



BILLINGS GAZETTE
COMMUNICATIONS

VOTER GUIDE

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2024 GENERAL
ELECTION

We have a job to do. Here's how we do it

LEE MONTANA

Welcome to the Lee Montana 2024 Voter Guide.

This year features one of the nation's most consequential Senate races, an open House seat, and state offices from the governor, Legislature and Supreme Court justices to the administrative heads of Office of Public Instruction, Secretary of State, Auditor, and Attorney General. This publication will be available in print and online throughout the campaign season as a resource for learning who is running for what job, what they stand for and how to contact them.

But there's much more to come. As the largest network of full-time journalists in the state, Lee Montana will catalog the issues important to Montanans and present them to candidates for response. After all, they represent you — the voters.

There's also lots to learn about ballot initiatives, election law, and the groups or movements that influence statewide politics. We want to be clear about how we do this. And we always want to know how to do it better. If you have questions about our reporting, see something missing, or need something more, let us know.

Mission statement

Advancing the principles of the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment, we journalists commit to preserving freedom of speech and the rights of people to gather, express their beliefs and converse with their government. Lee Montana newsrooms connect people across the Rocky Mountain West to their public servants, business colleagues and neighbors. We explore the issues, provide the data and report the debates and decisions that affect lives.

Who's doing the work?

Lee Montana journalists will cover the 2024 elections at both local and statewide levels. Our newsrooms in Missoula, Helena, Butte, Billings and Hamilton will concentrate on races and issues closest to their readership, such as county commissions, legislative seats and mill levies. In addition, the Lee State Bureau fields reporters tracking statewide office races such as governor and Supreme Court justice, state ballot initiatives and federal congressional races. Local reporters with special expertise will weigh in on some topics, such as how wildlife management or energy policy is reflected in candidates' campaigns.



STOCK IMAGE

The 2024 Montana general election day is November 5.

How do we choose what to cover?

Each campaigner or issue advocate has a list of reasons why they are most qualified or correct. Montana voters have their own concerns about what's important to them and how they want those needs met. As reporters, we strive to make campaign positions easy to find and understand, while testing them against the questions our readership audience raises. As representatives of the public at-large, we will ask campaigners to debate their opponents, back up their claims with evidence, and respond to voters' interests. Wherever possible, we will push campaigners to be available to the voting public.

We will also pay close attention to the mechanics of Montana's political system, including voting policy, political party activity, campaign finances, and the influence of out-of-state interests on Montana issues. We will look for connections explaining how national trends or actions affect Montana and

where Montana choices might determine national outcomes.

What won't we cover?

Every campaign believes it has truth on its side. Our mission as journalists is to test those claims in light of what opponents and disinterested observers say. We strive to do that using neutral sources, or where necessary, by bringing transparency to the sources of the claims. We will be on watch for manufactured disputes and distorted accusations. And this election cycle, we will mount extra guard for disinformation ploys intended to confuse or disrupt legitimate campaign activity. While we must be humble in pursuit of the truth, we will be consistent and forceful in pointing out things that are demonstrably false or incorrect.

How do we minimize bias in political coverage?

We give priority to candidates and questioners who commit to principles of fair play, transparent campaigning and civil discourse. And we commit to being transparent about our own

reporting. We welcome public and constructive criticism about the work we do, and pledge to be responsive to public feedback.

How do we report on hateful rhetoric, actions?

Violence, intimidation and bigotry have no place in American political discourse. Candidates and activists who depend on such tactics draw attention away from their governing credibility. We strive to balance all our reporting toward advancing the public welfare. Where possible, we weigh the potential impact our reporting on aggressive public activity might have on the targets of that action. We will always consider ways to mitigate harm while informing the wider audience.

How are we doing?

Let us know, and we'll respond.

Want to see all our political election coverage? Follow online at missoulian.com, helenair.com, mtstandard.com, billingsgazette.com and ravallirepublic.com.

2024 General Election Voter Guide: The Questions

U.S. Senate/House

1. Montana saw soaring temperatures this summer. The climate is warmer and drier because of changes in the climate, fueling larger wildfires around the West. Montanans suffer with poor air quality and from serious heat-related illness. Farmers and ranchers are dealing with the impacts of warmer summers through changed growing seasons and challenges maintaining herd health. If elected, what policies would you support to help Montanans navigate these changes?
2. What role, if any, do you believe the federal government should play in either ensuring or limiting access to abortion? Under what circumstances do you believe abortion should be legal?
3. What spending reductions would you propose in Congress to address the national debt?
4. Affording a home, either renting or buying, has become out of reach for an increasing number of Montanans. What would you do at the federal level to ensure people can find a place to live that fits within their budget?
5. Do you support the U.S. sending aid to Ukraine and Israel?

Governor

1. Would you sign a bill continuing Medicaid expansion in Montana past 2025? Why or why not?
2. What more can state government do to ensure housing in Montana is affordable?
3. What is the most effective way state government can reduce property taxes on Montanans? What do you identify as the main catalyst in increased property taxes in Montana?
4. What obligation does the state have in reducing carbon emissions? How would you accomplish this? What do you interpret the state constitution's provision for clean and healthful environment to mean when it comes to crafting state energy policy?
5. Native Americans in Montana die a generation younger than their white neighbors. What will you do to improve health outcomes in tribal communities?

Attorney General

1. What are the most effective things to be done within the state of Montana to stem the fentanyl overdose crisis?
2. How much should the state be involved in litigation at the federal level that did not originate in the state of Montana?



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD FILE

The Montana State Capitol in Helena.

3. Indigenous persons make up more than 30% of those missing in Montana but only account for about 6% of the state's population. How would you work to address this epidemic?
4. How would you work to improve the culture and performance of the Montana Highway Patrol?
5. What do you hope to accomplish in your role on the state Land Board?

Secretary of State

1. How would you use this office to foster trust in our elections and relationships with local elections workers?
2. What can this office do to ease the process of registering a business in Montana?
3. Do you support open primaries in Montana?
4. Are you satisfied with the office's business fee collection model? If not, how would you change it?
5. What do you hope to accomplish in your role on the state Land Board?

Montana Senate/House

1. Would you vote to continue Medicaid expansion past 2025?
2. What is the most effective way that state government can reduce property taxes on Montanans?
3. What more can state government do to ensure housing in Montana is affordable? Are subsidies appropriate?
4. How would you ensure you're communicating with the voters in your district and understand what issues they identify as most important to your district?

Superintendent of Public Instruction

1. How would you improve the impact of and accountability to the state's Indian Education for All program?
2. How would you work to improve teacher recruitment and retention in Montana?
3. The Office of Public Instruction has seen massive turnover over the last four years. What would you do to rebuild the agency?
4. Do you support the expansion of charter schools in Montana?
5. What do you hope to accomplish in your role on the state Land Board?

State Auditor

1. How would you use this office to advocate for consumers in Montana?
2. Where would you focus this office's investigatory branch?
3. How would you elevate awareness about the resources offered by the state auditor?
4. What policies or laws would you like to see implemented to address the role of pharmacy benefit managers?
5. What do you hope to accomplish in your role on the state Land Board?

Supreme Court Justice

1. How do you believe your judicial philosophy is distinct from your opponent?
2. How would you work to ensure an independent judiciary and preserve the nonpartisan nature of this election?
3. How would you make the court more accessible and understandable to Montanans?



MONTANA 2024 GENERAL ELECTION VOTER GUIDE: STAFF

This 2024 general election Voter Guide is a publication of Lee Enterprises, the largest news organization in Montana with more than 50 journalists across newsrooms in Billings, Butte, Hamilton, Helena and Missoula.

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Supreme Court Clerk

1. How would you balance the partisan nature of this office with the nonpartisan positions of judges?
2. How would you make the court more accessible and understandable to Montanans?

Public Service Commission

1. Montanans are struggling with high utility bills. How can the PSC bring those down?
2. Legislative audits in recent years have found "commission misconduct and management issues." What steps would you take to ensure the agency's operations are efficient and accessible to the public?
3. As Montana faces changes to its energy landscape and Colstrip retires units, what should the PSC do to ensure Montanans have access to reliable, affordable energy?
4. What are your qualifications for this position?

GOVERNOR

Ryan Busse — D



Age: 54

Home: Kalispell

Family: Married to Sara for 25 years; two teenage sons

Occupation: Writer, firearms expert and former executive (Vice President of Sales,

Kimber America: 1995-2020)

Education: Bethany College (Kansas)

Contact information for voters:

busseformontana.com, info@busseformontana.com

1. Absolutely. I won't just sign an expansion into law; I will champion it through the Montana Legislature every step of the way until it reaches my desk. I regularly meet with parents, businesses, hospitals and health care providers across the state, and I know this issue is far bigger than partisan politics. Keeping Medicaid expanded is a matter of keeping Montana's communities and economies strong by ensuring that rural hospitals, clinics and nursing homes stay open. Under Greg Gianforte's watch, Montana has lost more than a dozen nursing homes and hundreds of nursing home beds. More than 134,000 Montanans—including 36,000 children — needlessly lost health coverage because of Greg Gianforte's inability to run this state, and he stuck working families with red tape and uncertainty. When asked about it, what did the Governor say? He said his plan to kick Montanans out of their health care plans is "working as intended." That's not just bad business; it's cruel.

2. The State of Montana can take three immediate steps to make housing more affordable. Step one: Lower the residential property tax rate from 1.35% to .94%. This will provide relief to Governor Gianforte's record-high property taxes and put money back in the pockets of homeowners and renters, and it's what our own Department of Revenue recommended (Gianforte ignored this recommendation). Step two: Champion and support low-income housing tax credits to get resources to people who need to live in Montana, not to wealthy developers who want to get richer. Step three: Refocus the Montana Department of Labor to get to work building a stronger union workforce that can quickly

meet construction demands for new housing. Bottom line: We need to build more. Under Gianforte's administration, the Department of Labor is too focused on "culture war" issues and not on its actual mission.

3. This is a fact: Governor Gianforte is solely to blame for your record-high property tax hikes. Gianforte knows his tax hike is his political disaster, so he falsely blames his increase on county and municipal governments that "spend too much." This is a lie, and Gianforte knows it. So do many local elected Republican leaders across Montana, who are publicly criticizing Gianforte for lying about them. Only Montana's Governor approves the residential property tax rate and only he signs it into law. So the sole reason you're paying record high property taxes is Greg Gianforte. How can we reduce your property taxes? It's an incredibly simple fix: Lower the residential property tax rate from 1.35% to .94% (or by whatever amount the Department of Revenue recommends to keep property taxes "revenue neutral"). This will be a Day One priority for my running mate Raph Graybill and me, because Gianforte's property tax increase has been as high as 11%. I don't know what you call that in New Jersey, but in Montana we call that highway robbery.

4. Montana's Constitution guarantees certain rights that are not up for debate, like the right to privacy and the right to know what our government is doing. Another is the right to a "clean and healthful environment." That means we have an obligation to make sure our water is clean enough to drink and our air is safe enough to breathe. And Montanans owe it to ourselves and to future generations to take carbon emissions into account when developing energy, to cut pollution wherever we can and to leave our kids a future worth inheriting. We can do this without losing good-paying jobs, by the way. We cannot switch from coal and other fossil fuels overnight, but there are economic forces at work that are pricing these resources out of the equation. It's on us to play where the puck is going to be; not where the puck is. That's why — in addition to harnessing renewable energy resources — Raph Graybill and I support clean, safe, small-scale nuclear energy development in places like Colstrip, which is supported by the union coal workers who have endorsed our campaign.

5. Improving access to quality health care in tribal communities (and for

Indigenous people who live in more urban communities) is just one of the many challenges we face when it comes to the State of Montana's government-to-government relationship with sovereign Indigenous Nations. I've visited these communities across the state, and it's clear Governor Gianforte has failed to do this too. The first thing I'll do as governor is to ensure that my administration will be robustly represented by Indigenous People, across all agencies and departments, and especially in leadership positions. From there, Raph Graybill and I will work closely with our partners to expand Medicaid, to ensure that the federal government is meeting its treaty obligations, and to invest in physical infrastructure (like access to broadband, nutritious food, quality public education and rural health care facilities) to ensure that Indigenous communities can provide self-determination to their members.



Greg Gianforte — R



Age: 62

Home: Helena

Family: My wife Susan and I have been married since 1988. We have four children, and four grandchildren.

Occupation: Governor of Montana

Education: Bachelor of Science in engineering, Stevens Institute of Technology; Master of Science in electrical engineering, Stevens Institute of Technology

Contact information for voters:

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1. The safety net of Medicaid should be there for those who truly need it, but it will collapse if all are allowed to climb on it.

During the pandemic, the federal government didn't allow states to verify eligibility for Medicaid, and Medicaid enrollment spiked. Last year, the federal government required states to begin verifying eligibility again. Since then, we've ensured only those who are eligible can participate, and enrollment is back down to pre-pandemic levels.

Medicaid should be a temporary program for most people to help them get back on their feet. We should encourage work and reduce government dependency by requiring able-bodied adults with no dependents, excluding seniors and single parents, to work to receive benefits.

2. With the Biden-Harris affordability crisis, too many Montanans are struggling to make ends meet. Housing costs are too high. In the past decade, demand for housing has grown, but homebuilding hasn't kept up. I'm proud of what we've done to address the affordable housing crisis, but there's more to do. Working with legislators and the bipartisan Housing Task Force I launched, we made Montana a national leader, delivering historic pro-housing reforms that will boost supply and make housing more attainable. Some pro-housing advocates are calling our bipartisan reforms the "Montana Miracle."

Government spending alone won't solve the housing crisis, so we've prioritized reforms to boost housing supply while safeguarding our communities from sprawl. Recently, I met with the Housing Task Force for the third time and received 23 new recommendations aimed at making housing more affordable and attainable.

3. Property taxes in Montana are too high. About 85% of property tax revenue from Montana homeowners goes directly to local governments, with the other 15% going to fund local schools. Unfortunately, some counties have not been fiscally responsible, needlessly driving up Montanans' property taxes. In 2023, we secured the largest property tax rebate in state history for Montana homeowners and delivered permanent reforms that save over \$120 million, fully offsetting property tax hikes for the average homeowner.

The task force I launched this year recently suggested long-term solutions, including a homestead exemption for Montana homeowners. This will provide Montana homeowners with long-term relief and ensure out-of-staters — who don't live here, don't pay income taxes here, and own second homes here — pay their fair share to fund our schools, law enforcement, and roads and bridges. Our plan could reduce property taxes for about 350,000 Montana homeowners and renters and for about 30,000 Montana small businesses. Unlike our plan that benefits Montanans, my opponent would raise taxes on Montana small businesses,

COMPARE THE CANDIDATES ON THE ISSUES



JON TESTER

**THIRD-GENERATION DIRT
FARMER DEFENDING
MONTANA EVERY DAY**

TIM SHEEHY

**WEALTHY OUTSIDER WHO
MONTANANS
CAN'T TRUST**



✓ Jon and his wife, Sharla, still live in the home they built in Big Sandy in 1993. He's fighting to cut taxes for first-time home buyers and stop out-of-state developers from buying up property and pricing Montanans out.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Sheehy moved to Montana, bought up thousands of acres and three mansions, and started renting his property to rich out-of-staters like him.

✓ Jon Tester has always protected Medicare and recently lowered prescription drug costs for Montana seniors. He's kept our rural hospitals open and has always protected Montanans with pre-existing conditions.

HEALTH CARE



Tim Sheehy's "pure privatization" plan would dismantle Medicare, eliminate protections for pre-existing conditions, raise prescription drug costs, and shutter rural hospitals and nursing homes.

✓ Jon has a bill to make Roe v. Wade the law of the land and will always fight to keep politicians out of Montanans' health care decisions.

FREEDOM TO CHOOSE



Tim Sheehy supports letting politicians ban abortion here in Montana even in the case of rape, incest or the health of the mother.

✓ Jon passed bills to protect tens of thousands of acres and hundreds of miles of Montana rivers for future generations to enjoy. He will always stand up to anyone who wants to transfer, sell, or eliminate our state's greatest natural treasures.

PUBLIC LAND



Tim Sheehy called to transfer public lands so wealthy outsiders like himself can buy up even more. He even bought up prime elk habitat and then sold access to rich tourists while refusing access to Montanans.

Paid for by Montanans for Tester.

TO LEARN MORE OR TO VOLUNTEER ON JON'S CAMPAIGN: JONTESTER.COM / [@JONTESTER](https://twitter.com/JONTESTER) / [JONTESTER](https://www.facebook.com/JONTESTER)

JON TESTER FOR **U.S. SENATE**



farms, and ranches by up to 20% to give rich out-of-staters a huge property tax break.

4. I've been clear: to address our changing climate, we must focus on American innovation and ingenuity, not costly, expansive government mandates that will kill Montana jobs and our economy.

Our nation must have an all-of-the-above energy policy, like Montana does, to become energy independent and secure again. Unfortunately, the Biden administration has put its thumb on the scale, picking winners and losers for energy sources. We haven't, and won't, in Montana. We must continue to expand energy production, from all sources, to keep pace with rising demand and ensure

electricity is affordable and reliable for Montanans. That's what guides my approach to energy policy.

5. Working with tribal leaders, we've made significant investments in mobile response units and technical assistance for tribal communities.

After previous governors kicked the can down the road, we made a historic \$300 million investment to improve the delivery of behavioral health care throughout our state. We're expanding community-based behavioral health care and developmental disabilities services.

Sadly, the fentanyl crisis has disproportionately impacted our tribal communities. Fentanyl seizures have increased by 20,000% since 2019. This crisis has left no community untouched.

We must cut off the supply by securing our southern border, where drugs are entering our country with Joe Biden's open border policies.



