos from their followers and move on to the next trending topic. Meanwhile, the communities affected by those problems continue to suffer long after the social media conversation has died down. In some cases these reposts can be proven to be ineffective or even harmful.

For example, in 2020, at the height of the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, reposting a black square was a trend to show solidarity. Theoretically great, but practically, how does a million black squares help the oppressed people? With the amount of attention the movement was getting, this act of solidarity could have been used as an opportunity to expand on the stories of victims followed by resources to help.

More recently, people were reposting AI images of the destruction in Gaza. The inaccuracy of the images and the recycling of AI content was ultimately more harmful than helpful. Eventually someone called out the AI usage and the photo was replaced with a real image that displayed the destruction in Gaza. People began reposting to real image on social media to spread awareness about the genocide taking place.

The pattern is especially visible when public attention moves from one global conflict or humanitarian crisis to another or to domestic political issues. For days, a single cause could take over social media feeds, with users posting the same graphics and statements. Then as another topic emerges and gains more traction, the previous issue seems to fade from online discussions. Just because an issue isn't trending doesn't mean that the humanitarian crisis is over.

There is also a growing tendency to make activism a measure of personal morality. Social media encourages users to build public personas through the opinions they express, the causes they support and the content they share. Another way to establish social status or distinguish oneself from others can be supporting the right causes. In this world, it can even become more important to appear to have the right opinions than to understand the questions.

With this being the new standard, it can be especially nerve-wracking for people who want to fit in with their peers or retain a following. Not everyone is politically involved, meaning they may not have the same knowledge. Such pressure can blind people from effectively speaking on a situation.

This creates a further problem: activism becomes less about helping others and more about protecting one's own reputation. Some users may share information simply because it matches their beliefs or is gaining a lot of engagement. Others may call out and publicly criticize issues online, without considering whether their actions are contributing to any meaningful solutions. Outrage becomes content, controversy becomes an opportunity for engagement.

But it would be wrong to imply that anyone who posts political or humanitarian content online is acting in bad faith. Awareness is a significant aspect of social change, and not everyone has the financial means, time or physical ability to participate in demonstrations, donate to organizations, or volunteer their time and that's okay. For some people, sharing information may be one of the few ways to participate in public conversations.

Social media activism can also expose users to views they may have never been exposed to otherwise. It can give visibility to grassroots movements, connect people with organizations and make information more accessible. To write off all online activism as performative is to ignore the real work being done through digital communities.

But awareness should be a starting point, not a replacement for action.

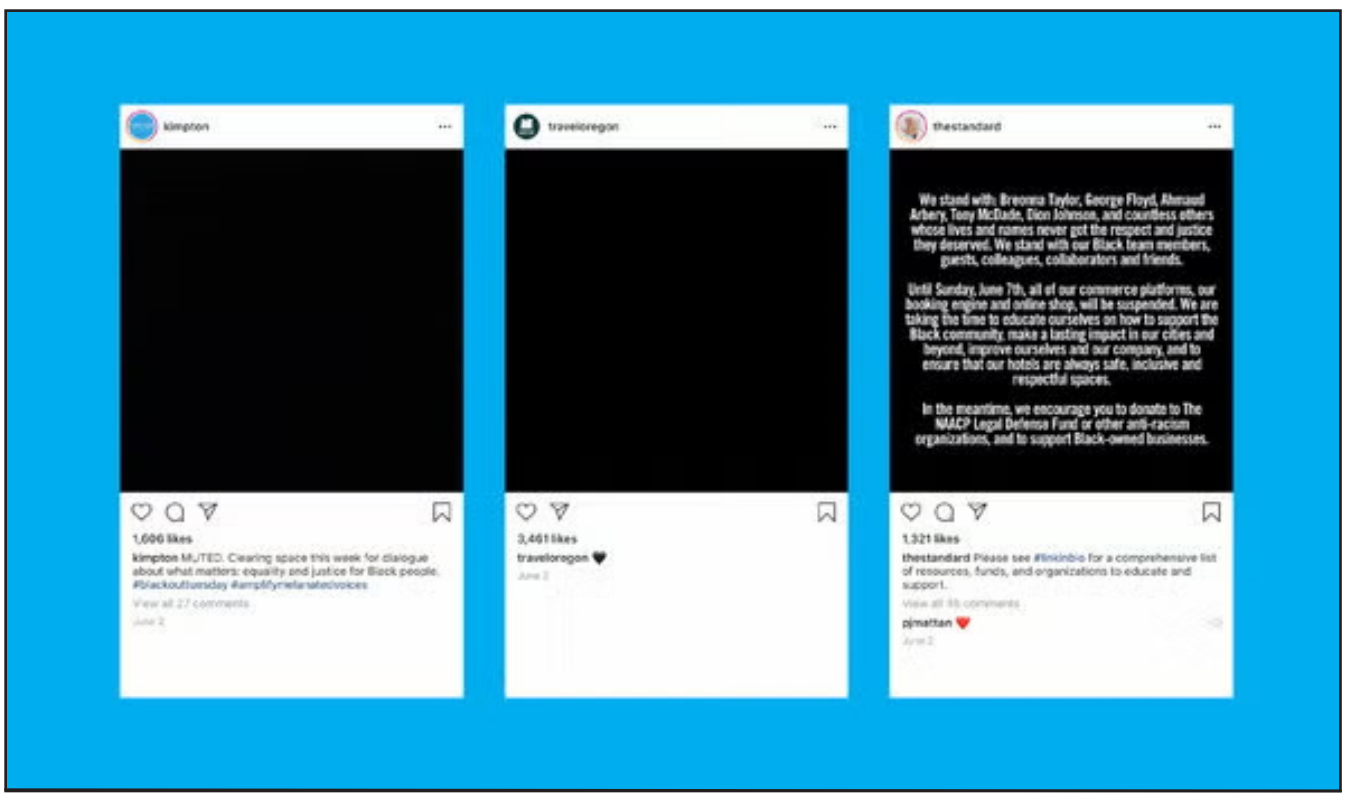
Supporting a cause requires more than demonstrating public approval. It means taking the time to understand an issue beyond a viral post, researching the organizations involved, listening to the communities directly affected and remaining engaged even when public attention moves elsewhere. Depending on the cause, meaningful participation might involve volunteering, contacting elected officials, donating when financially possible or simply having difficult conversations beyond the internet.

