

Independent Record

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 Mon-

tana 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?

3. Indigenous persons make up more than 30% of those missing in Montana but



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD FILE

The Montana State Capitol in Helena.

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 non-partisan nature of this election?



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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3. How would you make the court more accessible and understandable to Montanans?

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?

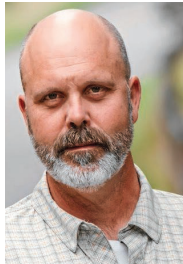
Public Service Commission

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 111%. 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:** Email address: info@gregformontana.com; Mailing address: Greg for Montana, PO Box 877, Helena, MT 59624; Twitter: @GregForMontana; Facebook: @GregForMontana; Website: gregformontana.com

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, 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

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://www.facebook.com/JONTESTER) / [JONTESTER](https://www.instagram.com/JONTESTER)



JON TESTER FOR U.S. SENATE

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



Age: 36

Home: Helena

Family: Single

Occupation: Comedian

Education:

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

2009

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

Education: CMR Graduate and two years at MSU

Contact information for voters: [HTTPS://libertysid.com](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 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 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 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 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

JILL SARK - HOUSE DISTRICT 79

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE



A
REPRESENTATIVE
THAT WILL
SUPPORT YOUR
IDEAS AND THE
NEEDS OF
HOUSE
DISTRICT 79

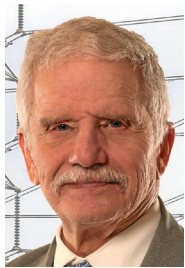
Paid for by Jill Sark, 6475 Foxwood Court, Helena, MT 59602

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 revealing 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 seems 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 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 possess 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 affect 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.



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. REPRESENTATIVE 1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Monica Tranel – D



Age: 58

Home: Montana

Family: Married with three daughters.

Occupation: Two-time Olympian, attorney focusing on land use, water rights, regulatory work, and representing

clients across Montana.

Education: Billings Central Catholic High School, Gonzaga University, Law Degree from Rutgers University-Camden

Contact information for voters: info@monicatrael.com

1. Montana must lead the energy transition. I support two existing laws:

- The Farm Bill, investing in Montana's agriculture, lands, and forests

- The Infrastructure and Inflation Reduction Act, funding forest management, water storage, and energy investment, including projects like St. Mary's Canal and the bridge in Noxon.

I would introduce my own bills that focus on:

- Enhance grid systems: protect our energy supply and keep our energy infrastructure sustainable, reliable, and secure.
- Housing: making sure Montanans are safe and have a place to live. I have a housing plan that will keep Montana affordable so all our families can live here.

2. Becoming a parent is a private decision that we must be free to make without interference from the government. No one needs to abandon deeply held beliefs, but the decision about having a child is not the government's to make, and certainly not Ryan Zinke's. I support privacy and freedom to decide whether we become parents, without government intrusion.

Consequences of extremism that Zinke supported are happening in Idaho, where the standard of care for a life-threatening miscarriage is to transport out of state, at tremendous risk. No doctor should face either saving a mother's life or going to jail.

3. For all of us who run households, we balance our budgets by increasing income and reducing unnecessary spending. That is exactly what our country must do. We must ensure everyone pays their share and no one gets a free ride. We can reduce the national debt by making sure that corporate tax rates are fair and that enough money is coming in to cover the essential costs of government, defense, education, and infrastructure. Simultaneously, we need to hold those on the spending side accountable. We need to monitor government spending, eliminate waste and fraud, and remove any abuse of the system.

4. I have a plan to address the high costs of housing. The federal government can partner with local government, public and private sectors to make Montana a place families can afford. My plan is: 1) assess the data to meet the problem; 2) hold bad actors accountable, making sure houses are for people to live in, not assets in an investment portfolio; and, 3) address the affordability gap for the missing middle.

We can promote Community Land Trusts, keep private equity from buying up trailer parks, and make sure rent isn't a function of algorithms set by Wall Street investors.

5. Yes. The United States must stand with our democratic allies. Providing aid to

Ukraine and Israel aligns with our values and strategic interests. We must also address the humanitarian crisis. While Israel must have the ability to defend itself, especially with respect to Iran and its proxies, we must have a two-state solution to rebuild Gaza and to give the Palestinians security, self-determination, and dignity.

In addition, it's critical that we ensure strong oversight and accountability for how taxpayer dollars are used, guaranteeing that our aid is effectively supporting the mission and the people it is intended to help.