Kaiser Leib — L



2009

Age: 36

Home: Helena

Family: Single

Occupation: Comedian

Education:

Bachelor's, Math and Computer Science, The University of Montana,

1. I would not veto such a bill. Healthcare has been damaged by burdensome government regulation. Free market principles are absent even when healthcare is ostensibly "privatized" because price discovery is impossible. But vetoing continued expansion without removing government meddling would not fix the problem.

2. State government can back off and leave everyone alone, thereby reducing the costs associated with regulations. State government can eliminate taxes, which make up a huge part of the cost of living.

3. The most effective way to reduce property taxes would be to eliminate them. In Montana, taxes are the purview of the legislature, not the governor's

office: I would be unable to unilaterally remove taxes, sorry.

That being said, state government has consistently increased the portion of property taxes which are paid by homeowners, far beyond the pace of property value increases. The biggest culprit is the legislature's ongoing policy of shifting taxes from businesses to homeowners—most recently at the behest of the sitting governor.

4. The state should lift restrictions and subsidies which discourage the development of wind, solar, and nuclear power.

"The state and each person shall maintain and improve a clean and healthful environment in Montana for present and future generations" is at odds with Libertarian philosophy. It demands that the state intervene in private affairs and binds "each person" to maintain the environment, so we all violate the constitution every day by using electricity and driving cars. But governors can't just ignore the constitution when they don't like it, and so I would endeavor to comply with the text as written.

5. Decisions about Native American health belong to Native Americans. Governments meddle. They make decisions in Washington and in Helena and they have never lived in Browning or Box Elder or Hardin or Lame Deer and neither have I. I do not claim to understand how to improve health outcomes, or the economic and educational outcomes this question buries. It is not for me to say. But I will listen.

U.S. SENATE

Tim Sheehy — R



Age: 38

Home: Bozeman

Family: Wife, Carmen, and four young children

Occupation: Former Navy SEAL, Aerial Firefighter, Founder and Former CEO of

Bridger Aerospace

Education: U.S. Naval Academy

Contact information for voters: info@timformt.com

1. The climate has always been changing, but the Leftist Climate Cult agenda is about control, not the environment. We must stand strong against the radical liberal Harris-Tester

job-killing energy agenda.

Despite what Jon Tester wants you to believe, Montanans can responsibly develop our natural resources while protecting the environment. Tester abandoned Montana when he helped kill the Keystone XL Pipeline, and wants to "move off fossil fuels" which would drive up costs, cripple producers, and shutter Colstrip.

I will advance commonsense policies that prioritize innovation, not government regulation, to support both a strong Montana economy and healthy environment.

2. My wife, Carmen, and I are proudly pro-life and support commonsense exceptions for rape, incest, and the life of the mother. Carmen and I strongly believe in helping bring more life into this world, which is why we proudly helped bring the upgraded neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) to Southwest Montana through our philanthropy to provide critical care to at-risk infants and specialty pediatric services ranging from surgeries to behavioral health.

Like most Montanans, I believe that Jon Tester's position of allowing an elective abortion up until the moment of birth is extreme and barbaric.

3. If we're going to defeat inflation and hand our kids a solvent nation, Congress must end its out-of-control spending that's driven costs sky-high.

America is \$35 trillion in debt, and Jon Tester has done nothing about it. In fact, he's voted to raise the debt ceiling 14x. Let's be clear: the federal government has a spending problem — not a revenue problem.

We must balance the budget and begin to lower our national debt. The quickest way to balance the budget is to ensure that politicians who fail to pass a balanced budget don't get paid. No balanced budget, no paycheck!

4. Skyrocketing housing costs are killing the American Dream, thanks to trillions in spending by Harris and Tester that have given us record-high inflation, sky-high interest rates, and higher building costs.

I will help defeat inflation by working to end the out-of-control spending and the disastrous economic policies that are crushing Montana families and small businesses.

We must also build more homes with Montana timber and promote trades education to create more high-paying jobs, lower housing costs, boost housing supply, support our communities, and build a stronger future for Montana.

That's common sense.

5. Having worked alongside our Israeli intelligence and military allies as a Navy SEAL, I stand with Israel one hundred percent. But the best thing we can do for Israel is quit funding the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism—Iran—which Jon Tester has repeatedly supported.

We must fix our spending problem, balance the budget, begin to lower our national debt, and most importantly, put Montanans and America First!

We must start cutting wasteful spending that doesn't put America First — that means no more blank checks to Ukraine or sending billions to regimes, like Iran, that chant "Death to America!"



Sid Daoud — L



Age: 56

Home: Kalispell

Family: Wife KristenMarie, son Antranik, son Kaden, daughter Cyan

Occupation: Senior Consultant at Summit7 Systems

Are you a candidate or PAC trying to reach voters?
Are you a business owner trying to reach customers?

WE CAN HELP.

Get your message in front of a huge audience in Montana and also take advantage of our many options to target specific audiences through print, digital, video and much more.

Education: CMR Graduate and two years at MSU

Contact information for voters:

HTTPS://LibertySid.com; Sid.Daoud@libertysid.com

1. U.S. Fish and Wildlife should filter down the list of Endangered, Threatened and species of concern to State Wildlife managers and have them oversee what programs to put in place. Beyond that U.S. Fish and Wildlife should stay out of our hair unless there is a matter of proven negligence. We know Montana better than Washington does.

2. Montana does a great job providing hydro-electric power, but we have to supplement our needs by buying out of state power, especially here on the Western side of the state. Montana should concentrate on safe and sustainable power as well as utilizing the resources we have here in the state, we should look more to Nuclear Power and Coal Power. We should also investigate wood pellet energy, the brush we clear to prevent forest fires can be compressed into pellets and bring an entire new industry to Montana.

3. As a veteran I am extremely

Call or email
Mandy.Schilling@lee.net or
406-657-1374
to discuss the many
options available to
help communicate your
important message.





distrustful of the VA. Although the VA has improved it is still not equal to private paid care. VA medical outcomes should be compared to private practice and pressure should be applied to be comparable until they become so. We signed a contract with our veterans to care for them for life, this is NOT social welfare, it is fulfilling a contract.

4. Compensation should not be set, this lowers compensation for all. The free market should dictate wages. Wages will increase naturally in years where we have extreme forest fires. Additionally, The State of Montana should be given the charge of taking care of not only state but federal forests so that we can

responsibly thin them to prevent large scale disasters. Local control surpasses Federal control every time.

5. I would give them the opportunity to succeed by giving them the same opportunities that we have. They should own the land on the reservations so that they can leverage it for small business loans and gain the value of improvements to the land. They should be treated as sovereign people and allowed to participate with the United States as much or as little as they desire. Self-reliance is powerful. Stop the generational poverty and government dependence we have forced them into.

★ ★ ★

Jon Tester – D

Age: 67

Home: Big Sandy

Family: I first asked my wife Sharla on a date when she struck me out during a game of softball at a youth barbecue. We got married during my senior year of college. Sharla and I have three children: our daughter Christine, our son Shon, and Melody, a close friend of Christine's who we were blessed to



welcome to our house years later. We also have five wonderful grandchildren who we are very proud of.

Occupation: Dirt farmer and U.S. Senator

Education: College of Great Falls

Contact information for voters: info@jontester.com

1. Sharla and I see the impacts of climate change firsthand on our farm. Oil and gas remain a critical part of how we power our country, and we should also be developing clean energy technologies to tackle climate change, create good-paying American jobs, secure our energy independence, and

invest directly in Montana companies researching innovative ways to produce energy technologies that lower costs for consumers. My infrastructure bill invested in updating energy grids to prevent and protect against wildfire, and I'm pushing to invest in research and development of technologies like carbon capture and storage to reduce carbon emissions.

2. I do not support a federal ban on abortion. I will always fight to protect Montana women's freedom to make their own health care decisions, because no Montanan wants the government telling them what to do.

The last time I ran for reelection, Roe v. Wade had been the law of the land for nearly 50 years. Its repeal was the largest reduction of freedoms in my lifetime – and the attacks on women's freedoms and privacy are just beginning. I fought in the Senate to pass the Women's Health Protection Act, which would have enshrined the protections of Roe v. Wade into law.

3. The deficit is out of control and both parties are to blame. In Montana, we know how to balance a budget and live within our means. That is why I authored a balanced budget proposal. It would

protect Social Security and Medicare benefits that our seniors have earned while still forcing the federal government to stop racking up the debt and passing it along to our kids and grandkids. We also need to hold massive corporations accountable and make them pay their fair share.

I was proud to support the Inflation Reduction Act, which is paying down our deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars.

4. Out-of-state millionaires are buying up second and third homes across the state and spiking prices for Montana families. You shouldn't need a million bucks to keep a roof over your head, and that's why I'm fighting to bring down the cost of housing.

I've introduced a bill to give first-time home buyers a tax credit so folks can get their foot in the door to buy their first home. And I'm taking on corporations and hedge funds who are buying up residential homes for short-term rentals and pricing out families. I've also secured resources to increase the supply of housing across the state.

5. As Chairman of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I'll always stand up to defend America. Our military priorities should lie in protecting

America, supporting our allies when appropriate, and staying ahead of our adversaries like China and Russia who want to replace us as the world's leading superpower.

We should be strategic and only involve America in foreign conflicts when it strengthens our alliances and benefits the United States. The United States can't and shouldn't get involved in every foreign conflict, but America is safer when we our allies know they can trust us to stand by them.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Austin Knudsen – R



Age: 43

Home: Helena

Family: Wife Christie, three children in middle and high school

Occupation: current Attorney General; previous Roosevelt County Attorney, 10

years in private practice

Education: B.A. from Montana State

University, J.D. from University of Montana

Contact information for voters:
AustinforMontana.com

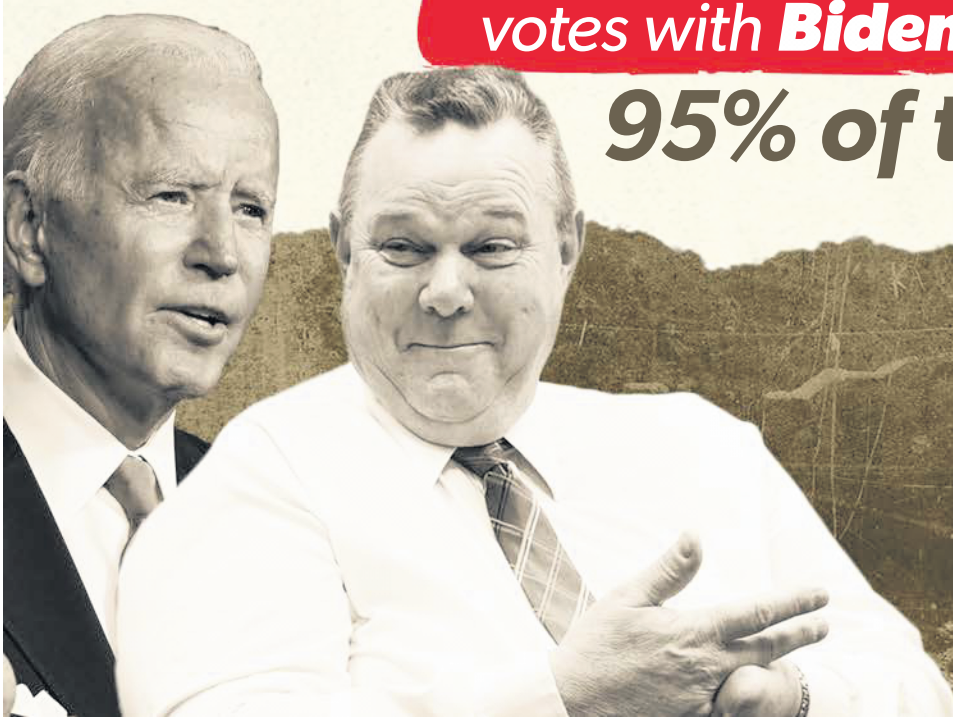
1. Addressing the overdose crisis is one of my top priorities. As Attorney General, I've strengthened our state drug task forces, hired additional narcotics agents, and provided 24 drug-detecting K9 units to agencies across Montana. The results speak for themselves: We've seized more than half a million fentanyl doses in just two years. To stem the crisis, we must continue to disrupt drug trafficking networks, coordinate closely with local law enforcement and public health agencies, and hold the federal government accountable for securing the southern border, as 100% of fentanyl entering Montana is manufactured by cartels Mexico.

2. The federal policies coming out of the Biden administration have been a disaster for Montana, threatening our economy, energy security, and individual rights. Montana must be proactive in federal litigation when the federal government's actions threaten our state's safety and constitutional rights. Under my leadership, we have filed

JON TESTER

votes with **Biden-Tester-Harris**

95% of the time



**Reject
Jon Tester
on Nov. 5th**

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more than 50 lawsuits against the Biden administration, challenging overreaching policies on the border, gun rights, energy, and other issues of importance to our state. Federal actions directly impact Montanans, and I will continue to protect our state's interests through federal litigation, especially in cases that affect our communities and liberties.

3. The disproportionate number of missing Indigenous persons is a tragedy I've worked to address by dedicating more resources to investigations and improving coordination with tribal and federal agencies. We've launched

awareness campaigns and expanded partnerships with nonprofits to ensure these cases get the attention they deserve. I will continue to push for the federal government to step up and protect Indian Country, better communication between law enforcement agencies, and community engagement to combat this epidemic, find the missing, and bring justice to affected families.

4. The Montana Highway Patrol is an indispensable asset to public safety in Montana. As Attorney General, I've prioritized training and accountability

within the Montana Highway Patrol. We've added resources to improve officer performance and morale, while strengthening partnerships with local law enforcement agencies to ensure safety across the state. Just this year, every single trooper received a \$4 per hour raise – the equivalent of 14 percent for a starting trooper. Going forward, I'll continue to focus on professional development, clear protocols, and supporting troopers who work hard to keep Montana's roads and communities safe.

5. As a member of the Land Board, I've

worked to maximize revenue for Montana schools while balancing conservation and responsible resource development. We've generated revenue through sustainable land management practices and supported local. Our approach is working: Just this month, we approved a record-setting \$2.85 million oil and gas lease sale on state trust lands. Ensuring schools receive the funding they need, maximizing the long-term value of state trust lands for future generations, and balancing multiple uses will remain my top priorities during my second term as Attorney General.



Ben Alke — D



Age: 45

Home: Grew up in Helena and lives in Bozeman

Family: Husband and father of four children

Occupation: Attorney – Crist, Krogh, Alke & Nord, PLLC.

Education: Helena Capital High School; University of Notre Dame, BA, Northwestern University School of Law, JD.

Contact information for voters: ben@alkeformontana.com

1. The Attorney General needs to provide more support to local prosecutors and law enforcement. Prosecuting felonies and getting drug dealers off the street is law enforcement 101. Unfortunately, the current Attorney General is not doing his job and crime is up.

The exact type of support depends on the county. To provide just two examples, the State is not prosecuting felonies in Lake County on the Flathead Reservation. That creates a law enforcement vacuum where cartels and other drug dealers can operate. In Yellowstone County, the Attorney General needs to support efforts to expand the county jail capacity to get drug dealers off the streets.

Law enforcement is a complex collaboration between federal, state, tribal, and local agencies. It's about working together and getting stuff done – not about press releases.

2. Not much. The Attorney General should participate in litigation outside Montana when participating will actually make a difference to Montanans. The tobacco litigation and opioid cases from years ago are good examples. The State had to participate in those cases to recover money for Montanans.

Most litigation at the federal level does not work that way. When 25 attorneys general file suit against the federal government, it's probably just a political stunt and waste of resources for 24 of them.

The Attorney General is the attorney for the people of the State of Montana. He should represent their interests, not the interests of any political party. Put politics on the backburner and just focus on doing the job for the people of Montana.

3. By making the reporting and

investigation of missing indigenous persons a top priority. Because the State does not have jurisdiction on any reservation (except the Flathead Reservation), communication and collaboration are critical. The Attorney General must play a leadership role by engaging with tribal leadership and tribal, federal and local law enforcement. Creating a reporting system, establishing a communication network, and tracking data on missing indigenous persons would all be steps in the right direction, but even more needs to be done. The Attorney General must also explore ways to effectively coordinate active investigations with other law enforcement agencies and be more proactive when fighting human trafficking.

4. By sticking to the core mission of the Montana Highway Patrol and removing all politics and favoritism. There is nothing political about administering the Highway Patrol. Troopers need to know that employment decisions will be based on hard work and merit, that they will be provided with proper training, and that leadership will listen to their suggestions and concerns and respond.

I will also implement the recommendations of a recent employee survey of the Montana Highway Patrol that revealed a lack of trust in the Attorney General's leadership. Unfortunately, rather than embrace the results and recommendations of this project, the current Attorney General cancelled the program and ordered that all copies of the results of the survey be destroyed.

5. Increased funding for education and increased access to public lands. State owned lands are held in trust for the support of education and for the benefit of all Montanans. My votes on the Land Board will be consistent with the mission of the board and the rights of Montanans, including access to public lands and waterways for hunting, fishing and recreation.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Christi Jacobsen — R



Age: 48

Home: Born and raised in Helena

Family: Husband and five children

Occupation: Secretary of State

Education: Capital

High School, Helena, BA Carroll College, Helena, Master's Public Administration, Missoula

Contact information for voters: info@christijacobsen.com

1. My administration has developed the strongest relationship with county partners in decades. That is what the county election officials survey information reported to the legislature last month said, and we've worked hard and delivered for Montana by building a united Montana Elections Team. From personal visits by myself and members of the team to courthouses around the state to focus on the uniqueness of each community, to a world class elections training, and unprecedented outreach to voters—the Montana Elections Team is working with momentum because of our intentional efforts to ensure Montana's elections set the national bar.