There is also value in recognizing that activism does not always need an audience. Not every charitable contribution needs to be photographed, every demonstration needs to be documented or every act of solidarity needs to be announced publicly. Some of the most meaningful contributions to social change happen without an accompanying social media post.

Ultimately, social media is not the enemy of activism. But the ease of digital platforms should not redefine what it means to engage in social change. Sharing information may get the conversation started, but conversation alone isn't going to fix the problems it brings to light.

But if activism's goal is a better society, then how many people saw a repost or liked a statement cannot be the measure of how committed you are. It should be what you see when you turn the screen off.

Activism is not about the person doing the supporting; it's about the people and causes you're supporting.



Social media trend during Black Lives Matter movement, posting black squares to show support

Photo via New York Times

Feels like Christmas in October

How Christmas' consumerism only comes earlier each year.

Kyan Feser
Staff Writer

In 1843, Charles Dickens' classic, "A Christmas Carol," was published.

The book follows Ebenezer Scrooge, a man of endless greed, as he learns selflessness and how to love Christmas. The tale is anti-capitalist, suggesting the wealthy should provide for the poor.

The term "Scrooge" has changed meaning since "A Christmas Carol." Once epitomizing a selfish capitalist, the name currently ridicules anyone who questions or cannot participate in Christmas' consumerism.

That said, I'm going to be a Scrooge right now.

It seems like Christmas comes sooner every year. If you bought Halloween decorations last month, you probably saw ornaments before ghouls.

Maybe I've just lost my whimsy, but an egregious window for Christmas shopping spoils my holiday experience. As a Halloween lover, Christmas memorabilia diluting the spookiness is downright annoying, but doesn't that annoyance signal hypocrisy? By loving Halloween, I'm engaging with the exact system I'm criticizing.

If anything, Halloween is far from innocent in terms of consumerism. Decorations, candy and costumes all cost money. What's the difference between Halloween and Christmas?

I think the difference lies in societal expectations.

For instance, my parents skipped Halloween this year. My sister has special needs and had it incredibly rough this October, so instead of decorating and handing out candy, my family took her somewhere fun.

There was no uproar or passive aggression from our festive neighbors. Instead, the night proceeded as normal. In my opinion, Christmas doesn't provide this grace, as skipping Christmas is usually deemed immoral.

Whenever I see anybody skip Christmas decorating, gift-giving or other seasonal customs, I can't help but think, "man, they're Scrooge-like", as opposed to the little thought I'd give a family leaving a bowl of candy outside their home.

This reaction is no coincidence; it's a reflection of the so-called "true meaning of Christmas" we've been taught our entire lives as Americans.

