WASHINGTON COUNTY

Nafisa Fai ‘increasingly optimistic’ as lead grows in Washington County chair race

Updated: Nov. 20, 2026, 5:56 p.m. | Published: Nov. 20, 2026, 5:34 p.m.



Voters will decide between Nafisa Fai (left) and Pam Treece to lead Oregon’s second most-populous county. Courtesy of campaigns

Set as Google Preferred Source

OREGONLIVE
The Oregonian

Listen:
Nafisa Fai ‘increasingly optimistic’ as lead grows in Washington Co
About 3 Minutes
1x
Everlit

By Austin De Dios | The Oregonian/OregonLive

The race for Washington County chair still rests on a razor-thin margin, but Commissioner Nafisa Fai once again widened the gap between her and Commissioner Pam Treece, new election results Friday show.

Fai is now leading by 699 votes, up from 460. The historic race could now hinge on challenged ballots that couldn’t be counted due to a missing or mismatched signature or other issues. Voters whose ballots were challenged have until Tuesday to fix them. Of the 274,000 ballots turned in this election, around 7,000 were challenged.

“We are grateful for the support of Washington County voters, and we are feeling increasingly optimistic,” Fai told The Oregonian/OregonLive.

Treece did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A majority of the 2,554 votes tabulated since last Friday, 54.3%, went to Fai. Treece initially took the lead on election night, but subsequent vote counts have largely swung in Fai’s favor. It would take a significant number of voters fixing their challenged ballots to sway the race now.



Nafisa Fai launches her campaign for chair. Austin De Dios/The Oregonian

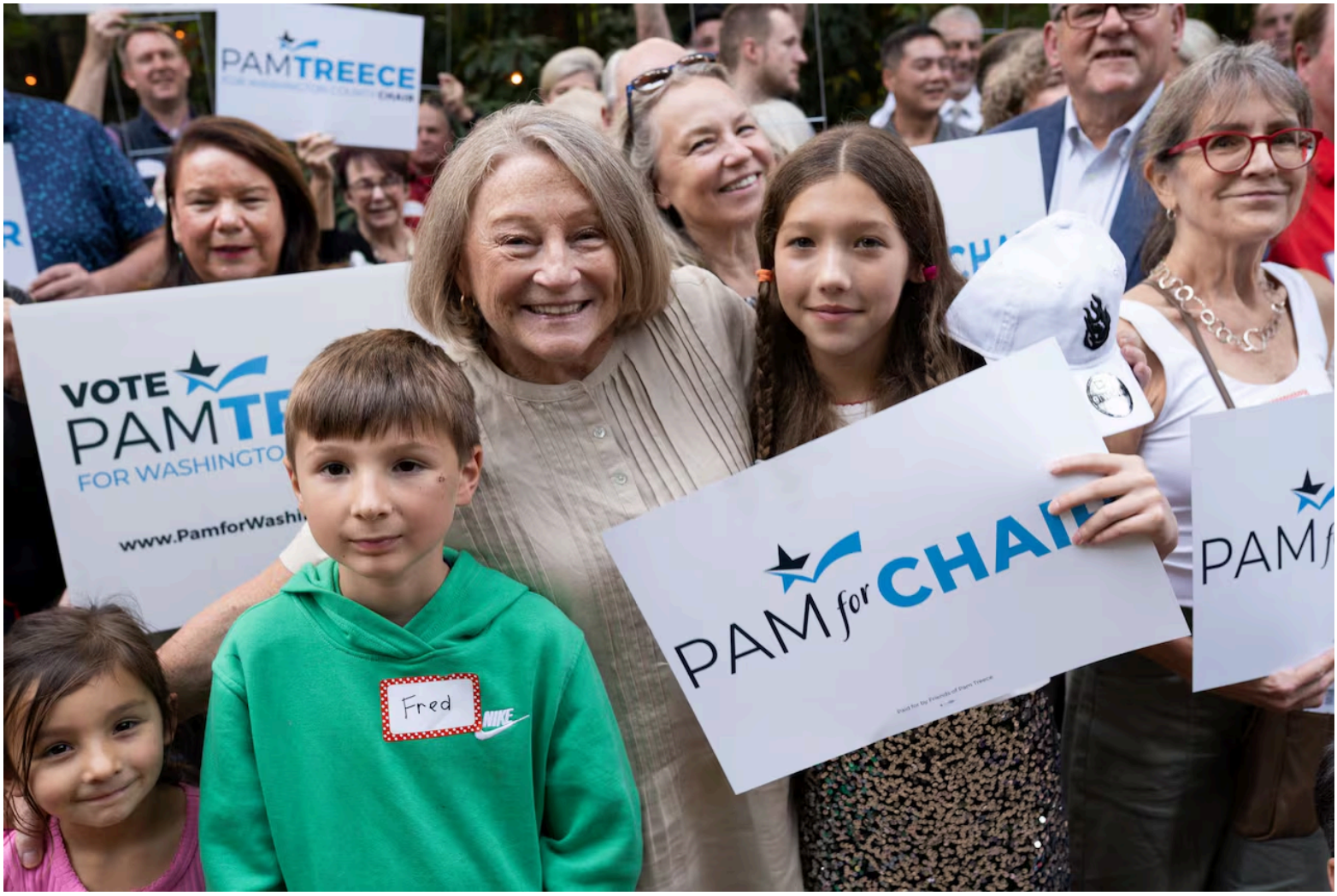
The county elections office gave both Fai and Treece a list of voters whose ballots were challenged. The candidates can now reach out to try and coax those voters to fix their ballots. Elections Division Manager David Hamilton estimated that historically anywhere from 20% to 45% of challenged ballots get counted, depending on the problem, but stressed that those figures aren't concrete.