2. As Secretary of State, I led and streamlined unprecedented reform and registered a historic number of businesses in the state. Now, filings are completely electronic, filed 24/7, from any device—while providing exceptional customer service to the business community. I've successfully

cut red tape, including eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic processes and fees from the office, reducing the steps involved for every business filing, and massively expedited the process for our customers, turning them around at record speed. Most importantly, through hard work, we've cut fees for Montana businesses in half and waived annual fees.

3. Montana is a red state that is adamant about limited government, while also fiercely independent. Most Montanans I talk to enjoy not having to register by party. At the same time, I feel for those who are upset by the political warfare played through crossover gamesmanship. When it comes to evaluating primary policy proposals, the devil is always in the details, and I would have to thoroughly review what is proposed to make a decision. Most Montanans enjoy our current system, but I recognize that there are instances where it is abused unfairly.

4. The Secretary of State's Office operates as an enterprise fund. No taxpayer dollars are used for funding. The office is run like a business, efficiently, doing more with less by



Starr Emery

Championing Montana Families and Communities

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- Safe Children
- Sound & Healthy Family
- Strong Montana Economy
- Education & Community Support
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Standing up for Montana Families!

**Safe Children
Sound Families
Strong Montana**



providing exceptional service to the Montana business community. As your Secretary of State, I have cut new business filing fees in half, waived annual report filing fees, eliminated numerous bureaucratic fees all together, and intend to continue to look for opportunities to further reduce fees. The number of employees in the office has been reduced by half, while providing exceptional service. The business community grades my performance an “A+”.

5. Managing our state lands is near and dear to my heart because my

family is a product of public schools and public land users. I fight for public access, properly funding our schools, responsible development of our natural resources, and protecting private property rights. I am proud of my work with timber and agriculture industries to protect our way of life. I have delivered by creating hundreds of thousands of new public land acres to recreate on, delivered access to landlocked lands for backcountry hunters, and prime fishing access locations for generations to enjoy God’s beauty in this state.



Jesse James Mullen – D



Age: 40

Home: Deer Lodge

Family: father of five

Occupation: small business owner

Education: Studied journalism at the University of Wyoming

Contact information for voters:
jessejamesmullen.com

1. The credibility of our elections is undermined by Montana’s current Secretary of State using misinformation to play national political games. Republican and Democrat election officials across Montana run the most secure elections in America. My opponent used public dollars to distribute fake voting information in 2022. She is suing to limit voter access and disenfranchise Montana’s youth and Tribes by promoting unconstitutional bills from the legislature. I spent my career holding politicians accountable. I will continue to prioritize accurate and timely information and

highlight the achievements of Montana's dedicated local officials.

2. Customer service is lacking and needed. I built customer service centers for some of the largest media companies in the US. State employees must be capable, competent, and accessible to the public. Our state will work again for Montana's small-business owners, not the out-of-state mega-corporations and tech bros dodging California taxes. Montanans don't need special rules for small businesses, but we do need a registration system that works and acknowledges Montana's locally-owned businesses are the backbone of Main Street.

3. Montanans vote for the person, not the party. I support giving Montanans a real choice in primary elections. Partisan candidates will be accountable to all Montanans if they want to use public resources for ballot access. Montana's Independents are a fast-growing segment of the population, and parties won't get special rules to play by while forcing Montanans to join an organization they don't support. Yes, I support open primaries. With both major parties against open primaries, I

think that's a good argument in favor.

4. The Secretary of State overcharged Montana businesses and refused to issue refunds without making Montanans jump through hoops. Businesses have to sue to fix known issues her department ignores, costing Montanans. The public shouldn't have to pay to defend an executive who won't do the job. I put Montanans first. That means better information for our small business owners and support from the Secretary of State's office to allow them to file without hiring expensive third-party organizations. And plain and simple, some people still like to pay by check.

5. I spent my career holding politicians accountable. Our public land is Montana's greatest investment, and I take the caretaker role for our land seriously. I will hold the Land Board accountable to Montanans and be a critical check and balance for a partisan board more interested in pleasing donors and lobbyists than protecting Montana's future. I'm not running for Secretary of State to work for the Governor or lobbyists. I'm running to serve as a caretaker for our public lands for the public and future generations.

**OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE SUPERINTENDENT**

Susie Hedalen – R



Age: 40

Home: Townsend

Family: Married to my husband Derrick

Occupation: Superintendent of Townsend School District

Education: I graduated from Montana State University, Bozeman, with a Bachelor's in Elementary Education, a Master's in Educational Leadership, and a Certificate in Native American Studies.

Contact information for voters: info@susieforschools.com

1. Montana's Constitution mandates Indian Education for All (IEFA), setting our public education apart. Alongside my teaching and administrative credentials, I hold a Native American Studies certificate and am the liaison for the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education. It's vital all Montana students grasp our tribal nations' cultural

depth. As State Superintendent, I'll infuse tribal history into civics education, collaborating with tribal leaders and offering educator training integrating IEFA across the curriculum. Honoring this mandate fosters inclusivity and awareness in Montana's classrooms. Fiscal reporting will monitor funding for high-quality Indian Education materials and professional development. As State Superintendent, I will ensure OPI supports districts in a meaningful tribal consultation process.

2. Montana struggles with a pressing teacher shortage, impacting communities statewide. Addressing this crisis demands multifaceted strategies to bolster educators and incentivize students toward teaching careers. Building upon initiatives like the TEACH Act, which enhances starting teacher salaries, and the educator healthcare trust program, we can improve retention and recruitment.

Collaborating with the Montana University System to recruit students into education and mental health professions is essential. Streamlining administrative processes in education redirects resources to classrooms. Advocating for federal authorities to

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ease unnecessary mandates empowers educators. As State Superintendent, I'll champion these efforts to ensure quality education reaches every Montana community.

3. As an experienced administrator, I understand that no organization can be effectively run without appropriate staffing levels of highly qualified professionals. State government is no different. In order to effectively serve Montana's educators and families, the Office of Public Instruction needs to have experienced individuals who are committed to serving our local communities, schools, and parents. In addition to building the OPI with strong employees, I will work to strategically reduce red tape and bureaucracy while streamlining agency functions. This will allow the OPI to focus on serving local communities. I am committed to responsive constituent services and proactive agency operations to improve response times, support educator professional development, and drive greater focus on academic achievement for students.

4. Last year, the Legislature approved public charter schools in Montana, a pivotal move for educational advancement. As a Board of Public Education member, I advocated for 19 top-tier charter schools statewide, 17 of which opened this fall. Montana now aligns with 45 states in broadening school choice within public education through these pioneering institutions.

Montana's charter schools enrich our public education landscape, offering varied options. By expanding opportunities, we fulfill our constitutional mandate to tailor education to each student. I'm dedicated to collaborating with state leaders to vary academic opportunities, ensuring Montana students access innovative pathways to reach their fullest potential.

5. Our state trust lands exist to ensure robust returns to support our local schools. As a Land Board member, I will prioritize active management of our state trust lands to maximize revenue for schools while also maximizing public access to our state lands for recreational activities. State Trust lands produce about \$50 million each year in school funding through agriculture, oil, gas, forestry, minerals, and real estate. Active management of our land allows us to provide strong returns for schools and recreational opportunities for generations to come.



Shannon O'Brien – D



Age: 55

Home: Missoula

Family: Husband Chuck, son Carter, high school sophomore

Occupation: Retired Educator

Education: Bachelor's, Political Science, UW, Master's Gonzaga, Doctorate, UM

Contact information for voters: campaign@montanansforshannon.com

1. In keeping with our constitutional obligation, I would ensure the goal of Indian Education for All is met – that every Montana student learns an accurate history that includes Native people, understands tribal sovereignty, and is aware of contemporary Native issues. IEFA funding should be used for these purposes and OPI can ensure accountability for those dollars through school finance reporting systems. That said, my emphasis would be on impact, not paperwork.

OPI should provide the professional development, curricular resources, and encouragement that help the professionals implementing IEFA programming actively engage teachers and students in elevating Native history and culture.

2. We need to meet this crisis head-on by addressing the issues driving Montana teachers out of state or into another profession. To start, we must ensure Montana teachers earn a living wage.

We must encourage and help replicate creative local efforts to provide affordable teacher housing. Beyond that, we need to lift up teaching as a profession. Working with the Montana University System, we must ensure students heading off to college see teaching as a viable career path and have financial incentives to pursue it. Once in the classroom, teachers should see OPI as the valuable resource it once was.

3. An independent audit of the financial and programmatic situation at OPI would identify major gaps and suggest triage priorities, but the complaint I hear repeatedly from school districts is the need to be responsive.

Not answering the phone or getting back to people is unacceptable. Under my leadership OPI will be responsive. I'm committed to building a culture of service and restoring the pride we all once had in that office. Working with educators, community leaders, business owners and universities over the last 12 years, I know Montana has an abundance of talent that can be tapped to rebuild OPI.

4. We have a responsibility to our taxpayers to spend their money effectively and transparently. The PUBLIC charter schools are showing great promise and innovation in both areas. The PRIVATE charter schools, however, with limited oversight and no obligation to meet public expectations, are unconstitutional. We cannot dedicate precious resources to private education for a select few. Montanans love their local school and they trust their teachers. We can and we must fund public education adequately to provide a free, quality public education for every Montana child.

5. Simply put, we must protect our public lands. Because the revenue generated from our public lands helps fund public schools, the Superintendent's role on the Land Board is especially important. As a Land Board member, I will vote to protect public access and make sure that leases of public lands are fair and equitable to both the state and the people leasing the land, while providing optimal support for public education. I will never support the sale of Montana's public lands.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION DISTRICT 2

Brad Molnar – R



Age: 74

Home: Laurel

Family: Married, three children, 12 grandkids, five great-grandkids

Occupation: Senator, retired

Education: three years UM Forestry and journalism, certificate in energy regulation and International Energy from U of Michigan/ NARUC

Contact information for voters: Brad. Molnar@yahoo.com, 406-794-5982

1. See 3) below. Much of the recent rate increase was not from PSC actions. ie 30% was property taxes. The legislature needs to address this causation. None have appealed claiming that the arithmetic is wrong. Many judicial rulings, reversing PSC rulings, concerning renewable energy have had substantial negative impacts. Federal rules threatening base load power (Green New Deal via the Inflation Reduction Act etc.) has caused rate increases of about 25% across the Intermountain West. If dogmatic ideologues would stay out of our elected PSC's legislated mission the rate structure would improve.

2. I recently fought to allow open and transparent meetings for new energy procurements. I /the people of Montana lost. PSC rule mandates such meetings be open, but the law does not so it is ignored. All I can do is keep trying. Some coverage from the press would be nice.

Unlike most departments the PSC is made up of five commissioners each with one vote. So cannot, and should not, try to force compliance with the new behavior guidelines. That job belongs to the voters.

3. Some want to join a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO). I am open but luke warm to this as the other member states face the same challenges we do. And they can out vote Montana in cost allocations.

When on the Commission I was the OMS agent so if this is the path chosen I shall re-assume that position and mitigate start up issues.

I prefer, and have started soliciting support for, having NWE customers form a member owned co-op and purchase energy from the BPA. Possible down sides have yet to surface.

4. Experience.

- 2001 energy advisor to Speaker of the House and Governor. Wrote HB 640 which stopped Montana Power from crushing Mt with deregulated pricing.

- Elected to PSC and Vice Chairmanship in 2004 and oversaw NWE's bankruptcy and re-integration of generation and transmission assets.

- Re-elected to PSC and Vice Chairmanship 2008 and repealed new formula that raised rates for lower and middle income rate-payers.

- Served on Senate Energy Committee 2020-2024. Appointed to the Consumer Council oversight committee to assure the Consumer Council has the resources to properly represent consumers before the PSC on rate questions.



Susan Bilo – D



Age: 62

Home: Bozeman

Family: Married, and I belong to a dog.

Occupation: Montana State University– Gallatin College Instructor

Education: B.S. and M.S. from Colorado State University

Contact information for voters: E-mail: SusanBilo4PSCDist2@gmail.com; Website: www.Bilo4PSC.com

1. Multiple ways that include:

- a. Ensuring more affordable energy options are compared and given fair consideration. Today's utility-scale solar and wind with battery storage power plants are cost-competitive/cheaper than fossil fuel-powered plants. Montana has world class wind, but other utilities such as Puget Sound are using it more than we are to keep bills low and meet clean energy goals.

- b. Leading the effort to expand our constrained electric grid to allow the import of cheaper electricity when needed. Idaho Power invests in solar and wind power plants and expanded the grid so it can buy cheap windgenerated electricity from states like Wyoming. These strategies keep their average electric bills at \$65/month versus Northwestern Energy's \$113/month (based on 765 kwh use/month).

- c. Introducing competition for Montana's two investor-owned utilities by developing fair and reasonable contact terms for outside businesses that want to build power plants in Montana.

- d. Overseeing development of a long-range energy plan that proactively addresses the levelized cost of energy as well as the external costs on our environment and society.

- e. Last, by directing the utilities to expand and better market efficiency programs that help Montanans reduce electricity and natural gas use.

2. These issues resulted in an Executive Director being hired to oversee operations and manage misconduct. There should be a dock in pay for not showing up for meetings and hearings and dismissal for breaking the law and mis-use of taxpayer dollars. Transparency and access to utility plans and PSC



decision-making information is critical: Laurel citizens were not told about plans for Northwestern Energy's new natural gas plant. That would not have happened on my watch! I would have made sure Montanans – especially in Laurel – were informed and invited to public meetings to learn more and provide input. I will work with PSC staff to proactively inform Montanans about all major energy decisions and plans.

3. There is a repeated myth that only fossil fuels plants are reliable. Colstrip shut down during Montana's recent extreme cold snap, and in Texas several years ago, wind turbines and a natural gas plant stopped working during extreme cold. All energy facilities need to be "weatherized" for extreme weather events that are occurring more frequently due to climate change. Solar energy systems work well in cold climates and wind turbines provide electricity at America's McMurdo Research Station in Antarctica. And, battery storage makes these systems reliable because the electricity is available 24/7 upon demand when needed. These reliable systems are also more affordable (and cleaner) than fossil fuel plants. Lazard – a respected global financial and leading financial advisory and asset management firm – creates yearly reports on the unsubsidized costs of all energy. Its analysis indicates "significant cost declines for utility-scale renewable energy generation technologies that are driven by multiple factors including decreasing capital costs and improved technologies."

The PSC should have directed Northwestern Energy to build a new wind or solar farm and renew their Judith Gap wind contract instead of investing in the Laurel natural gas plant and looking to acquire additional Colstrip shares. The excuses for not investing in renewable energy technologies are old and worn out!

4. The majority of the PSC's work centers around energy, and I have over 25 years of energy program, project, and policy experience. I was an energy specialist for a state energy office, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. As an instructor, I research and teach fact-based energy information to students in my Montana State University–Gallatin College classes. I have also taught energy courses for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Once elected, I will step back from teaching and be fully dedicated to

the job. I have served on advisory boards and committees providing guidance on long-range plans. Energy is my chosen profession, and my knowledge and experience will help me provide a fresh perspective and hit the ground running.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION DISTRICT 3

Leonard Williams — D



Age: 67

Home: Butte America

Family: Two children

Occupation: Inside Wireman/retired

Education: Graduate Twin Falls High School; Idaho State Electrical

Apprenticeship Training

Contact information for voters:

Leonard (Lenny) Williams, PO BOX 4221, Butte MT 59702; 406-565-2498; Lenny4pscdistrict3@gmail.com; Lenny for PSC District #3 Mt.; www.lennyforpsc.org

1. Montanans today are faced with the challenge of high energy, property tax, and cost of living increases. The Public Service Commission has the task of balance the proposed rate increase with the demand of energy supply and the opportunity for the provider to maintain a profit and provide a steady state of flow to the captive consumer meaning that the rate of demand and energy production is maintained at an equal rate.

As we move into a more neutral carbon-based energy profile investments should reflect the technologies afforded to us today. Because the base of some of the costs is dependent on supply and demand we could reduce the amount of consumption.

2. The Montana's Public Service Commission has recently come under the watchful eye of a Legislative audit reveling the "commission misconduct and management issues". More recently incidents of finger pointing at staff and regulated bodies over the greatest rate hike in the Treasure States history along with a break in protocol.

The recent adoption of a formal Code of Conduct for the Commission and management staff seams not to have gained the trust of the electorate.

The creation of an oversight board consisting of interested parties would also be a conduit for staff to voice

concerns over what may seem like their research falling on deaf ears.

3. As Montana faces challenges in energy production with growth the and the advent of the evectional loss of production at the Colstrip facility, how can the PSC help create a bright future in energy production in the Treasure State?

Fortunately, Montana has the ability to move to a more substantiable renewable energy profile. Bold ideas are needed to source new energy production to assure it maintains its mandate to balance cost to the consumer and profit for the for supplier. The question remains on how the PSC deals with creating a new path in the transformation of Colstrip itself and assure citizens and Tribal Nations a place and a future in their communities.

4. The qualification that I posses to add benefit to the Public Service Commission District 3 are over 30 years in the electrical trade, multilabel aspects in construction of wind, hydro generation and power distribution centers.

As a Journeyman Wireman and proud member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, it has afforded me with many opportunities to educate myself not only skilled labor but to serve as a delegate in Central Labor Councils the Executive Board and other organizations with a diverse composition. From collective bargaining and collaboration with the goal to find consensus in aspects that effect lives.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION DISTRICT 4

Elena Evans — I



Age: 39

Home: Missoula

Family: Husband, Tim; two kids ages 4 and 6

Occupation: Environmental Health Manager, Missoula County

Education: Master's Degree in Geology, University of Montana

Contact information for voters: www.ElenaForMontana.com, info@elenaformt.com

1. My family is one of many Montana families that moved to budget billing after the PSC approved the 28% rate increase for Northwestern Energy last year. The PSC is legally obligated

to ensure ratepayers have "reliable, sustainable, and affordable" power, and the PSC can force NorthWestern to work harder to meet that standard when it submits requests for new rate increases or requests to purchase new power sources, for example. The PSC can also require utilities to expand programs to assist low-income customers.