If your family's like mine, you've probably watched countless films about cynical protagonists, usually people with basic class consciousness, discovering Christmas isn't just about consumerism, but about spending time with your family and being generous or, if you're a believer, remembering the Christian roots of the holiday.

While I agree with the sentiment of these films on paper, they read like propaganda to inspire ignorance.

In reality, if you can't afford the time or money to visit your family on Christmas, you're viewed as selfish. If you can afford to visit your family, but not buy gifts for everyone, you're also viewed as selfish. Are you unable to attend church or donate because you're stuck working a minimum wage job? Once again, you'll be viewed as selfish.

These stigmas are largely absent on Halloween. If a child sees a house lacking candy or decorations, they'll simply visit the next house. Plus, a single Halloween costume is cheaper than a new Xbox.

In summary, experiencing the "true meaning of Christmas" is viewed as morally correct per its concept of selflessness, gatekept by one's ability to consume, meaning consumerism is inherent to the holiday, and ridicule is expected for anyone unable or unwilling to spend money.

A Scrooge is no longer a wealthy capitalist whose greed hurts those around them. Instead, it's a victim or protester of holiday greed. The less money you spend, the more you're seen as ungrateful for the people around you.

Now, if you were a business conglomerate maximizing profits, why not extend the season where consumption is a moral expectation? Sure, Halloween is a moneymaker, but it pales in comparison to gargantuan Christmas profits. The sooner Christmas is in stores, the sooner people feel obligated to spend money.

If you aren't willing to spend some festive cash, well, nobody likes a Scrooge.



Bits of Halloween items among Christmas decorations in Michael's

Photo by Kyan Feser

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Accessibility on campus Cont.

on the university to have elevators and other accessibility transportation fixed in a timely manner would help students, she said "it would be beneficial."

"From personal research I have conducted you can look at the papers on the elevators and see when they were last serviced. It has been years for a lot of them on campus… In my opinion, if we're putting money into certain aspects of campus, we could also allot time and money for accessibility concerns," Davidson said.

Students interested in learning more about the club can follow the official union Instagram @disabled.student.union.wu for more information.

2026 Midterm Elections reach record highs in campaign spending

An update to how current candidates were doing and spending.

Hudson Mize
Staff Writer

Billions have been spent on the November midterm elections for both parties, with the campaign financing count beginning in January of 2025 and lasting until December 2026.

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) tracks federal campaign contributions and how much candidates are spending. As of Oct. 31, $3.2 billion have been spent in total.

According to the FEC, $2.02 billion has been spent by House candidates and $1.18 billion has been spent by Senate candidates.

So far, the top ten candidates in spending are all members of the Democratic party, with the top spender James Talarico, Texas Senate candidate, spending over $136 million.

However, Republicans have spent more money on advertisement campaigns than the Democratic party.

According to statistics shown by the Washington Post, Republicans have spent around $1 billion in advertising, compared to Democrats who have spent around $661 million.

Despite the difference in spending, most of the money spent on advertisements specifically addressing the economy is equal, with both parties spending over $400 million.

In this midterm election season, the cost of living has been ranked highest in voter concerns, which explains the reason behind the economy being the highest point of interest.

Other issues, however, such as health care and government ethics have had more Democratic dollars put into them, whereas Republican ads target social issues, immigration and crime or public safety issues.

For South Carolina candidates, Dr. Annie Andrews has spent a significant amount in advertisements compared to Darline Graham.

Andrews has spent approximately $22.5 million as of Oct. 14, according to FEC records, with Graham only spending approximately $1.3 million.

Even with the difference in spending, Andrews and Graham were expected to have a tight race as of Oct. 28.

Not all states were predicted to have a close race. States such as Massachusetts and Rhode Island have their Democratic candidates winning over the Republican by over a 25% margin according to the University of Massachusetts and University of New Hampshire.

Democratic support has been strong this midterm season, especially in traditionally blue states like Massachusetts.

According to data found from a survey conducted on Oct. 8 by the Pew Research Center, the Democratic party has more engaged voters, which may lead to the current midterms favoring the Democratic party.

Looking at historic data, it is not uncommon for the President's party to lose the House during midterm elections. A similar situation occurred with the Democratic party losing the midterm elections in 2022, when former President Joe Biden was in office.

For the senate, on average the sitting President's party loses 3 seats per midterm according to historical data from The American Presidency Project.

Unlike the House midterm elections, the pattern is inconsistent, as former President Biden won a Senate seat in 2022 and President Donald Trump gained Senate seats during his first term in 2018.