Ryan Zinke – R



Age: 62

Home: Whitefish

Family: Wife: Lolita Zinke; sons: Wolfgang and Konrad Zinke; daughter: Jennifer

Occupation: United States Congressman for Montana's First Congressional District

Education: Bachelor of Science in Geology;



University of Oregon, Master's in Business Administration; National University; Master's of Science in Global Leadership; University of San Diego

Contact information for voters:
ryanzinke.com

1. Montana also saw a cold snap with temperatures 20-to 60-degrees below zero

last winter. Whether it's 90 and sunny or 60-below zero Montanans need a reliable and affordable power grid that can only be achieved by utilizing Montana's diverse energy resources. That means not following the Left's plan to tear down dams, that means letting the Crow Tribe manage their resources and mine their coal, and harnessing all the other energy God has put under our feet and

in our skies. As Secretary of the Interior and as Congressman I built a record of responsible energy development that led to record low fuel and power prices and led to record safety for on and offshore production. We became a net exporter of energy and used that energy to help our friends and keep our adversaries in line. We are the greatest country in the world. Nobody can out-innovate or out-produce the US unless radical environmentalists like environmental lawyer Monica Tranel are pulling the strings. Her plan to ban fossil fuels and force a transition to all electric vehicles would literally leave Montanans to freeze.

2. I do not support a federal abortion ban and regardless of what my opponent says, it's never been the case. She will lie and tell you what her DC strategists told her will win this race, but at the end of the day my record and my word is consistent. I personally am pro-life but understand restrictions should be put in place after the first trimester and that there are heartbreaking situations where exceptions should be made available such as rape, incest and to protect the life of the mother. Monica Tranel on the other hand supports elective abortions up until the moment of birth and would not require emergency care for a baby who survives an abortion. Absolutely unthinkable. She will tell

TIM SHEEHY

Navy Seal ★ U.S. Senate

★ **END**

Biden-Harris-Tester Inflation

★ **SECURE**

Our Border

★ **STOP**

Democrat Tax Increases



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you that doesn't happen—without denying it's her position—and frankly that's just incorrect. Practically speaking, I believe the best way to reduce abortions is to make birth control widely available and affordable so those difficult situations aren't even faced in the first place. On the other end of the family planning issue, IVF makes the miracle of a family possible and should remain an option for parents.

3. It's simple: You take out a loan you pay it back. You don't spend what you don't have. Two years of Democrat control in DC led to big government spending, trillions of dollars added to the debt, and record high interest rates and inflation. Bills like the slyly-named "Inflation Reduction Act" which Monica Tranel said was "awesome" and that she would vote for, increased federal spending by trillions and made bogus investments in Chinese technologies at the expense of America. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee I've voted to cut billions of dollars from federal budgets while funding core government functions and making investments in Montana where it counts the most. I cut wasteful and woke programs at the Departments of Defense, Education and Agriculture and increased funding at Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs. And just as important as cutting spending is making sure Montana gets its fair share of tax dollars back. As a committee member I secured more than \$35 million for Western Montana roads, bridges, senior homes and a youth center in Browning. Looking to fiscal year 2025, I have funding pending for more than \$25,000,000 in water systems to support more housing, and additional funding for law enforcement and emergency services across the district. Not all government spending is bad spending so it's important to root out the garbage and frivolity and make investments in core functions.

4. Household finances are tight right now and a lot of young people feel like the American Dream of home ownership is unrealistic. This is due to high inflation for gas, groceries and rent or high interest rates and building materials costs if they want to buy or build. Even a family of 3 with two good jobs can't make ends meet in this housing crisis. The answer is not more government housing, it's making the American Dream affordable again. I truly believe that folks who work in the community should be able to live there, which is why my family has provided affordable rental homes in Whitefish for the better part of 20 years. In Congress, I sponsored the HELPER Act to establish a new home loan program under the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to make homeownership more accessible to K-12 school teachers, first responders, law

enforcement officers, and other essential public servants by eliminating some of the barriers for first-time homebuyers including high down payments and monthly mortgage insurance premiums. Like a lot of you, I grew up in a trailer park. Trailers are quality homes and buyers shouldn't be treated as second rate citizens if they seek federally backed mortgages through USDA, HUD or the VA. For folks who aren't in a position to purchase a home and need a hand up, making sure those programs are viable and Montana gets its fair share is important. I worked with Montana Housing Authority to hold DC accountable and prevent HUD from swiping millions of dollars from Montana's housing aid accounts helping keep hundreds of Montanans in their homes. Lastly, I've taken the time to investigate and invest in the root causes of the housing shortage. It's not my family's little vacation rental as Monica Tranel would lead you to believe. In most towns, like Seeley Lake, Lolo and Lakeside, it's lack of infrastructure to support more building. I worked with County Commissioners and planners to identify four water infrastructure projects for federal funding. Once funded, the projects will build the necessary infrastructure to support additional housing in areas that need it most.