2. First, I would defeat Jennifer Fielder (current VP of the PSC) in this election. She has a long history of misconduct, corruption, and scandal. Everywhere she goes, lawsuits follow.

Second, I would implement the legislative audit's recommendations to the letter. I would create a code of conduct for all commissioners, reclassify department staff so they aren't supervised by politicians, and empower nonpartisan staff to do their jobs without political interference. I'm a true Independent. I firmly believe our government should be run by people rather than political parties. Transparency would be my #1 goal.

3. The PSC is required to ensure reliable power, but the extremely old power plants that provide most of our energy frequently shut down during major cold snaps causing huge cost

increases that NorthWestern passes on to customers.

The PSC is required to ensure affordable power, but they aren't requiring NorthWestern to invest in forward-thinking energy like major utilities in other states, which will save customers money in the long run.

The PSC is required to ensure sustainable power, but our power plants aren't cutting it. It's time to invest in cutting edge technology to cut costs for consumers.

4. I'm not a Democrat or a Republican. I'm a working mom with two kids. As a lifelong public servant, I've always stressed professional conduct, honesty, and transparency. I'm a trained geologist, a water quality expert, and the former Director of the Montana Association of Conservation Districts. I know how to build a budget and stick to it. I always read the fine print.

I've also completed the Incident Command System and received my Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response certification. For years, I've demonstrated an ability to simplify complex systems, interpret regulations, and understand how small details impact real people.

RUDOLF HADEN

Veteran for House District 49



**ACCOUNTABILITY AND
SERVICE IN LEADERSHIP**
Rudolf Haden is a veteran and teacher who strongly values empathetic representation in Government!
Born in Powell, Wyoming, Rudolf spent 28 years deployed as an Intelligence Officer in the Navy before retiring and returning to Montana.
As your representative in Helena, he has the values, character and independence to focus on unity and finding the best solutions for our district and state. He wants to bring down costs and taxes, fund our schools, fight crime and build a Montana our kids will thrive in! Rudolf has always sought out the most difficult challenges and will make it his JOB to find effective solutions to our problems. Send this enthusiastic veteran to Helena and let's make Montana affordable again!!

**VOTE RUDOLF HADEN FOR
HOUSE DISTRICT 49**

Learn more about
Rudolf at HadenForMontana.com
Paid for by Haden for Montana, Democrat, PO Box 50665, Billings, MT 59105



Jennifer Fielder – R



Age: 58

Home: Thompson Falls

Family: Married 25 years to Paul Fielder. Two grown children and five grandchildren.

Occupation: Public Service Commissioner

Education: Bachelor of Science; Associate of Applied Science; Associate of Arts and Sciences.

Contact information for voters: Web: www.JenniferFielder.com (all contact info is available on this website as well as a messaging portal)

1. Whether its gas, groceries, fast food, or utilities, steep price increases have impacted everyone, and almost all of these increases have been driven up by bad government policies on a national level. In spite of that, since I was elected to the Montana PSC in 2021 we have actually saved gas and electric customers more than \$35 million dollars. In fact, Montana's utility rates are now lower than 37 other states. We also approved a new garbage company in Missoula County which offers considerably lower prices. I will continue working diligently to lower costs while keeping service quality up.

2. Before I joined the Commission in 2021, the agency was in turmoil. I immediately put my administrative skills to work and led vital Strategic Planning, Software Modernization, and Internal Policy Reforms – all of which resulted in higher standards of conduct, order, and performance throughout the agency. In 2023, I was unanimously elected by fellow Commissioners as the Commission Vice President and later that year the PSC received its best state fiscal audit in a decade. We also scored 100% on our federal audits the last 3 years in a row. The current Commission and staff are outstanding.

3. We are working very hard with the utilities and the legislature on Integrated Resource Planning to ensure adequate utility supplies will be available when Montanans need them now and in the future. At the root of this is to step up energy efficiency measures, accurately forecast energy demand, and allow Montana utilities to maintain and develop enough energy to meet consumer demand. If we are short on energy supply

in Montana, our utilities are forced to enter bidding wars to obtain energy from other states, and this can be very expensive especially during extreme cold weather when demand is highest.

4. Four years Montana Public Service Commissioner; two years as Vice President of the Montana Public Service Commission; eight years Montana State Senate. Prior to that, I gained over 20 years of professional planning, design, and project management experience which involved the types of industries regulated by the PSC – including railways, pipelines, power plants, telecommunications, water works, solid waste management, and federal energy regulatory proceedings. I completed NARUC Utility Rate School. My formal education includes a Bachelor of Science with Magna Cum Laude honors, an Associate in Arts & Sciences with President's Medal Award, and an Associate in Applied Science.

STATE AUDITOR

James Brown – R



Age: 53

Home: Dillon

Family: Two brothers and a sister and my dog "Lola".

Occupation: Lawyer/public servant

Education:

Beaverhead County High School; BA, University of Montana; LLM in tax law from the University of Washington; Montana insurance producer's license.

Contact information for voters: jim@jamesbrownformontana.com

1. Protecting Montana's insurance and securities customers is the most important duty of the State Auditor. For the last 20 years, I have, first as a private practice attorney, and second as President of the Montana Public Service Commission, worked to defend the interests of consumers and investors and will continue to do so in this key position.

The Auditor is also tasked with administering Montana laws to ensure the state maintains a healthy and thriving business environment. The majority of businesses in Montana are small businesses. And, as a small business owner and employer myself, I pledge to keep Montana open for business through common sense regulation, fair

enforcement of the law, and meaningful consumer education and outreach.

2. I have zero tolerance for those who violate the law or attempt to financially abuse seniors and other vulnerable groups. The Auditor's Office is, among other things, a law enforcement agency. Having been an attorney and an officer of the court, I will zealously defend all Montanans, especially our vulnerable seniors, from the fraudsters and scammers who would seek to prey on them, particularly against those who use Artificial Intelligence to target the Treasure State's most vulnerable populations. This is a situation that I will address immediately upon being sworn in office as Montana's next Auditor.

3. I grew up in and was educated in rural Montana. I have experienced firsthand how tough it can be for hard working Montanans living outside of Helena to access state resources. Consequently, among my top priorities as Montana's State Auditor will be to bring government services into your local community by holding education and outreach sessions in all parts of the Treasure State – from Ekalaka to Eureka. This effort will include holding public consumer and business education forums in communities around the State, namely in those underserved areas of the state such as native American reservations and eastern Montana.

4. Having grown up Dillon, a small Montana community, I understand the importance of protecting access to quality health care services for all Montanans. This includes the need to ensure small independent pharmacies have a level regulatory playing field in which to compete against chain retailers. Montana's legislature recently passed legislation to give the Auditor's office more oversight of pharmacy benefit managers. However, the Legislature should consider taking additional action to protect consumers and make prescription drugs more affordable, including investigating how PBMs fit into a national drug pricing structure and highly concentrated health care markets and providing greater transparency to PBM practices.

5. Montana's Constitution clearly denotes that it is the primary job of the land board to maximize revenue generated from school trust lands for use by Montana's public schools. While, in 2023, State Trust Lands produced roughly \$54 million for Montana's K-12 public schools, we can do better for

Montana's children by generating more revenue through proper stewardship of state trust properties. Thus, from day one as a member of the land board, I will work to ensure each project is generating sufficient revenue to educate Montana's kids as required while ensuring the public interest is served by protecting access to public lands for all Montanans.



John Repke – D

Age: 67

Home: Whitefish

Family: Single (widowed in 2023 after 43 years of marriage); father of three, grandfather of three (all Montana residents)

Occupation:

Retired after a 4-decade career in private business as a finance executive involved in corporate finance, insurance, securities, strategy, and general management.

Education: BS in Finance, Ohio State University; MBA in Finance, University of Denver

Contact information for voters: www.repkeformontana.com

1. The Auditor's job is to "protect Montana insurance consumers". Advocacy and outreach are the core responsibilities and will be my top priorities.

I support continuing Montana's current Medicaid Expansion beyond 2025, when it is set to expire. All Montanans are impacted when some of us don't have health insurance.

Increased frequency and severity of catastrophic climate events is roiling Montana's home insurance market. I will research best practices addressing this critical issue and find solutions that work for Montana.

I am committed to transparency in rates and coverages in all lines of insurance, along with a competitive insurance market, to benefit Montana consumers.

2. I will focus the investigatory efforts on protecting Montana consumers from fraudulent security schemes, deceptive online scams and insurance fraud. I will partner with other state and federal agencies to leverage the resources of the office and broaden the investigative reach.

3. The resources of the office are vital to the protection of Montana insurance consumers – and becoming increasingly important in the current insurance market. Unfortunately, they are under-utilized. I will increase awareness of the services by requiring insurance companies to notify their customers that the office is available to answer questions and mediate disputes that cannot be resolved directly with their insurance company. I will also work to promote the fraud protection services of the office through partnerships with phone, text, and email providers.

4. Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) play a complicated role in the delivery of pharmaceutical drugs to insured patients across the country. My plan is to work closely with our federal delegation to manage drug costs, including the costs of PBM services. Specifically in Montana, I will work to require more transparency around PBM costs and PBM decision making around approval of drug coverages. The office needs to enforce SB395 from the 2021 session.

5. Montana's state trust lands were established for the purpose of generating funding for K-12 education. That's an important mission and with my four-

decade background in finance, I will bring a higher level of financial scrutiny to the leasing decisions that generate that funding. I will also ensure that our state lands are managed for the long-term benefit of all Montanans, and I will ensure that Montanans maintain access to our public lands for hunting, fishing, hiking, and other recreation.

U.S. HOUSE DISTRICT 2

John B. Driscoll – D



Age: 77

Home: 30 South Davis St., Helena

Family: Wife, Kathryn and four children and six grandchildren.

Occupation: Retired

Education: Sacred Heart Grade School, Miles City; Hamilton High School, Hamilton; BA, Gonzaga University, Spokane; MIA, Columbia University School of International Affairs, New York; certificate, Columbia University Latin American Institute, New York; MPA, Harvard University Kennedy

School, Cambridge, Massachusetts; MBA, University of Montana, School of Business, Missoula; U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Contact information for voters:
johnbdriscoll.blogspot.com/?m=2;

<https://www.facebook.com/john.driscoll.585112?mibextid=LQQJ4d>

John B Driscoll@stewardmagazine;
driscolljohn37@gmail.com

1. I will work to provide a way forward that takes our skilled work force from good jobs in carbon-based industry and related activities to good paying jobs in electrified railroading and large scale hydrogen manufacture from water transported by rail from the lower Columbia River. This will require continued development of wind and solar electricity generation, deployment of small modular reactors, addressing the need for high level nuclear waste disposal, and substantially opening and increasing electricity transmission capabilities. Farmers need resources to sequester carbon beneath the ground and/or sequester carbon in compressed agricultural fiber panels to be integrated into the mass timber construction

materials market and delivered by fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEV). Firefighters need a higher wage to be recruited and retained, and volunteer firefighters need encouragement and some reimbursement for the increasing initial attack activity on fires near our towns. Volunteer ambulance emergency medical technicians (-EMTs) need to have their time required for training reimbursed. Construction trades personnel need incentives for work force development in low embodied carbon and carbon sequestering building techniques.

2. I will support legislation making those national standards be the same as those previously in effect under the Roe v Wade U.S. Supreme Court decision. The decision should always be the woman's.

3. On the income side I would not extend recent tax cuts and will aggressively look for ways to return the progressive federal income tax to its original structure. On the expenditure side, I will not support the Sentinel Minuteman modernization project which, including updating warheads, is now \$161 billion over targeted cost. I will do that by voting to reduce other aspects of the Defense Department Budget so that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff uses

For New State Senate District 24

Mike's Goals for Public Service:

- Serve you, the city, county and our state of Montana
- Public Safety and access to Behavioral Healthcare
- Long term care for the elderly
- Workforce development and affordable housing
- Support our Veterans and their families

ENDORSED BY: Billings Firefighters IAFF Local 521, Billings Carpenters Union 82, the Western States Regional Council of Carpenters, The MT Family Foundation, The MT Shooting Sports Association, MT Stockgrowers Association, MT Building Industry Association, Billings Chamber of Commerce and the Billings Association of Realtors.

Elect Mike Yakawich

"Safer
Healthier
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Growing
Community"



We Like Mike!

Vote Mike Yakawich for SD 24

Paid for by Mike Yakawich for SD24 (R), PO Box 32004 Billings, MT 59107

his legal authority to reallocate Sentinel funds into justifiable areas of defense. I will work to end the missile-based portion of this country's nuclear triad as part of a comprehensive global nuclear weapons reduction treaty. I reject the notion of funding an "iron dome" as out of the question, given our other massive defense requirements and the size of our country.

4. I'll work to bring together expertise required for legislation to build a large number of multifamily carbon-sequestering structures on leased federal ground, long-term leased for favorable terms near existing communities. The structures will be in keeping with the latest International Building Codes which now permit mass timber skyscrapers, taller than 10 stories. Existing federal long-term lease guarantees equal to 90% of the multifamily structure's long-term cost will be expanded, still requiring 10% down payments. Leasing of federal land for these structure will not be allowed in areas where local governments are failing to provide sufficient water/pressure for stand pipes and sprinklers and reliable fire protection. The structures would be leased and built by limited equity cooperatives, meaning that in return for the value of a favorable long-term lease, each cooperative member will be held to a gain in equity for their membership equal to no more than the increase in local median income during the period of membership. This will leave a perpetual block of affordable housing.

5. No



Troy Downing – R



Age: 57

Home: Helena

Family: Troy and his wife Heather have 4 grown children

Occupation: Montana Commissioner of Securities and Insurance

Education: New York University

Contact information for voters: Info@troydowning.com or www.TroyDowning.com

1. We all care about our environment. We also care about our communities, opportunity, and quality of life. We need to maintain inexpensive and reliable energy.

Our communities need to be able to afford to heat their homes, drive their cars, and purchase goods and services which would otherwise be unaffordable without inexpensive, reliable energy.

We must continue to support our traditional energy industry while removing barriers for "all of the above" development.

Americans are innovative and I believe the markets will continue to drive innovation as we make traditional energy cleaner and more efficient and pave the way for alternatives. Fossil fuels can't, and shouldn't be, simply turned off without causing possibly irreparable harm to the average American.

2. I will uphold the value of life from conception to natural death. The rescission of Roe v. Wade did not make abortion legal or illegal. It was simply an unconstitutional usurpation of states' rights and was properly rescinded pushing these decisions to the states and closer to the people. The federal government should continue to protect the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

3. Poor fiscal policy and uncontrolled debt are among the biggest problems we face as a nation. Our unfettered debt is also an issue of national security and of future prosperity. As a nation, we must address both our discretionary and mandatory spending programs.

Simple beginning steps may include single-title appropriation bills, elimination of omnibus spending bills, elimination of earmarks, and balanced budget legislation. On mandatory spending, we need to circle the wagons and address the elephant in the room while not negatively impacting Americans who depend on the programs they have spent their lives paying into.

4. To make housing more affordable for Montanans, we need to tackle the inflation driven by Biden and Kamala Harris's economic policies. If you put money into any system, especially money that was not earned, it is an inflationary pressure. We need to tackle inflation, and we need to remove barriers and over-regulation and red tape that increase costs to builders trying to produce affordable and workforce housing.

5. I believe that our country has been incredibly generous to Ukraine to date and urge our European allies to step up and be the tip of the spear in the face of Russian aggression in their own backyard. We must also strongly consider lifting Biden Administration restrictions

on allowing Ukraine to counter attack militarily significant targets within Russia. Finally, we need a victory plan from Zelenskyy with a clear definition of victory. Israel is our strongest ally and the only democracy in a part of the world that hates America. We must continue our unwavering support for our only ally in the Middle East. Israel has a right to exist and has a right to protect herself. It is in our best interests that our ally remains strong in this region and remains our first line of defense in this region.

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

Katherine Bidegaray



Age: 63

Home: Sidney

Family: Mother of five children, grandmother of six grandchildren.

Occupation: District Judge, Montana 7th Judicial District

Education: Bachelor's Degrees in Political Science and Philosophy, Law Degree (JD) from the University of Montana School of Law

Contact information for voters: bidegaray@bidegarayformontana.com

1. During more than 21 years as a district court judge, my judicial philosophy has centered on fairness, respect, and impartiality, not swayed by partisan interest, public opinion, or fear of criticism. It is rooted in a firm commitment to the rule of law. I approach each case with an open mind, basing decisions on the relevant facts and legal principles, while adhering strictly to the 1972 Montana Constitution, the U.S. Constitution, and established legal precedents and statutes. My opponent describes himself using political terms and attends partisan political events.

2. I will continue to work, as I have during 39 years as an attorney and judge, to maintain a fair, impartial, nonpartisan judiciary that upholds the U.S. Constitution, the Montana Constitution, and the rule of law. I will decide issues based on the law and facts, not on partisan ideology or politics. Montanans are entitled to expect neutrality and impartiality in the judiciary, as underscored by the separation of powers our 1972 Montana Constitution requires. I am not a politician. To maintain public trust and the integrity of our judicial

system, I do not participate in partisan political events.

3. Briefs and orders in cases appealed to the Montana Supreme Court are available to the public on its website. Oral arguments to the Court are streamed. I would encourage the continuation of these practices. To make the Court more understandable to Montanans, I would emphasize the important role the Montana Supreme Court plays in preserving the rule of law, protecting the individual rights the 1972 Montana Constitution guarantees, and reining in the other branches of government if they abuse their power. In addition, I would write decisions that are clear, logical, and concise.