This controversial race for chair is the closest in recent memory, but an automatic recount has grown less likely. In Oregon, a recount would be triggered if the gap between two candidates is less than 0.2% of the total votes cast for them, and in this case that number will likely hover around 450 votes.

If a recount is triggered, the elections office will start counting ballots by hand Dec. 1, and Hamilton said that process would take around five days.

OREGONLIVE
The Oregonian

Voters first elected Fai, 48, to the commission in 2020, when she became the first Black and first Muslim board member. An immigrant from Somalia with a long career in public health including at Multnomah County, Fai said her priorities included removing barriers for small businesses, spurring affordable housing construction and responding “swiftly to federal overreach.”



Pam Treece at a campaign event. Courtesy of campaign

Treece, 75, was elected in 2018, when she became the first candidate to unseat an incumbent commissioner in 31 years. Treece campaigned on affordable housing, growing good-paying jobs and keeping taxes and fees “in check.” She boasted of decades of private and public sector experience, including more than 20 years at electric company PacifiCorp.

MORE BY AUSTIN DE DIOS

City councilor up for recall is appointed mayor of North Plains Nov. 20, 2026, 5:13 p.m.

Nail-biting Washington County chair race may hinge on challenged ballots Nov. 20, 2026, 4:59 p.m.

OREGONLIVE
The Oregonian

The county, home to employment giants such as Intel and Nike, is often lauded as the state's economic engine and finds itself at the center of Oregon's data center debate. The chair sets the tone at the top and leads the legislative body overseeing the county and its $2 billion budget. The job pays $149,777 a year.

The winner of the chair contest will join Commissioner Jason Snider and Commissioners-elect Kipperlyn Sinclair and Felicita Monteblanco in January. Sinclair, a Hillsboro city councilor, defeated former Hillsboro Mayor Steve Callaway to represent District 4 in this election.

If Fai wins, her seat will be open. Monteblanco won in May's election the seat that will be vacated by Treece.



Austin De Dios

Austin De Dios covers local politics for The Oregonian/OregonLive with a focus on how policy decisions shape everyday life in Washington and Clackamas counties. He is committed to accountability and tracking...more

ADeDios@oregonian.com

OREGONLIVE

▼ About Us

Our Journalists
About OregonLive.com
Contact The Newsroom
Advertise With Us
Subscribe to The Oregonian
Subscriber Services
Delivery Opportunities

OREGONLIVE
The Oregonian

Accessibility Statement

▼ Subscriptions

The Oregonian

eNewspaper

Email Newsletters

▼ Already a Subscriber

Manage your Subscription

Place a Vacation Hold

Make a Payment

Delivery Feedback

▼ Read More Top News

Today's Top News
All Politics
Crime
Business
Commuting
Weather
All Education
Homes & Gardens
Letters to the Editor
Video
Environment
Here is Oregon
Noticias en español
Special Sections
Sports
High School Sports
Ducks
Beavers
Trail Blazers
Portland Fire
Timbers
Thorns
Recruiting News
Entertainment
Travel
TV & Movies
All Food & Dining
Comics

▼ Your Regional News Pages

Portland
Washington County
Clackamas County
Clark County
Pacific Northwest

OREGONLIVE
The Oregonian

▼ Follow Us

Email Newsletters

YouTube

Twitter

Facebook

Instagram

RSS

▼ Mobile

iPhone, Android apps

Tablet apps

▼ More on OregonLive.com

Place an Ad

Autos

Jobs

Sponsor Content

Post a Job

Newspapers.com Archive

Privacy Policy | User Agreement | Ad Choices

ADVANCE LOCAL

Use of and/or registration on any portion of this site constitutes acceptance of our User Agreement, (updated 8/1/2024) and acknowledgement of our Privacy Policy, and Your Privacy Choices and Rights (updated 1/1/2026).

© 2026 Advance Local Media LLC. All rights reserved (About Us).
The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of Advance Local.

OREGONLIVE
The Oregonian

Community Rules apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site.

YouTube's privacy policy is available here and **YouTube's terms of service** is available here.

Ad Choices