5. Israel is our closest ally in the Middle East and is an invaluable partner in maintaining global security. I unequivocally support Israel and the destruction of the Hamas terrorist regime. I strongly oppose sending any humanitarian aid to Palestine until there is a complete and total surrender and the terrorists are rooted out. As such, I voted against the funding bill for Israel because it literally sent billions of dollars to Hamas. Imagine fighting a war only to have your ally funding both you and your opponent. I refuse. On the issue of Ukraine, I have voted no on every Ukraine funding bill. I will not blindly send U.S. tax dollars to fight a foreign war that the President, Department of Defense, or anyone else in charge can't tell me what the plan is. "Defeat Putin" is not a plan, it's a goal but it's not a plan. When I was in Iraq we didn't just put down a piece of paper and say "OK guys the plan is to win, now go". What's the plan, rules of engagement, metrics for success, go-no-go criteria? They have no idea. Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration have sent billions of dollars to Ukraine with zero oversight and zero accountability. Meanwhile we have our own soldiers living in barracks that are little better than slums, veterans dying while waiting to get health care, and the border being overrun by cartels, criminals and terrorists. A no vote on funding for Ukraine is not a yes vote for Russia, it's a yes vote for putting American interests first.

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

JOHN METZGER
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT #2**NOV. 5 ELECTION** ~~REPUBLICAN~~ ~~DEMOCRAT~~ **JOHN METZGER****U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT #2****The Only Candidate w/ Experience SAVING TAXPAYERS BILLIONS!**

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

- Closing the Border/Border Security/'Building the Wall'
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- Audits why property taxes are so high and how to reduce property taxes
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- Economic penalties and sanctions on China and Mexico for not meeting specific goals stopping fentanyl from entering the U.S.

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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 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 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 75

Marta Bertoglio – R



Age: 55

Home: Montana City

Family: Husband - Joe Chapman and daughters, Marrin and Cecelia

Occupation: Broker/ Owner Uncommon Ground Real Estate

Education: Graduated from Powell County High School, Deer Lodge, 1991 Graduate of the United States Air Force Academy

Contact information for voters: Phone 406-438-1772, martaformontana@gmail.com

1. I want to review the bill presentation before deciding on my vote. Some taxpayers are reluctant to allocate tax dollars to this program. I am educating myself on the program by attending presentations, so that I may make an informed decision. I am concerned about the impact on rural hospitals and the working poor if Medicaid Expansion is discontinued. Having grown up in a rural community, I understand the significant importance of rural hospitals for these towns.

2. One potential option to consider is adjusting the tax multiplier for the residential tax rate. I look forward to voting for a reasonable solution that puts Montanans first especially those who pay taxes for their primary residence.

3. I think that developers are burdened with too many regulations and requirements, which are ultimately passed on to buyers in the form of increased cost and longer wait times for subdivision approval from county/city officials. Perhaps providing tax incentives to developers could help the housing shortage.

4. As a business owner, I am not able to travel to all areas in my district as much as I would like, but I am available by phone or email, and I enjoy meeting with people. I attend monthly meetings in Whitehall and Boulder in person or via Zoom whenever possible. I also plan to visit the communities. As a current business owner, I truly understand the economic stress experienced by myself and my fellow citizens, and I will work hard to find relief for Montanans.



Nancy Jane Lien – D



Age: 72

Home: west of Whitehall, Montana

Family: four children, Benjamin Griffin of Bozeman; Emily Griffin of Petersborough, New Hampshire; Patrick Griffin, of San Diego,

California and and Julia Griffin Sagaion of Seattle; two grandchildren, Eldora Sagaion and Maddox Griffin.

Occupation: Contracts Administrator in the oil and gas industry.

Education: MEd - Human Development; BS - Government - Montana State University

Contact information for voters: nancyjane@lienformontana.com

1. Yes, Medicaid expansion is critical to rural health care. It is also a major source of reimbursement for private medical providers, including mental health and addiction services. Rural counties, such as Jefferson County, rely on satellite offices for care and without Medicaid those services would not be available to the local population.

Medicaid is a program funded largely by federal dollars and the state contribution for expanded services is a small portion of total costs. The impact of not participating would be devastating to the most vulnerable among us. The impact of not participating would be devastating to rural communities.