Dan Wilson

Age: 60

Home: Kalispell

Family: Married 28 years to wife, Tia; daughter Live, 22-years-old

Occupation: District Court Judge, Flathead County



Education: B.A., Penn State, 1987; J.D. University of Minnesota Law School, with honors, 1993

Contact information for voters: info@wilsonforjustice.com

1. My judicial philosophy is defined by these principles. First, judges must not forecast what their rulings will be in advance. In no other way can Montanans respect the decision of a court as fair and impartial. Second, judges must obey and follow the law and not seek to remake the law in the image of their own beliefs. Third, judges must interpret and apply the Constitution and all laws according to their plain meaning and original intent.

So many statements have been made during the course of this campaign that I will not attempt to define my opponent's judicial philosophy. Respectfully, I will leave that opportunity for her.

2. I will maintain an independent judiciary by following the traditions and standards established by generations of judges before me. That includes the faithful application of the law and legal precedent and respecting the role of our co-equal branches of government.

To preserve the nonpartisan nature of this election, I will run a campaign

focused primarily on my own experience and qualifications.

3. I will urge my colleagues to conduct more public hearings in cases. Aside from providing greater public exposure to the court's workings, increasing the number of public hearings will offer Montanans an insight into the efforts that go into producing a final decision of the Supreme Court.

SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE

Cory Swanson



Age: 47

Home: Townsend

Family: Married with two children. My wife Julie is a speech therapist in Townsend.

Occupation: Broadwater County Attorney, and Colonel

in the Montana Army National Guard

Education: BA in Political Science, Carroll College; Juris Doctor with Honors from UM Law School; Master's Degree in Strategic Studies from US Army War College

Contact information for voters:

swansonforjustice.com; Facebook Page; X Profile

1. A judge's job is to correctly interpret the law and apply it to the facts of a case, producing a legal outcome guided by those parameters and not by a personal agenda. If I'm elected to the Montana Supreme Court, I will decide every case in that manner.

My opponent routinely tells people that he will fight for certain rights (while ignoring others), and he will fight against the conservative policies of the elected legislature. That is a judicial activist philosophy that will undermine the fairness of our courts by advancing a personal agenda, not the impartial rule of law.

2. Judges ensure an independent judiciary by scrupulously deciding cases on the facts and the law, not politics. The judiciary needs to zealously exercise its authority, but also respect the legislature's Constitutional turf.

I have resisted efforts to turn this campaign into a partisan race by confirming that I have not accepted or solicited endorsement by the Republican Party. My opponent has failed to disclaim support from the national Democratic

Party, and has publicly endorsed Jon Tester and Tim Walz. I can assure every future litigant that I will serve as a non-partisan and impartial judge.

3. There is a nationwide trend of decreased trust in the courts, which correlates to decreased understanding of how they work. I would like to lead a public outreach effort to bring the courts to the people, and bring the people to the court. That includes expanding upon the road show that the Supreme Court does a couple of times a year for oral arguments. We should encourage lawyers and judges to help student government, mock trial, or pre-law programs. And it means encouraging access to justice efforts to assist low income persons who need but cannot afford legal representation.



Jerry Lynch



1. My judicial philosophy is based on my experience as a judge, my commitment to the Montana Constitution, and my conviction that a nonpartisan, impartial judiciary is the mortar that holds our

democracy together. I'm the only candidate for Chief Justice who is running to preserve our nonpartisan, impartial judiciary, not to try to remake it any one individual or group's liking. Litigants in my courtroom can be sure of a fair hearing based on the unique facts of their case. They can trust that I will faithfully apply the law, regardless of politics.

2. I am a champion of the 1972 Montana State Constitution. At the Montana Supreme Court, as Chief Justice I will ensure that we follow the law as it is written and will be certain that the law is enforced regardless of politics. The judiciary only functions if it is independent and nonpartisan, and ensuring ours remains so will be my north star. As Chief Justice, I will expand trainings for District Judges and employees of the Montana judicial branch to ensure everybody understands the importance of being apolitical and impartial.

3. The Montana Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to a quality education. Government and civics lessons are a fundamental part of a quality education. I am an enthusiastic supporter of civics education

in every school. I will also continue the important work begun by Chief Justice McGrath to modernize our courts. This includes embracing technology that allows for e-filing documents, livestreaming arguments, and making case dockets searchable online. These technologies help bring the court into our communities. I will continue to embrace the power of technology to make our courts more accessible and understandable. As well, I will advocate for increased funding for Montana legal services and public defenders throughout the State of Montana, not just urban centers.

CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT

Bowen Greenwood — R



Age: 52 (53 by election day)

Home: East Helena

Family: one sister

Occupation: Clerk of the Montana Supreme Court

Education: BA from

Georgetown University in 1994.

Contact information for voters: www.GreenwoodForMontana.com

1. I was first elected as a Republican, I'm running for reelection as a Republican, and I will always be a Republican. One crucial element of being a Republican is being fiscally conservative, and that's how I administer the Clerk's office. My coworkers and I spend less money than appropriated every single year. I've cut the travel budget, cut the operations budget, and all while making sure my coworkers are paid well-enough to compensate for the Biden-Harris inflation. My record is one of tightfisted stewardship of taxpayer dollars, and I'd like to continue to govern in that way.

2. I've taken three steps to make the court more accessible and understandable to the people of Montana. The first is that every week, we email all the court's opinions to everyone who wants them. Lawyers get that service anyway, now so do the people of Montana.

Second, I've listed high-profile cases on the Clerk's office website. The court's docket isn't always intuitive for

Re-elect Senator Tom McGillvray

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- CIVILITY IN POLITICS
- REDUCE PROPERTY TAX RATES FOR MONTANA HOMEOWNERS

ABOUT SENATOR TOM MCGILLVRAY:

- 12 years legislative Experience
- Served in both Senate and House leadership
- Received Legislative Excellence award for Pension reform
- Nationally recognized for medical freedom legislation
- Committees: Public Health (Chair), Ethics (Chair), Finance and Claims (Public Safety sub-committee Vice Chair)

TOM MCGILLVRAY
For State Senate District 26

Paid for by McGillvray for Legislature (R) / Dan Hofferber, Treasurer / 764 Arbor Hills Dr. / Billings, MT 59105

non-attorneys. Listing the big cases on the front page makes it easier.

Finally, my coworkers and I are increasingly digitizing records so people can view them online instead of having to come in in person.



Erin Farris-Olsen – D



Age: 40

Home: Helena

Family: Husband Robert Farris-Olsen, sons Tupper (8) and Auggie (6)

Occupation: Strategic Public Interest Consultant

Education: Bachelor's Degree, Carroll College; Law, University of Oregon

Contact information for voters: erin4montana@gmail.com

1. This is a partisan race for a nonpartisan job. The partisanship is an historic relic and I would support a legislative change to make it nonpartisan. While Justices are nonpartisan to insulate the Court and preserve a separation of powers, that insulation does not exist with current partisan Clerk's office. Per the Appellate Clerk Ethical Code, Clerks should observe high standards of conduct to protect the integrity, impartiality, and independence of the judiciary in order to avoid even the appearance of bias or impropriety. I would act impartially to give every litigant a fair shake.

2. An efficient Court is a more accessible Court and I would take steps to identify and pursue opportunities to increase efficiencies. I would take immediate steps to improve the website, increasing case searchability. I would volunteer to serve on the Access to Justice Commission and improve relationships with the Court Administrator's Office, State Bar of Montana, and other legal associations. I would make every effort to be welcoming to all and foster a spirit of customer service. My values of fairness and equality inspire my vision for increasing access to justice for all regardless of political affiliation or agenda.

HOUSE DISTRICT 39



Melissa Smith – D



Age: 51

Home: Billings

Family: Spouse and two children

Occupation: Website Developer

Education: BA, Art

Contact information for voters: melissa@esmiths.net, 406-534-9879

1. I believe we should continue Medicaid expansion to help low-income Montanans access healthcare. It's already helped lower healthcare costs for individuals and small businesses, keeping kids healthy and in school, and helping more people work and support their families. In addition to being a moral choice, the Montana economy benefits from increased access to healthcare by supporting healthcare jobs, especially in rural areas.

2. The State already had a plan to reduce property taxes last year, but it was ignored by our governor and republican super-majority, who could, and did, legislate what they wanted. We currently have an unequal tax system where only homeowners must pay the full value of their property, while businesses and corporations are given exemptions and rate caps. I support fully equalizing our property tax system to give tax relief to homeowners, and more fairly distributing our revenue needs across all Montanans, families and business owners alike.

3. Montana can expand available housing by incentivizing affordable housing development, easing regulatory hurdles, and investing in infrastructure. Policies like tax credits for developers, streamlined permits, and improved public transit can expand affordable housing options. Supporting programs offering down payment assistance and low-interest loans aids first-time buyers. While subsidies may help, a more complete strategy includes addressing regulatory, financial, and infrastructure aspects is vital for lasting impact.

4. The voters in my district are my neighbors, and many of their experiences are my own. Even so, the best way to learn is with an open mind, so the surest way to find out is to walk my neighborhood, knock on voters' doors and ask, what are the most pressing issues for you?

HOUSE DISTRICT 40

Mike Vinton – R



Age: 57

Home: Lockwood

Family: Wife (Sue), four children, three grandchildren

Occupation: Self Employed General Contractor

Education: BS Computer Engineering - Montana Tech; Masters in Business Administration - University of Phoenix.

Contact information for voters: Facebook: Mike Vinton For Montana; website: www.VintonForMontana.com; email: mikev@vintonlog.com; phone: 406-855-3345.

1. While it is difficult to state definitively how I would vote on any legislation without the benefit of reading the proposal, currently approximately 25% of Montanans are on Medicaid, and I think that is too many. This program has merit and should be available to those that truly need it (disabled, low income elderly), but we can't continue to expand entitlement programs and sustain a healthy economy. If Medicaid is expanded beyond sustainable levels, it may not be available to those that require this important assistance. We also should focus more on educating and training people to prosper in this land of opportunity thereby reducing the number of individuals relying upon government assistance.

2. It would be presumptuous to think any one person has a solution to reduce property taxes, and it is too big of a subject for a survey question. Having said that I will give some thoughts: For instance, in my personal property bill, 100% of the "state" portion of my tax bill goes to schools. In order to reduce this portion of my tax, it would be necessary to take money away from the schools, which

I would not be willing to support. If we want to reduce the state portion of property taxes, we must replace it with revenue from another source. Where would that come from? The rest of the property tax bill is comprised of local taxes, where citizens have a louder voice and greater power to control these. Citizens have to decide if they would like to have lower taxes in lieu of giving up some government programs. I look forward to the opportunity to work with citizens and legislators to reduce the overall tax burden on Montanans.

3. We need to keep the cost of development down, and state government can help by assisting communities with funds for infrastructure. Is this a subsidy? I see it as an investment into our state, where no one company or individual should benefit from it, rather an entire community. Regulations need to be relaxed in many cases, but this has more to do with local governments than the state. Personal and corporate subsidies should not be part of the solution.

4. I am very engaged with my community and have an open line of communication with anyone regarding issues that are important to them. I am accessible by phone, e-mail, website and on social media. I am often at community events and meetings. If elected, I encourage anyone with issues to please bring them to me and any legislator for that matter.



Bob Auch – D

Age: 67

Occupation: Retired

Education: BS in Education from Eastern Montana College

Contact information for voters: 406-696-1829, robertauch@

yahoo.com, PO Box 201 Huntley, MT 59037

1. Yes. Medicaid is important for the elderly, disabled and everyone whose employer does not provide health insurance benefits.

2. House and Senate Democrats have a proposal for lowering property taxes. Highlights of the proposal include



a \$50,000 homestead exemption for Montana residents and a \$200,000 exemption for small businesses. Additionally it would create a tiered property tax rate to ensure those living in high value mansions pay their fair share while protecting lower income families and individuals from being priced out of their homes by rising property taxes.

3. I would like to explore options for preventing businesses from buying and reselling single family homes at a profit. We also need to limit businesses from coming in and buying apartment complexes and mobile home parks only to increase the rent forcing residents to move.

4. I would do my best to be available by phone, regular mail and email. Many older Montanans don't have the means or simply prefer not to use social media platforms for communication.

HOUSE DISTRICT 42

Bill Hodges – R

Age: 69

Home: Hardin, Big Horn County

Family: Married 39 Years. Two adult daughters

Occupation: Retired

Education: High School: Billings Senior/ Post Secondary: Rocky MT College. Graduate School: MSU Billings/Masters In Healthcare Admin.

Contact information for voters: E-Mail: bill.hodges55@outlook.com; Website: In Development

1. I would support expansion based on more strict protocols for access of the program along with increased support staff for the Medicaid program. A improved Medicaid application for income/asset collection would benefit staff and applicants accessing the program. Not a hand out, but a hand up mentality for the vulnerable population Medicaid serves in Montana.

2. Providing for a cap on the property tax. Such as 5% on a calendar tax year. Challenge local government entity to be for cost conscience with tax-payer dollars. Taxing on revenue status of the tax-payer in an equitable formula that is equal across the collection/assessment system. Providing an incentive for payment of taxes such as once a tax-payer has sustained 35 years of taxes in the state, the obligation for future taxes is forgiven.

3. Community Trust Funds for a base



to develop affordable housing may be an option to pursue. Analyze current buildings in a community that are vacant & could be renovated instead of building new housing. Providing a “sweat equity” provision for occupant ownership of the housing unit.

4. Communication of state issues will be communicated to voters by accessing my website along with scheduled community Legislative Information voter group meetings designed to update & solicit feedback from my voter district constituency. Voter mail out forms for voter input may be option if significant amount of voters are limited with internet access. Local civic groups such as Chamber of Commerce, Senior Citizens, School Board, Tribal Boards

will be contacted for opinions/input on legislative issues impacting House District 42.

HOUSE DISTRICT 43



Alexander Clark – D



Age: 39
Home: Billings
Family: Two children
Occupation: Community organizer
Education: B.S. Montana State

University Billings

Contact information for voters:
clark4montana.com

1. Continuing Medicaid expansion is vital for Montana’s populace, healthcare infrastructure, economy, and fiscal stability. It ensures hardworking, low-income Montanans receive essential medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment. By sustaining urban hospitals, clinics, and rural critical access hospitals, Medicaid expansion maintains financial stability. Additionally, it bolsters the economy by supporting approximately 7,500 jobs and generating \$475 million in personal income and \$775 million in economic activity. Moreover, through budget

savings and increased tax revenues, Medicaid expansion not only covers the state’s investment but also enhances fiscal health.

2. Montana must initiate several measures to address property tax concerns. Firstly, it should heed the Department of Revenue’s recommendation from November 2021 by reducing the residential property tax rate from 1.35 percent to 0.94 percent. Secondly, implementing an automatic property tax “circuit breaker” is crucial. This entails providing tax refunds to homeowners and renters facing potential displacement due to excessive property tax burdens. This mechanism could be integrated into Montana’s income tax return process.

Finally, there's a pressing need to counteract the ongoing trend of shifting tax burdens from income-generating industrial and commercial properties to non-income generating residential properties.

3. To enhance housing affordability in Montana, the state government can implement various strategies. These include incentivizing the construction of affordable housing through tax credits or grants, promoting mixed-income developments, and streamlining zoning regulations to encourage housing construction. Subsidies can be appropriate if targeted effectively, such as providing rental assistance for low-income individuals or offering down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers. Additionally, investing in infrastructure to support affordable housing developments and partnering with nonprofit organizations and private developers can further bolster affordability efforts while ensuring sustainable growth.

4. To ensure effective communication with voters in our district and grasp their top priorities, I'd employ a multi-faceted approach. This would

involve regular town hall meetings, community forums, and door-to-door canvassing to directly engage with constituents. Additionally, I'd utilize digital platforms and social media to reach a broader audience and gather feedback through surveys and online polls. Building strong relationships with local community leaders, advocacy groups, and neighborhood associations would provide valuable insights into pressing issues. By maintaining an open dialogue and actively listening to constituents, I'd stay informed about their concerns and advocate for their needs effectively.



Larry Brewster – R



Age: 73

Family: two adults married 51 years; two kids. Daughter in Houston, son in Billings; two grandkids,

Occupation: Retired 35 years at Northwestern energy

Education: Idaho State University

Vocational school, Electronics, commercial electricity

Contact information for voters: 406-670-0929; email larry05@bresnaan.net; 1216 Babcock Blvd, Billings, MT 59105

1. Depends on the bill and who and what constitutes eligibility. Does it do what its supposed to do.

2. Reduce spending by the local governments, level the cost of government buy applying 15-10-420 to cap spending on base budgets and all special districts. Voting all additional increases for a cash amount not mills. And let them increase based on the average inflation over the previous 3 years and growth. Change the multiplier to reduce the taxes quickly.

3. Increase density for starter homes, revise rules for subdivision and development. So that the process moves quickly and have more of an administrative process to reduce the delays. Some tax credit processes might help till the markets correct would help to bridge the costs to keep rents low.

4. Crime Taxes, inflation, Transportation, inner belt loop helps.

HOUSE DISTRICT 45

Denise Baum – D



Age: 56

Home: Billings

Family: My spouse of 24 years, Craig, and a teenage son.

Occupation: Detective with the City of Billings Police Department.

Education: BS in Criminal Justice Administration with an area of specialization in Psychology from Mount Senario College in Ladysmith, WI.