Political scientists argue that voter dissatisfaction with the President and his party motivates opposition groups to mobilize, leading to a switch of party power in Congress during midterm elections.

Despite the Democratic party being favored overall, the Republican party holds a geographical advantage with their respective states.

The Republican party retaining an advantage within their states is due to the Democratic party being mostly located in high populated states and urban areas.

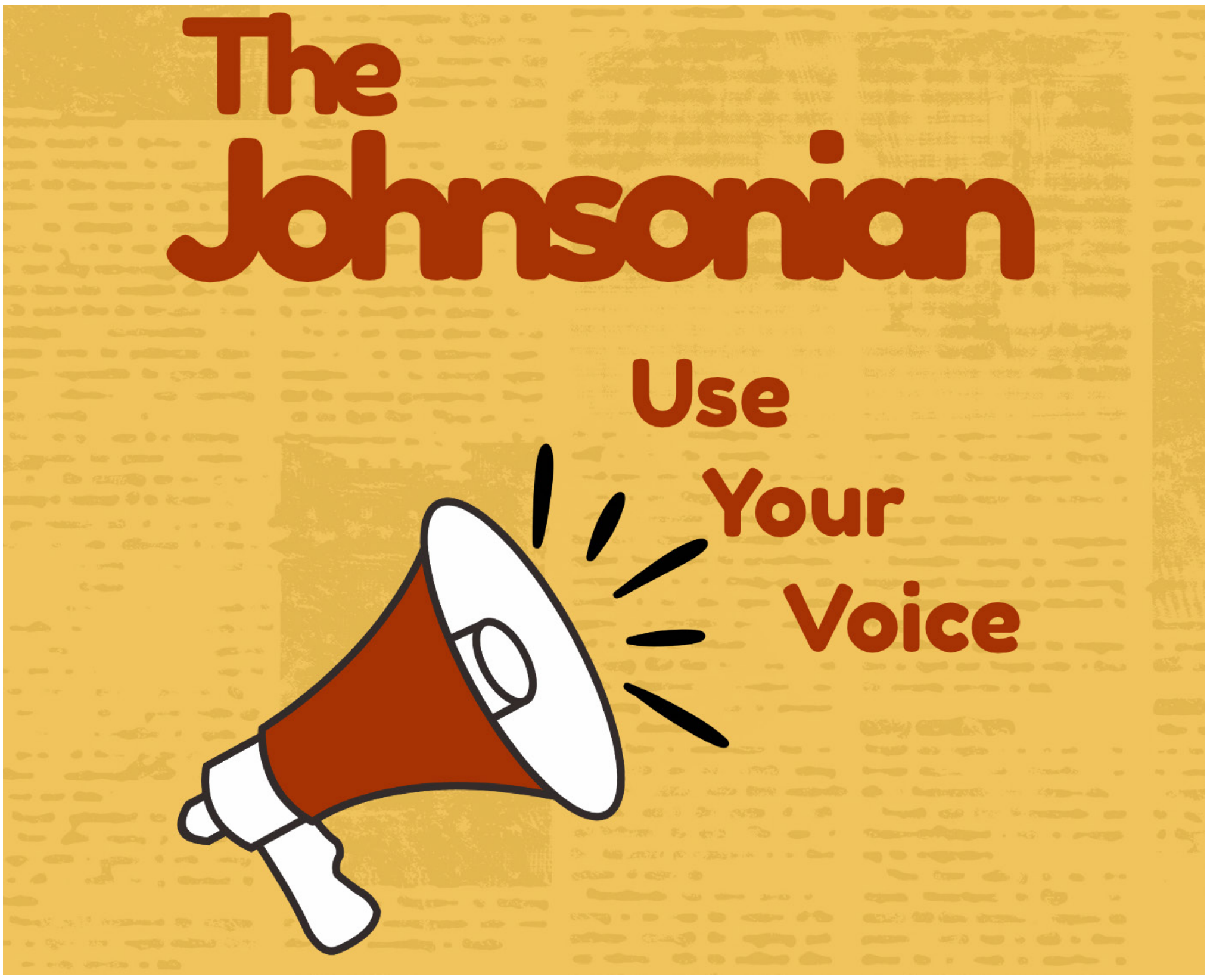
Since seats for the Senate are not based on population unlike those for the House of Representatives, smaller states have a disproportionate amount of representation.

Ultimately, it is the voter's choice to decide if the historical trends of past midterm elections will continue or if this year will be an exception.



Signs showcasing voting and political candidates off of Dave Lyle Blvd

Photo by Claire Meuret



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COMIC

November 5, 2026



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