Contact information for voters: Email: baumformontana@gmail.com; Address: PO Box 81112, Billings, MT 59108; Phone 406-208-0345; Website: baumformontana.com

1. Yes. Medicaid expansion keeps Montanans healthy & working especially those working in jobs which are critical to the economy such as childcare or other service sector jobs. I would also support legislation permanently removing the sunset. Expansion keeps the doors open on our rural hospitals & keeps

TIM SHEEHY

Navy Seal ★ U.S. Senate

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Biden-Harris-Tester Inflation

★ **SECURE**

Our Border

★ **STOP**

Democrat Tax Increases

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the uncompensated care costs down. Expansion improves health care access for all Montanans by providing more options for mental health & substance abuse treatments, increases services offered at Indian Health Service facilities, provides greater access to preventive care & early screenings leading to healthier and better lives.

2. The most effective way to reduce property taxes for Montanans is simply to ensure everyone pays their fair share of taxes by establishing a sustainable and fair taxation structure. Stop throwing state money into income tax reductions that benefit the wealthiest 20% of Montanans and shifts the tax burden to low income earners who are required to pay a greater percentage of their income in taxes. A Housing Fairness Credit will reduce the effective property tax rates paid by families with lower & moderate incomes with a tax credit. This, along with a Homestead Exemption will reduce their taxable value.

3. Affordable housing is incredibly hard to find and the state and local governments should make use of all available grants and federal programs to increase affordable housing availability. A HOME investment partnership program which provides block grants to create affordable housing for low-income households, such as homebuyer assistance. State programs such as

4. I have served the Billings community for 21 years as a law enforcement officer. I have spoken to thousands of people during the course of my investigations & duties as a detective. The best way to ensure that you are communicating with the voters in your district is to actually be out there knocking on doors, asking them about their concerns and taking the time to listen. For me, this is the best part about running for office. Also, making myself available and reachable via telephone, email, website and social media ensures that voters are able to contact me.



Kassidy Olson – R



Age: 42
Home: 1231 Poly Drive, Billings
Family: Single
Occupation: office manager and life insurance agent
Education: Bachelor's

degree in Political Science from MSU-Billings

Contact information for voters:
kassidyolsonformt@gmail.com;
kassidyolsonformt.com

1. I would have to see the bill put forward on Medicaid expansion but I am open to passing a bill that is fully funded without raising taxes and that helps the people who truly need Medicaid.

2. One way to lower property taxes is to utilize budgets effectively so we do not have to go to the voters consistently and ask for money via mill levies. A second way is to increase the rates of out of state vacation and recreational properties.

3. Owning a home is the cornerstone of the American dream and right now we are being priced out of this. On the state level we can open access to more logging mills, reduce regulations and cut red tape, and look into changing zoning requirements and banking requirements. Different tax credits may be appropriate if needed to help resuscitate the American dream.

4. To keep in touch and communicate with voters I have a website, email account, and phone number all publicly available for anyone to contact me. Having open public forums is also a great way for voters to interact with their representatives.

HOUSE DISTRICT 46

Emma Kerr-Carpenter – D



Age: 35
Home: Billings
Family: Spouse (Dan) and 2-year-old son
Occupation: Stay-at-home mom
Education: Bachelor's from Boston

University, 2012

Contact information for voters: Email - emmaformontana@gmail.com; Website - www.emmaformontana.org; Phone - 406-894-0377

1. I will vote to continue Medicaid past 2025. Medicaid is a great deal for Montana. It has been a crucial tool for helping many of our friends and neighbors get or stay healthy enough to work or get an education. Medicaid has created good paying jobs across the state, helped keep healthcare accessible in rural Montana, and costs the state

pennies on the dollar to maintain.

2. During the legislature the Governor and Republican supermajority could have acted on the advice of the Department of Revenue and adjusted the property tax rate to account for the recent increases in property values. Instead they frittered time away giving tax breaks to the wealthy and big businesses. Big property tax payers-like big corporations, owners of railroads and mines-have a cap on how much their property taxes can increase, but homeowners do not. We have to enact long term property tax relief plans that protect middle class Montanans from footing the bill that gives big corporations a tax break.

3. Housing in Montana is so unaffordable and hard to come by that we must utilize every tool to make renting and buying a home possible. I am in favor of almost any tax credits and subsidies, especially those that go directly to the resident. The last legislature made progress in increasing the number of living units available, but now it's time to work on making sure Montanans can afford what is available. The Legislature also needs to continue to protect the rights of mobile home owners against out-of-state corporations intent on pricing them out of their communities.

4. There's no substitute for meeting the voters in my district face-to-face. I will be knocking on thousands of doors in my district in the coming months to get to know voters and which issues are on their minds. Voters can also call or email me. My phone number and email are listed above. I make an effort to listen and respond to everyone, and I keep in mind which issues I am hearing about.



Starr Emery – R



Home: Billings
Family: Married to an amazing and supportive husband. Our home has the joy of children and youth.
Occupation: Volunteer firefighter and a member of the Parent Advisory Council for School District 2

Education: Education is focused on Behavioral Health with an emphasis in Adolescents and Children

Contact information for voters: Email starrformontana@gmail.com; Facebook at www.facebook.com/starrformontana

1. Finding a solution that works for all Montanans is a top priority. Many families in need of assistance with medical expenses are working families, equaling approximately 66%. There are about 13% more who are currently covered and are unable to work due to health challenges. This shows a majority of Montana does need Medicaid expansion or another viable solution. Tackling this issue will be essential and is something I am actively researching and planning to address.

2. Most property taxes in Montana are incurred from city and county mill levies. It is important to fully understand these levies and vote accordingly. I plan to support legislation that lowers our resident and small business property taxes. Increasing the tax rates paid by out-of-state individuals and corporations allows for this and helps ensure personal income tax rates will not increase. It is important to ensure voters have the necessary information to allow for informed and educated voting.

3. The housing challenges in Montana pose difficult for many families. Affordable housing options can include first time homebuyer programs, decreasing property taxes, and lower interest rates. Further research into privatized housing options is needed to compare with government subsidized housing before presenting legislative options.

4. Representing the community effectively is essential. I am already actively engaging with community members and will continue to do so. I am happy to email, call, or even meet for coffee to hear someone's thoughts and ideas because Montana is our home and our voices matter. I can share my thoughts and ideas, but ultimately what I want to know is how I can best serve our community.

HOUSE DISTRICT 47

James Reavis – D



Age: 41
Home: Billings
Occupation: Former public defender for 11 years, now a private attorney with Netzer, Krautter & Brown, P.C.
Education: Bachelor's in History and Global Politics from Washington

State University, Juris Doctor from Montana Law School, Master's in Public Administration from Middlebury Institute of International Studies

Contact information for voters: www.reavisformontana.com/contact

1. Yes. Passing permanent Medicaid expansion is critical for a healthy and productive workforce, providing reliable treatment for substance abuse, and keeping our rural hospitals operating. It's also the right thing to do. Medicaid expansion makes fiscal sense. Montana's relatively modest investment into Medicaid pays for itself with budget savings from federal funds and larger tax receipts from Montanans who can go to work and not be sick. Medicaid is also critical to funding our mental health system, elderly care services, and protecting our children from disease and harm.

2. The most effective way to reduce property taxes for everyday Montanans is to reduce property taxes for everyday Montanans. The 2023 Legislature fumbled an opportunity to stop the pandemic housing spike from spiking property taxes. Rather than adjust property taxes to keep homeowners from getting pinched, legislators cut income taxes for the wealthiest Montanans instead. That's unfair. I support a wide range of property tax reforms, such as expansion of the P-TAP program to the middle class, giving local governments more levers besides property taxes to generate revenue, and fixing the education funding formula to reduce dependence on mill levies.

3. Our legislators can do a lot to streamline our housing policy to increase housing supply and manage prices. We can enact wide-ranging zoning reform to reduce or eliminate minimal lot area requirements, simplify the permitting process, revisit building height limits, and support more solutions beyond single-family housing such as duplexes, triplexes, and accessory dwelling units. I would support many of the recommendations proposed by the bipartisan housing task force. I would also support offering down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers.

4. I have over a decade of experience of working in the courts and seeing the most personal of experiences the people of Billings go through. As an attorney, I am entrusted with

confidential information, but what is important to my clients is not a secret. They care about their children deeply, they want to live in a good home, and they don't like being hosed by a government agency or a business that plays dirty. I knocked on thousands of doors last election cycle, and I'll knock on thousands more to make sure my constituents have their voices heard.



Stephanie Moncada – R



Home: Billings

Family: I am the the youngest of seven. I am grateful for the values that my family and the south side community have taught me.

Occupation: Retired

New York City Police Officer; recently terminated by Wells Fargo for running for public office

Education: attended Billings public schools K-12; John Jay College of Criminal Justice in NYC; graduate of The New York City Police Academy

Contact information for voters: P.O. Box 20599 Billings Mt 59101 or Stephanie4MT@gmail.com

1. I would vote to expand. The number of Montanans on Medicaid fluctuates with the economy and other circumstances. The Medicaid expansion has helped thousands of people access the necessary preventative care, including cancer and diabetes screening. It is also important to our rural communities without the expansion we would have uncompensated care at critical access hospitals and rural clinics. There has been no rural clinics closed since the beginning of the Medicaid expansion in Montana.

2. The best way the state government can reduce property taxes for Montanans is by taxing the out of state property owners and the out of state recreational property owners so that they pay a higher tax rate than those who live here year round. This will help offset Montana residents. More research will need to be done to come up with other ideas.

3. Offering tax credits , housing trust funds can be used to develop affordable rental housing. Partnerships

with organizations issuing tax exempt bonds and programs for home buyers. Offer incentives to local developers to encourage the development of affordable homes.

4. Through community involvement, functions , volunteering, letting people know that I am here to address concerns they may have. The youth of the community need the have an outlet I will be an advocate for them and make sure they know what resources are available to them. Knowledge is power!

HOUSE DISTRICT 48

Anne Ross – D



Age: 39

Home: Billings

Family: I live in South Side Billings with my husband Robert and our two boys (6 and 2). Robert is an electrician with IBEW L.U.532, and I am a work from home Mom with many hats, listed below. I grew up in Billings with 3 siblings and business-owner parents:

My Mom, Kelly is a CPA, and Dad, Kirk is a retired Union HVAC Contractor. They both grew up on farms and my extended family still farms on the high line. We are gardeners, makers, fixers, creators, and all hard-working stock. My motto: dirty fingernails, happy heart!

Occupation: Artist, Designer, Printer and Member of CWA L.U.7818, Property Manager, Work from home Mom: gardener, chicken owner, toddler negotiator, cook. I have years of experience in service industry management working for Sage Spa Living in Bozeman and Billings. I also worked as an adult professional educator for Health Works Institute, and as a Youth Case Manager and Care Manager for Youth Dynamics during my time living in Bozeman.

Education: Bachelor's of Fine Arts and coursework equivalent to a Bachelor's of Science in Applied Psychology from Montana State University Bozeman. Certified Artist with the Montana Artrepreneur's Program.

Contact information for voters: electmom@annerossformontana.com; PO Box 30793 Billings, MT 59107; 406-

JOHN METZGER

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT #2



NOV. 5 ELECTION

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The Only Candidate w/ Experience SAVING TAXPAYERS BILLIONS!

John Metzger is running as a write-in candidate for Montana's U.S. House District #2. John Metzger is running as a write-in candidate for Montana's U.S. House District #2. John is running because he has 4+ years experience as a U.S. Congress Legislative Aide cutting \$44B in wasteful government spending.

John has already drafted bills and letters for the US House of Representatives to include:

- Closing the Border/Border Security/"Building the Wall"
- Investigations into ending Price Gouging on groceries, gas, prescriptions, and ending monopolies on fertilizer and other farm supplies
- Audits why property taxes are so high and how to reduce property taxes
- Increasing prescriptions from 10 to 250/year for price reduction negotiations with pharmaceutical companies
- Economic penalties and sanctions on China and Mexico for not meeting specific goals stopping fentanyl from entering the U.S.

Learn more at VoteJohnMetzger.com

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647-0583; www.annerossformontana.com; [instagram.com/anne.ross.4.mt](https://www.instagram.com/anne.ross.4.mt)

1. Yes. Medicaid expansion, 90% funded by our federal tax dollars, has helped Montana hospitals and care facilities stay open through recent economic and pandemic related setbacks. We have invested in the expansion of services due to the cost savings and bolstered our economy with good paying jobs around the state. Our aging population will be needing a lot more care in the coming decades. We need more long-term care facilities for mental health and the aging community through additional expenditures, which are made possible by the consistent annual influx of over

\$900million in federal funds supporting healthcare access in Montana.

2. Against our constitution, property taxes were raised scathingly higher for low-to-middle-income Montana residents and lower for the ultra-rich, and large corporations. Let's lower the tax rate for average homes as we do when property values increase. Business equipment and intangible tax exemptions, and plummeting business tax rates (that may have helped small Montana businesses thrive in the 90's) have become distorted to a point where corporate giants are paying little to no taxes on their businesses compared to the immense profits and impacts on our ecology and infrastructure that

they produce. Let's make taxes fair and balanced again in Montana.

3. People cost our state more money through emergency services when they are homeless than when we invest in safe and reliable housing first. Montana faces major losses in our deficient affordable housing market in the near future as properties conclude their enforceable "Period of Affordability". In this market, it's difficult to prevent landlords from selling these properties for a high profit, dwindling the available supply. Let's invest more in things like housing trusts which offer stable sources of funding for new projects, updating housing in disrepair and helping affordable housing developers

get federal incentives with up-front reimbursements for construction.

4. I am thankful for the volunteers, candidates, central committee and coordinated campaign staff who continue to help me knock doors, providing my information to voters' homes so they know me and how to reach me. The needs of HD48 families will guide my decisions in Helena, and if I am unsure how a bill will impact my constituents, I will seek their input. I have a strong sense of justice for working families getting their fair shot and I know that lawmaking is a nuanced and complicated process with many heads coming together to provide meaningful solutions.



Curtis Schomer — R



Home: Lifelong Montanan

Family: husband to Haley and father to three sons.

Occupation: Blue-collar worker in the mining industry

1. Yes, Montana Medicaid provides healthcare coverage to nearly 300,000 Montanans who wouldn't have health insurance otherwise. Medicaid provides these people with access to preventative services, care for chronic conditions, and access to mental health services. In turn, costs have declined for emergency services and inpatient care and an overall stronger health care system in Montana. Medicaid expansion is important to constituents in my district, and I'll support Montana Medicaid expansion on their behalf.

2. Due to influxes of people moving to Montana our market valuation and taxation have exploded. This is a focal point for me - if we don't make changes now then our children will not be able to own homes in their home state. We need to protect new home buyers and elderly fixed income homeowners by shifting the higher tax burden to wealthy out-of-state homeowners who are driving up costs. Vacation and recreational property owners should be paying higher taxes. I also support limiting local government spending, in turn limiting local mill levies that drive our property taxes up.

3. Programs such as our local CLDI have been a great resource for affordable housing for Yellowstone County residents. I will support and advocate for tax credits for programs and housing developments like this which will in turn aid low-income Montanans. We need to cut through red tape to speed up permitting and zoning reform. I will focus on workforce development, so communities have local skilled workers to develop and build without having an influx of out of state (or country) laborers. I support free market solutions in lieu of taxpayer funded subsidies.

4. Monthly neighborhood taskforce meetings are a great forum for residents to be heard and advocate change in their respective neighborhoods. I will continue to attend these meetings in my district alongside SD24 candidate Mike Yakawich.

I also have enjoyed, and would like to continue, communicating with voters at their front doors. My constituents are encouraged to contact me via phone, email or social media.

HOUSE DISTRICT 49

Rudolf Mikeal Haden — D



Age: 49

Home: Billings

Occupation: retired

Education: BA Political Science (University of Colorado); MA Defense and Strategic Studies (US Naval War College)

Contact information for voters:

RMHaden4MT@gmail.com, PO BOX 50665 Billings MT 59105

1. Yes, I would vote to continue Medicaid past 2025. The program is critically important to so many in Montana, especially in our rural areas. I think we can not only expand Medicaid, but also seek improvements so that we can more effectively provide care to those who need it.

2. The most effective way to reduce property taxes for our overtaxed middle class is to immediately broaden the Property Tax Assistance Program so that more folks can get relief. I also support reducing property taxes for our Veterans who have a 50% or higher disability rating. Next, taxes can be more fairly calculated so that the middle class get relief while the wealthy pay their fair share.

3. The state can better facilitate construction for homes and incentivize the reclamation of building space in our cities for habitat, like what HomeFront is doing in downtown Billings. When supply is healthy, pricing related to demand will come down. I support subsidizing housing in certain cases; particularly for staffing/teachers in our public schools. I'm interested in finding properties near schools that can be transitioned to homes for teachers. Generally, I look for solutions that alleviate multiple problems while not creating new ones.

4. The first rule in representative government is to make oneself available to the voters. The next rule is to listen to them! This is also leadership 101 in the US Navy, where I spent the past 28 years. Since January, I've been talking to voters and if elected as their representative, I won't stop finding ways to meet and discuss the concerns and issues important to them.

Bottom line, I will be synchronized with the voters of my district, and when we solve problems their signatures will be all over that solution!



Sherry Essmann — R



Age: 71

Home: Billings

Family: Husband Jeff, two children, three grandchildren, 91-year-old mom

Occupation: Retired banker, worked with banks, credit unions, insurance and financial services providers

Education: BS Applied Management, Rocky Mountain College

Contact information for voters: 406-876-0490, sherryessmann.com, also on facebook

1. Qualifications to receive Medicaid should include a work requirement that could be enforced, drug testing each month, and elimination of any income cliffs. Since the Feds control the distribution of these funds, the state should consider how to

become independent of federal dollars so we can get people back to work. We should influence our Congressional representatives to work on changing the federal rules. I will determine how to vote after I review the new Medicaid bill.

2. The state only controls the school levies, so we would need a new way to assess school equalization mills to lower them from the current 95 mills for K-12 and 6 mills for colleges and universities. Most of the property tax revenue is based on city and county voted and non-voted levies. Citizens should evaluate levies presented by their local governments to determine if they want their property taxes to increase based on the number of mills proposed. We could also consider a sales tax that would help lower, but not eliminate, the property and/or income tax burden.

3. Unless and until our citizens want more government subsidized and controlled housing, the state should not, in my opinion, be involved in trying to control the housing market. I would support a first-time homebuyer program, where the state could support some type of variable rate, low down payment loan to help get kids into their first homes. Involving banks and credit unions in the process would assure that we

People Over Politics Kim Gillan



- Kim has solutions to **stop** unfair property tax increases and shifts on homeowners and small businesses
- Kim has **solutions** to support rural healthcare, infrastructure, and housing
- Kim **listens** to voters and residents - not lobbyists or party bosses

*"We can **trust** and count on Kim to be a strong, effective voice for our rural communities."*

-Steve

Kim Gillan
State Representative
HD55, Carbon County

www.kim4carboncounty.com

Paid for by Kim Gillan - HD 55 - Democrat
PO Box 452, Red Lodge, MT 59068



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

The Montana State Capitol in Helena.

don't have investors trying to regulate the market and removing the ability of new homeowners to keep the equity in their homes when they decide to move up.

4. I have gone door to door in my district, visiting almost 2000 homes and talking to as many of my voters as possible. I have heard from them about their priorities, which include property tax reduction, parental rights in the lives of their children, and getting to the root cause of and lessening the crime in our city. Many of my constituents believe it might be time for a sales tax in Montana. My phone number, (406) 876-0490, and email address, sherryessmann.com, are on my flyers, along with a QR code that links directly to my website.

HOUSE DISTRICT 51

Jodee Etchart — R



Home: Billings

Family: Wonderful husband and two great kids

Occupation: State Representative, Physician Assistant

Education: BA Physician Assistant;

Rocky Mountain College; BS Counseling & Human Services; MSU-B

Contact information for voters: Jodee.

Etchart@legmt.gov

1. The total budget for ME for the current biennium is \$2.15 billion. Approximately 10% comes from Montana's budget covering about 100,000 people/year from ages 19-64 at 138% FPL providing \$11,000 in benefits/person/year. 13% of people covered have mental or general health issues which makes working difficult, 66% work. ME keeps rural hospitals open and assists many Montanans in need. The Federal debt is over \$35Trillion and HHS estimates \$100Billion in improper payments from federally funded health programs in 2023 alone.

Let's pass a bill that helps the most with

the best possible short- and long-term outcomes.

2. 85% of property tax bills result from local city and county mill levies. 15% of the property tax bill goes to constitutionally mandated school equalization. The current democrat proposal decreases out of state owners' rates by 15%, increases small business rates by 20% and increases Agriculture rates by 10%. Republicans will ensure that out of state vacation/recreational property owners pay a higher rate. This will assist in offsetting property taxes for Montana residents. Republicans will pass legislation lowering Montana resident and small business property taxes without increasing your income tax rate by

increasing the rate out of staters pay.

3. In the 2023 Republican controlled legislature, a series of bills passed which were dubbed the “Montana Miracle” removing government red-tape, promoting housing development and forging the way for affordable housing in Montana. This helped RedFox Apartments housing development through “Homefront” build more affordable housing without taxpayer funded subsidies. Republicans will continue to promote favorable regulatory environments to further free market solutions.

4. Attending and setting up constituent events have been a terrific way to connect. Anyone can reach me at Jodee.Etchart@legmt.gov. Every effort is made to answer each constituent’s concern with thousands of communications received during the last session. Working together will ensure that Montana remains the Last Best Place. Talking with constituents regarding healthcare led to me successfully sponsor and pass 4 bills that earned Montana the title of “Leader in the Nation in Healthcare Reform” Thank you for entrusting me to represent you in Helena.



Janna Hafer — I



Age: 71

Home: Billings

Family: I am married to Randy Hafer, mother to four, and stepmother to three

Occupation: I am retired from running High Plains Architects.

I was proudly elected to serve as a volunteer Billings School Board Trustee

Education: I graduated MSU with a degree in Microbiology and Environmental Health

Contact information for voters:
janna4montana@gmail.com

1. Absolutely. Medicaid disproportionately supports working class Montanans who keep our economy humming. It is unfortunate that providing basic healthcare to the people who do the actual work in Montana continues to be a discussion. There is no discussion. Medicaid expansion has been crucial in providing healthcare access to thousands of Montanans who otherwise might not afford it. Continuing this program past 2025 ensures that our most vulnerable populations receive the care they need, which ultimately benefits the entire

community by reducing overall healthcare costs and improving public health outcomes.

2. There is no frictionless path to lowering property taxes. Any solution will be polarized, and be open to legitimate criticism from both sides of the aisle. The state government can reduce property taxes by diversifying our revenue streams and ensuring that we have a fair and balanced tax system. This includes exploring options like closing tax loopholes for large corporations and ensuring that everyone pays their fair share. Additionally, we can look into increasing state funding for local governments to reduce the reliance on property taxes for essential services.

3. We should consider everything we can while still being true to our values. I support the legislature incentivizing local infrastructure that will support affordable housing, I would support loosening regulations for ADU’s, and I would support legislation that incentivizes green building practices. In addition, not all construction needs to be new construction. Maintaining or increasing the state historic tax credits in order to rehabilitate existing empty historic buildings on main streets in Montana towns and cities can promote housing opportunities that are affordable while also energizing downtowns, and ultimately increase the tax base.

4. Communicating with voters is easier said than done. I would have to prioritize methods that are accessible to working people in my district. There are events where people can come meet the candidates, but that is probably not the easiest or most convenient way to increase contact with constituents. I would need to prioritize responding to honest questions via email. It is time intensive, and is not glamorous, but it’s required to meet people where they are.

HOUSE DISTRICT 52

Carole Boerner — D



Age: 62

Home: Lived in Billings for 20 years and in Montana my entire life

Occupation: retired Captain of the U.S. Public Health Service spending career as an engineer for the Indian

Health Service serving Indigenous people in Montana and Wyoming.

Education: Master’s degrees in Civil Engineering and Organization Development; certified personal development coach with a part-time practice helping people with their life struggles; protector of our public lands, avid hiker/backpacker. serving on the local chapter board of Wild Montana; my HOA; and the Public Works Board. My experience in the USPS and my advocations throughout my life have well prepared me to be a legislator.

Contact information for voters:
carole4mt@gmail.com

1. Absolutely. We also need to look to expand services. Solutions are needed to combat the sharp edge of being qualified for Medicaid then a small pay raise leaves people without coverage. We also need to stop with the red tape preventing people from qualifying and staying on Medicaid.

2. It was pretty simple for the last legislature which Republicans royally messed up. Change the multiplier.

3. Many local governments have solutions to the housing crisis respective to their constituents. We need to let them govern and get out of their way. Also, we need to offer some incentives to building affordable housing. A big problem is private equity firms as well as large out-of-state corporations buying and renting homes at huge profits. We must do better.

4. My opponent voted against SB442, a bi-partisan and widely popular bill which funded roads in rural areas. These roads are used by many Montanans to enjoy outdoors activities such hiking, hunting, fishing, etc. We need to do every to keep Montanans enjoying all that Montana offers.



Bill Mercer — R



Age: 60

Home: Billings

Family: Married to Marci; we have two adult children

Occupation: Attorney; Holland & Hart LLP

Education: Billings Public Schools; B.A., University of Montana, 1986; M.P.A., Harvard University (John F. Kennedy School of Government), 1988; J.D., George Mason University School of Law, 1993.

Contact information for voters: Email bill.mercer@legmt.gov; Address: P.O.

Box 2118, Billings, MT 59103; Phone number: 406 698-1671; Web page: www.mercerforlegislature.com

1. No. I voted against renewing Medicaid Expansion in 2019 and would oppose its continuation in 2025. Medicaid Expansion, authorized by the “Affordable Care Act”, is another example of Congress increasing spending that is unsustainable. Fifteen years later, over 85,000 Montanans are covered by Medicaid Expansion and another 137,000 are on legacy Medicaid. At points in the last two years, we have had more than a quarter of Montanans on Medicaid. As a limited government conservative, I am troubled by the gradual slide in the direction of “Medicare for all”. Montana should return to its pre-Obamacare Medicaid program (without Medicaid Expansion).

2. There are 18 property tax classes, but Republicans in the 2023 Legislature focused on relief to homeowners in Class 4. I sponsored House Bill 192, which included rebates for homeowners who were Montana residents and occupied their primary residence for 7 months in 2023. The Legislature enacted a bill with rebates up to \$ 675 for two years. For 2023, 216,382 homeowners claimed the rebate. These offset property tax increases for 73% of those who claimed them. We will need to determine whether changing the rates among the 18 classes or more rebates will provide better relief for Montanans.

3. State government cannot “ensure” housing is affordable because the market is a function of supply and demand. Housing market issues experienced in Billings, most other urban areas of the state, and a subset of smaller communities were the subject of a number of bills in the 2023 Legislature. I supported some of those bills, but whether they will result in an appreciable increase in housing inventory and a significant reduction in housing costs is far from clear. I do not favor using state revenue paid by one taxpayer to subsidize the purchase of a house by another taxpayer.

4. I have represented a large percentage of the voters in House District 52 during the last three legislative sessions, so my positions on issues are well known and available for review on the Legislature’s website. In advance of the legislative session, I am reachable by phone or e-mail. During the session, the pace makes it challenging to connect with constituents by phone, but I read every e-mail and welcome input. On significant

issues, I often hear from constituents with opposing points of view. On every vote, I need to determine what best advances the public interest.

HOUSE DISTRICT 55

Kim Gillan — D



Age: 72

Home: Red Lodge; previously Billings

Family: Adult children. Hank Gillan Rosen and Claire Gillan Rosen, educated in Billings Public Schools, both working in Health Care

field

Occupation: Retired; former Career in Health Care Policy/Administration working on state and Federal issues (served as USHHS Regional Director for Rocky Mountain Region); business and management consultant for private/public entities; Lecturer/Advisor Rural Health Care. State Representative/Senator 1997-2012

Education: Masters, Cornell University; BA, UCLA

Contact information for voters:

Kim4CarbonCo@gmail.com

1. Yes. Continuation of Medicaid Expansion is critical for thousands of hard working Montana families (including seniors) and for keeping the doors of health care providers open in Montana's rural communities. Since its approval in 2015, the Federal government's 90% match for Expansion has enabled Montanans to obtain preventative health services, to reduce reliance upon expensive Emergency room care (down 16%), helped deal with the shortage of providers in rural areas and helped the state's budget. I will work to permanently extend Medicaid Expansion and return to 12 month eligibility which reduces the administrative burden. I will also ask DPHHS to review the eligibility of Montanans kicked off Medicaid (Traditional and Expansion) due to administrative snafus.

2. Next session, the legislature needs to get serious about fixing property taxes for homeowner/small businesses—there is nothing partisan about ensuring folks can stay in their homes, keep their Main Street small businesses open and/or afford to live in Montana, First solution, adjust property tax rates downward (as

recommended by MTDOR in November, 2022) to eliminate the increase and be revenue neutral (which means the state does not collect more revenue after reappraisals). This approach was supported by the Racicot, Marx, Schweitzer Administrations. I do not support keeping the 2023-24 \$200 million/year property tax increases permanent, Next, adjust property tax rates to be revenue neutral going forward—and add in agricultural. Also look at proposals to help renters and first-time homebuyers. I will look at any and all solutions (regardless of the sponsor's party affiliation) if they treat Montanans fairly—which is what I did when I served on the Taxation Committee for 6 sessions between 1997-2012. as well as Chair, Interim Revenue Committee and Vice Chair Taxation (several times)

3. The State Government has made some initial steps to address Affordable Housing. It will take private/public partnerships, which involve local organizations, as is being done in Carbon County, led by Red Lodge Area Community Foundation. There are Federal programs, but there is a “gap” in the financing and the State can help fill this gap with tax credits, low interest loans and grant dollars, Montana needs a program targeted specifically for rural areas, because the financing is challenging for small-scale affordable housing projects or renovations.. The state could also help with technical assistance—because of the complexities of finance/grant/loan applications. Affordable housing is critical to Carbon County because without it, workforce will not be available. For example local businesses are helping to find workers housing—the lack of supply is a priority concern

4. This is a key part of my campaign and commitment to Carbon County voters. What I hear on the hundreds of doors I have knocked, is that voters want you to be their voice (and problem solver) in Helena— and not be beholden to lobbyists or a political ideology, As I did for 16 years when I represented the Billings Heights, I did extensive outreach and will send weekly email updates (not partisan reports), answer emails from all carbon County folks, solicit input from folks (surveys) along with listening sessions(mid-session and after) and participate in community meetings/ initiatives. Outreach to voters is more than campaigning, it involves listening! I will continue to use the “grocery store”

test, where people feel free to approach me, ask questions about my voting record and share their opinions. I also will use various social media to engage residents and get their opinions.



Brad Barker — R



Age: 52

Home: Luther, Montana

Family: Married with four children

Occupation: Mergers & Acquisition Advisor / Retired U.S. Army

Education: Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Economics from the United States Military Academy at West Point; Masters in Public Policy Management from Georgetown University; and a Masters in Military Studies from the United States Marine Corps University

Contact information for voters: brad.barker@legmt.gov, 406-426-1034

1. I support maintaining the current funding for the Medicaid program while maintaining all citizenship, residency, & work requirements and the hospital outpatient revenue fee as the most fiscally responsible course of action for Montana.

2. Reinstate the Homestead Tax Exemption that was eliminated in 2015 for both owner and long-term renter occupied homes to shift some of the burden back to non-resident homeowners and businesses headquartered outside the state. In fairness, these entities benefit from state services, like the \$180 million fire fund, without contributing to the income taxes that fund them.

3. Are subsidies appropriate? Reinstate the Homestead Tax Exemption for both owner occupied and long-term rental homes; tax short-term rentals at the same 1.89% commercial rate that hotels pay - government should not pick winners and losers; reduce zoning and permitting red tape that drives up construction costs; and fully utilize the existing Federal and State grant and low-cost loan programs. I do not support additional subsidy programs.

4. Involvement in the community, community organizations, interacting with local government, town halls, newspaper articles, facebook.com/ Representative.Barker/, and bradbarker.com.

HOUSE DISTRICT 57

Marty Malone — R



Age: 75

Home: My wife and I own a ranch near Pray

Family: Wife, Gayleen; two adult children with four grandchildren

Occupation: Previous occupations include 30 years as MSU

Extension Agent, eight years as a Park County Commissioner; two term member of Montana House of Representatives; six years Fleet Manager for Yellowstone Country Motors; 43 years ranching in Paradise Valley

Contact information for voters:

Maloneforhd57@gmail.com;
Maloneforhd57.com; facebook.com/maloneforhd57

1. I would vote to continue Medicaid expansion. I have attended two seminars to fully understand the pro and cons of expansion. It ends up saving money for the state since it provides preventative medicine. It also provides medical services for entry level jobs that may not have employer supplied health insurance. This provides more incentive for businesses to expand the use of internships. It also provides a substantially better reimbursement rate to the state.

2. Property taxes are levied by local governments and school districts. The Governors select committee on property tax reform has developed some great ideas. I like the idea of not taxing the first 100,000 of valuation for resident homeowners on their primary residence. Also bond requests based on dollars needed and not a static mill levy. I would support limiting real estate valuation increases. The increased valuation needs to be no greater than the overall inflation rate. The large increase that homeowners experienced forced some families to eliminate basic needs. Also, local and state governments need to live within their means just like Montana families.

3. The 2023 Legislature addressed some of the zoning issues and housing regulations in the state that basically raised the development costs which in turn raised the new and existing home prices. Increased density is always an option for developers. Basically, the legislature needs to study the development costs imposed by local

governments. I do not support direct subsidies.

4. My goal is to listen to the people by attending meetings throughout the district and listening to their concerns. In past elections, I spent many hours knocking on doors and communicating directly with the voting public. My district has changed this year due to redistricting, so I need to spend more time on the new portion of district 57.



Scott Rosenzweig – D



Age: 61

Home: Bozeman

Family: Three children, ages 24, 21, 17, all currently living in Montana

Occupation: Satellite Communications executive

Education: BA, philosophy, Wesleyan University and MBA, Cornell University.

Contact information for voters: scott@rosenzweigformontana.com

1. Yes, definitely. That vote is a major reason I am running for office. Medicaid expansion is critical to the financial health and continuation of basic services for Livingston Healthcare, the Shields Valley Medical Clinic, and Bozeman Deaconess hospital. It is also critical to the continuation of our mental health services.

2. First, rebalance the property tax rates back more towards the 2022 balance, across the property tax categories, so the Residential sector gets reduced and the other categories again pay their fair share. Second, create differentiating rates that favor (a) Montana homeowners' primary residences, (b) long term residential rentals over short term rentals, (c) Montana Income tax payers over non-residents, and (d) also create plans for seniors on dial to be spared the sudden increases in rates, such as other states and countries offer.

3. This is a topic I am very open to learning about. The state could use its financial strength to support finance cost reductions, which should not cost the state anything but do provide benefit to those receiving them. Subsidies may be appropriate, particularly for publicly funded employees (school, fire, state, municipal employees, etc.), and may be

tied to length of service and loans or even just financing support, earned through sign-on and time-service bonuses.

4. I will have a news section on my campaign's social media pages. I will make myself available by attending meetings. I will reach out to organizations and associations in my district to let them know who I am, why I care, and how to contact me. I have started that process already, by attending many, many meetings, and by knocking over 2,000 doors in this campaign, so far.

HOUSE DISTRICT 58

Jason Gunderson – R



Age: 39

Home: Livingston

Family: Single

Occupation: Police Detective

Education: Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice

Studies; Graduate Nano-Certificate in Organizational Effectiveness

Contact information for voters: Gundersonformt.com; Gundersonforhouse@gmail.com

1. I'm still educating myself on this issue and certainly recognize the need, but I have concerns about the financial impact this decision will have on our State. We're talking about reducing revenue by cutting property taxes while increasing spending through Medicaid expansion. My main question is: where will this money come from? Can we realistically afford it, or are we will break the bank? I'm interested in learning about alternative approaches, like what has been done in Georgia, and am open to more education on this issue.

2. Short term solutions like implementing a cap on how much taxes can be increased and reassessing how the tax base is distributed among our citizens would be good places to start. I'd also like to see a significantly larger portion of the marijuana tax revenue be returned to cities and counties, which would help ease the local tax burden. Equally as important though, we also need to reduce government spending and waste or those ideas, and others like it, will be ineffective. We unfortunately have a much larger tax issue that will require multiple sessions to address.

3. We have a supply issue and the

only way to address our supply issue, is to build. We must reduce regulations and cut through bureaucratic red tape to encourage construction and lower building costs. Coordination with DNRC to utilize land trusts should also be a priority. Subsidies will only inflate the market, driving up housing prices and dependence on government assistance. Instead, we should focus on strengthening our economy so people can afford homes themselves. Local governments must also play their part by updating zoning policies and implementing growth plans that support development.

4. I will continue to use social media across various platforms to maintain open communication with as many people as possible. My website and email offer additional ways for people to connect with me. I also attend, and will keep attending, community events and local government meetings to stay informed and remain accessible. When elected, I plan to share updates and my experiences as a legislator through a YouTube channel. Utilizing those communication methods, I aim to ensure that I am both visible and responsive to the needs and concerns of my community.

SENATE DISTRICT 20

Linda Auch – D



Age: 69

Home: Billings

Occupation: retired teacher

Education: Master's degree in Education

Contact information for voters: 406-670-

7821

1. Yes, I would vote to continue Medicaid expansion past 2025. Medicaid expansion provides assistance for low income Montanans including seniors and those working low-wage jobs. Health care coverage keeps thousands of Montanans healthy.

2. The most effective way the state government can reduce property tax is three fold, and is laid out in the Democrats proposal. Immediate property tax relief can be see by reducing the taxable value on residential properties and small businesses. Secondly, taxes can be reduced on primary homes and taxing secondary homes and multi-million dollar

mansions at a different rate. Lastly, it would establish a Housing Fairness Tax Credit that would ensure that working families and retired Montanans aren't priced out of their homes by ensuring their property taxes don't rise beyond their ability to pay.

3. We need to build more moderate homes that people can afford. We need to support housing programs such as Homeword, a government assisted housing program, which provides affordable homes for low to middle income people in Billings and around the state. There are already four sustainable Homeword housing properties here in Billings and plans for another one, which will help to meet housing needs for 100 families in the Heights.

4. To ensure I am communicating with voters in my district, I would make myself available by sharing my contact information: phone number and email.



Sue Vinton – R

Age: 67

Home: Lockwood, Montana

Family: Husband, Mike Vinton; four children, three grandchildren

Occupation: co-owner, Vinton

Construction, Inc. General Contractors

Education: AAS Human Services; BA Criminal Justice

Contact information for voters: sue@vintonlog.com; sue.vinton@legmt.gov; phone: 406-855-2625

1. It would be irresponsible for me to say how I would vote on any legislation prior to reading the Bill. That being said, we must ensure that the benefits of Medicaid are available to the people in our state who need it; and that we as a state has the funding available to provide this necessary benefit. I look forward to reviewing any legislation related to Medicaid expansion during the 2025 Session and will work to ensure the most responsible use of funds for this program.

2. Citizens need to be aware of where their property taxes are going and what, if any, increases to those taxes they are voting on. We need to reduce government spending in a responsible



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

The Montana State Capitol in Helena

manner and ensure that we as a state do not over collect property taxes, as was done in 2021 and 2022. Taxes over and above what is necessary to fund schools, protect citizens, especially children, and keep our roads and bridges in good repair should be returned to taxpayers.

3. State government should work to reduce regulations that are over burdensome to developers and builders. I was proud to carry legislation in the 2023 Session that streamlined the timeframe for permit approval from DNRC which will help new housing to become available. I am interested in crafting legislation to reduce the cost

of infrastructure in communities where new housing is necessary, as well as exploring public/private partnerships.

4. My phone number, e-mail and mailing address have always been, and will continue to be available to all members of the public. I answer every message I receive and am happy to interact with voters in whatever forum is most comfortable for them. I make it a point to attend as many community functions, school board meetings and events as I can. I enjoy the opportunity to hear from citizens both during the Legislation Session and throughout my term of service.

SENATE DISTRICT 21

Sharon Stewart-Peregoy – D



Age: 71
Home: Crow Agency, Montana
Occupation: Faculty/ Dept Head Little Big Horn College
Contact information for voters: P.O. Box 211 Crow Agency, MT 59022; 406-639-2198

1. Yes.

2. Reinstate the industrial and tech TIF'S that was repealed in 2013. Avoid tax limits especially assessment limits, no cost shifting of taxes. Target property tax relief for middle and lower income Montanans by providing the options for state aid, monthly payment vs annual payment for property taxes.

3. Continue to support and fund programs established in the Dept of Commerce. Are subsidies appropriate? Yes. Down payment assistance for homeowners.

4. Continue to interact with constituents during the legislative session and interim by attending

local meetings, community forums. I maintain constituent phone line at home for people to contact me.

SENATE DISTRICT 24

Mike Yakawich — R



Age: 64

Home: Born and raised in Butte; living in Billings for the past 40 years.

Family: Married to Yukiko for 44 years; five children and seven grandchildren.

Occupation: Former business owner, former Billings City Councilmember, non-profit director, member of several boards/committees, House District 51 Legislator currently serving on HB872 Commission "Behavioral Health for Future Generations" also on the Human Services Interim Committee, and Montana Committee for Developmental Disabilities

Education: BA, UM

Contact information for voters: yak.mike@gmail.com; 1-406-647-6391

1. Yes, Medicaid and Medicaid expansion is very important to many of my constituents in my Senate District. I will work hard to insure those qualified to be covered are insured and that more guardrails are established for success, no misuse of funds therefore providing more funds for those who qualify.

2. Adjust the structure of the value of mills by counties, put a vote on permissive mill levy, increase the voter percentage of voters favoring a mill levy increase. Adjust some classifications of tax rates and support the Elderly Homeowner/Rental Credit program. The idea of applying the Homestead Act is another great idea for people who own a home and can receive a tax break. My wife and I are grateful for the tax rebate we have received, a good example of helping reduce our tax burden.

3. The housing situation can be helped by faster permitting by towns and counties to reduce interest paid out by developers during those waiting periods. A short-term building revolving loan program can help the first-time buyers and builders.

I have seen excellent landlords in which redeveloped dilapidated properties are made into quality

housing providing therefore for a great housing surplus. For profit or for nonprofit organizations can be supported as the Community Leadership Development Inc. that does a great job for housing in Billings, I have supported the Jackson Street Development and other developments that use tax credits for such housing and supporting Tax Increment Finance such as South Billings Urban Renewal as another tool for supporting more affordable housing.

4. I give out my phone number and email and respond to both. I am constantly engaged in outreach through such venues as volunteering with local organizations, attending the local neighborhood taskforces, Tax Increment Finance (TIF) meetings, through city council, local community nonprofits, events, local churches, walking door to door, etc. This includes coffee meetings face to face, phone calls, mailings, texts, emails and social media (i.e. <https://www.facebook.com/mikeyakawich/>)

I will continue to reach out sharing my major concerns for our community and state addressing public safety: Behavioral Health, healthcare, long term care for the elderly, prevention (suicide, substance abuse, domestic violence), affordable housing, supporting local shelters, and pre-release to mention a few.



Mark H. Nicholson — D



Age: 70 on election day

Home: I have lived in Billings for 20 years

Family: Laura R. Nicholson MD MPH and I married in 1985. We have raised our two children, Marjorie

and Kaj, and our foster child, Justy, who has multiple disabilities. We continue to look after Justy in our home as her guardians.

Occupation: I am a retired psychiatrist and I am a home caregiver for our disabled foster daughter.

Education: Helena Senior High School 1972; BA in English from Carroll College, Helena, Montana 1976; MD from the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 1985; Family practice residency at University of Utah; Psychiatric residency at University of Washington

Contact information for voters: Cell phone 406-698-7346; Email mark@DrNicholsonForMT.com

1. Continuing Medicaid expansion is the right thing to do for Montana's citizens, healthcare systems, economy and state budget. Well over a hundred thousand hard-working, low-wage Montanans deserve the access to the general medical care, mental health care and substance use treatment that Medicaid expansion provides. Medicaid expansion keeps our urban hospitals and clinics financially healthy and our rural critical access hospitals alive. It supports about 7,500 Montana jobs and generates about \$475 million in personal income and \$700 million in economic activity. Finally, between budget savings and increased tax receipts, Medicaid expansion more than pays for the state's investment.

2. Straightaway, the legislature needs to decrease the residential property tax rate from 1.35 to 0.94 percent which the Department of Revenue advised in November 2022 and the 2023 Republican-controlled legislature and Republican governor ignored. The legislature should go on to consider a homestead property tax exemption to reduce the taxable value of residential properties and small businesses. Montana also needs a housing fairness tax credit to prevent property taxes from rising above an affordable percent of income for seniors, renters and workers with modest and middle incomes.

3. Establishing housing improvement districts with Montana Board of Investments backing for special assessment bonds would reduce the cost of financing for the upfront infrastructure costs of housing developments. This is detailed in R23 in the Governor's Housing Task Force Final Recommendations. This measure can be expected to allow developers to build more housing at a more affordable cost.

4. I have knocked on over three thousand doors in Senate District 24 and talked with hundreds of voters on their doorsteps to give them a chance to meet me up and tell me what is important to them. Additionally my phone number and email address are available on my website DrNicholsonForMT.com.

SENATE DISTRICT 26

Karen Lyncoln — D

Age: 77

Home: 1736 Songbird Drive, Billings MT 59101

Family: Single - mother and grandmother

Occupation: Retired Social Scientist



Education: BA, Urban Studies, California State University at San Francisco, 1970

Contact information for voters: phone or text 406-210-1206; email: lyncolnforSD26@gmail.com; FB: Lyncoln for Montana Senate District 26; web: www.lyncolnformontana.com

1. Yes, I support renewing the existing Medicaid program past 2025. I also support reinstating those citizens who were dropped from the rolls for making administrative mistakes on their paperwork. Medicaid allows people to obtain medical services that keep them healthy, on the job, and able to care for their families. Medicaid payments help medical providers stay in business, a critical issue in rural Montana and for nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

2. The 2023 Legislature transferred the burden of property tax directly onto home owners, reducing the burden on corporations — landowners but not necessarily residents. The Montana Budget & Policy Center estimates that residential property tax shifted from 38% of the total in 1994 to 58% of the total collected in 2023. The most effective way to solve the problem is to re-balance the burden and reduce the residential property tax rate from 1.35% to 0.94%, as the DOR recommended in 2021. In addition, I support including a true homestead exemption and exemptions for small business owners.

3. Building new affordable housing is a long-term investment while the need is immediate. Rising demand, land prices, construction costs, mortgage interest rates, homeowner insurance, and property taxes all affect the current market. I support programs that address each of these issues: promoting more mixed-use neighborhoods and smaller lot size and/or building set

backs; offering state-backed low-interest loan and insurance programs; and re-balancing the property tax formula. I support subsidies in the near term. Rental vouchers are safe and effective, and the Section 8 program is very effective at lowering the rent on older homes.

4. Senate District 26 is one the largest districts in Billings with a full range of housing choices and lifestyles, from apartments in the southern part of the district to ranches up Highway 3. I have kept current on issues using the Gazette and local TV news sources and by posting on my campaign website (www.lyncolnformontana.com) and my Facebook page (Lyncoln for Montana Senate District 26). I have also worked with canvassers from the Big Sky Victory office to ensure that voters receive information about my campaign and that I learn of their concerns.



Tom McGillvray – R



Age: 67

Home: Billings

Family: Married with three children and six grandchildren

Occupation: State Senator (retired financial advisor)

Education: BA Agriculture; Montana State University

1. Medicaid Expansion provides free health insurance to non-working or low income able bodied adults and is 90% funded by the federal government. Like any government program, its affordability must be reviewed. The Federal government is currently \$35.3 trillion in debt and running annual deficits approaching \$2 trillion. Interest on federal debt now exceeds what is spent on defense and is the federal governments largest expense. Improper payments alone totaled over \$230 billion mostly in Medicare and Medicaid. The federal government is approaching fiscal collapse. A program for the able bodied, who can arguably work for health insurance needs serious review.

2. State property taxes are about 15% of our property tax bills. One hundred percent of state property taxes are directed to schools. All local property taxes go to county and city governments and schools. There are 13

classes of property taxes in Montana. Personal homes are one of those 13. I will speak about homeowner's property taxes. The best way for the state to reduce homeowner's property taxes, and one I support, is to lower the rate of tax on homeowners. This can relieve the inflationary increases in property taxes largely caused by an overspending federal government.

3. I support regulatory reforms such as reducing minimum lot sizes, parking lot size, landscaping mandates and the reduction of building code mandates to increase affordable housing. Subsidies are typically not helpful and distort markets. The nationally recognized package of housing reforms the Republican led legislature passed in 2023 were recently upheld by the Montana Supreme Court. The implementation of these bills will help to stabilize housing costs. The biggest help to stabilize housing costs would be for the federal government to stop overspending which has exacerbated inflation, increased interest rates, and made housing less affordable to average Montanans.

4. I attend constituent and public meetings to communicate with voters. Contact information for legislators can be found at <https://leg.mt.gov/senate/>. I welcome feedback and always seek to answer constituent inquiries. For example, I have helped multiple individuals with questions about claiming their \$1,350.00 state property tax rebate as well as other needs. Legislators don't have staff support, so during legislative session, when we receive thousands of emails, my responses are sometimes delayed. Please keep emails short during session, (January-April 2025) as it helps with my response time. It is an honor to serve you!

SENATE DISTRICT 27

Kathleen Gilluly – D



Age: 64

Home: live in Laurel and have spent most of my life in Yellowstone County.

Family: son Gene, an IBEW electrician in Arizona; several grandchildren in Montana and my siblings, two of whom live in Billings. Michael retired from

the BPD, and Mary is a social services care manager at Billings Clinic. Our sister Margaret is a teacher in Texas. Our brother David is a farmer in Japan. I have several friends and a couple of dogs who I regard as family also.

Occupation: Although I have retired, I spent the past 15 years as a journalist and editor beginning at The Anaconda Leader and finishing at The Laurel Outlook. Prior to that, most of my working life was spent at non-profits.

Education: I attended Humboldt State University in Arcata, California and MSU-Billings. I also served four years of active duty in the U.S. Army.

Contact information for voters: Kagilluly@yahoo.com, 406-559-0947, www.facebook.com/mtskywtchr

1. Medicaid is vital to the health of our populace, especially children and other vulnerable folks. I would vote to continue Medicaid expansion past 2025. The program not only sustains much of our rural economy, it creates and supports thousands of jobs, all while expanding Montana's healthcare reach across the state and on Indian Reservations. Everyone benefits from a more comprehensive health delivery system. The best part is that the federal government contributes 90% of the funds for the program, infusing about \$900 million into the state annually.

2. While property taxes for homeowners have risen about 20%, industry has been given a pass. Overall, large industrial taxes have fallen. As an example, NWE, the state's largest taxpayer, saw a decrease of 20%, paying \$36 million less than the previous year. Reform of property evaluations need to be instituted, ensuring homeowners don't don't shoulder so much of the burden. To assist elderly and poor homeowners qualify for relief, I would support a system that automatically enrolls them based on their state income tax return or other proof of income.

3. Affordability and availability have created a housing crisis that isn't unique to Montana. I support using available tax credits to incentivize building more low-to-moderate income homes/apartments. A great example of the partnership between businesses and developers is the new apartment complex in Laurel, The Laurel Depot project was a collaboration between GL Development of Helena and the Montana Board of Housing. I also

support putting funds in the hands of those who could most benefit-low-income folks trying to purchase homes-in the form of down payment assistance.

4. I would continue to visit with my constituents as I always have. I live in Laurel, shop in Laurel, attend events and am invested in the people of Laurel. When I was editor of The Laurel Outlook, my door was always open to folks, and that won't change. I will provide frequent updates to the newspaper and residents about issues, along with utilizing social media. During my campaign, I will speak to the voters in my district to learn more about their concerns and will ensure they have all my contact information.



Vince Ricci – R



Home: Billings

Family: Married

Occupation: retired, longtime Laurel business

Contact information for voters: Phone number 406-855-9153; Email

ricthriftway@montana.com.

1. Medicaid expansion for the current biennium is \$2.15 billion. The Federal Government pays 90% of that expense. That money is coming from a government that is trillions in debt, I can't even tell you the exact amount because it continues to climb. When Medicaid expansion was passed in 2015 it was to lower insurance costs, lower prescription costs and hospital costs none of which has happened. Part of the bill coming this session is to remove the sunset, without a sunset Montana could be responsible for the entire amount. So I will have to be a no.

2. Property taxes are 85% local city and county. I will have to wait then to see what proposals are going to be brought from the governors task force.

3. In the 2023 session Republicans passed bills removing red tape to promote affordable housing development without subsidies. Republicans will continue that work.

4. Here is my contact information. Phone number 406-855-9153; Email ricthriftway@montana.com. I look forward to serving the constituents in Senate District 27.