2. The Montana Department of Revenue should apply a lower tax rate percentage to a property's appraised value for properties that are occupied for over six months. I also believe that homeowners who have occupied their homes for over ten (10) years, and/or their heirs, should have property tax rates

capped.

I would also offer Montana income taxpayers a tax credit (as opposed to a tax deduction) for property taxes paid. Most of Montana second homeowners do not pay Montana income tax, they would be ineligible for the property tax credit.

I would also suggest that the classifications for intra-state and inter-state pipelines, rail and transmission lines be re-evaluated and adjusted for revenue losses sustained from the recent tax break gifted by the 2023 Legislature.

3. What more can the state government do to ensure that housing is more affordable? Are subsidies appropriate?

The state, and local zoning and planning boards, can assist with expedited permitting and a culture of encouraging housing inventory, without sacrificing community aesthetics, the environment or housing quality. I prefer the use of incentives, rather than subsidies, for affordable units. Developers are encouraged to reserve a portion of total units for cost assisted rents or reduced listing price by claiming housing credits for the capital construction costs.

I would also encourage bringing back

VOTE LAURA SMITH

"As your State Senator, I will fight for a government that works for the people, not against them. I will advocate for fair taxes, affordable living, your Constitutional Rights, preserving public lands, and a safe & healthy place for our kids to grow up."

- ✓ Former Prosecutor of violent crime and mom of two
- ✓ Proven leader as your current Helena Representative (HD 79)
- ✓ Passed multiple bills protecting kids and holding government accountable



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for
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the Montana Board of Housing First Time Homebuyer Program and the New Construction Program. These programs were shelved several years ago; but allowed first time homebuyers a respite from down payment and points fees assessed by traditional lenders, and assisted contract workers and farmers with alternative methods of income qualification. Units or single family homes purchased or constructed with incentives should have minimum occupancy durations, and re-sale priority given to other qualifying buyers.

Providing low cost community sponsored housing for teachers and first responders is also a solution. Incentives for employer paid housing allowances could serve to ease Montana's worker shortages.

4. This is the most important question of

the survey as it identifies that representation is not exclusive to those that share the same viewpoint. As a Main Street business owner for nearly three decades, the greatest takeaway I have is the importance of customer service. I would consider the confidence of the voters as a catalyst for service to the voters.

I would interact with, and regularly attend, schoolboard, town council and county commission meetings within the district and coordinate and encourage state and local collaboration.

During the legislative session I would write weekly updates for the newspapers serving the communities in the district. I would convert the campaign website, www.lienformontana.com, to an issues discussion forum and survey tool.

HOUSE DISTRICT 79



Luke Muszkiewicz – D



Age: 46

Home: 18 N Benton Ave, Helena, MT 59601

Family: Spouse, Virginia Reeves, and two daughters, Hannah and Margot

Occupation: Software Engineer/Data Analyst

Education: B.A., Computer Science, Carroll College

Contact information for voters: info@lukeformontana.org; 406-461-0193; www.lukeformontana.org; PO Box 1534, Helena, MT 59624

1. I support renewing Medicaid expansion. When the Legislature joined 41 other states in 2015 to expand Medicaid coverage, it enabled many Montanans who are in low-income jobs or part-time work due to a disability to finally afford healthcare. Furthermore, the bulk of the costs are paid by the federal government. Increased access allows our children to succeed in school and our workforce to continue supporting their families. Investing in the health of children and families and maintaining access to rural health care throughout Montana are broadly supported policies to strengthen our economy and reduce state expenditures over the long-term.

2. Montana families are understandably concerned about the drastic increase in their property taxes. While property taxes are a critical source of investment in public education and other public services, the Montana Constitution compels us to “appraise, assess, and equalize the valuation of all property.” Our current system places an unfair burden on residential property owners compared to corporate property owners. The next Legislature should provide a homestead exemption to Montana residents, a small business exemption, explore a tiered property tax rate based upon assessed value, and ensure property taxes remain affordable for seniors, renters, and low- to middle-income workers.

3. Housing is a fundamental need. Without access to safe, healthy, and affordable housing, children will struggle to learn in school and adults will struggle to support their families through work and post-secondary education. Furthermore, escalating housing costs and shortages will prevent the recruitment and retention of educators, healthcare providers, state employees, and other members of the workforce that we need throughout Montana. State government should play an increased role in subsidizing and otherwise incentivizing housing development that meets the needs of low-income workers and young adults entering the workforce.

4. Montanans rightly expect their elected representatives to welcome their opinions and ideas with an open mind and due consideration. Listening to understand, mutual respect, and civil dialogue are core tenets of my approach to public service. As chair of the Helena school board, I made it a priority to respond to every constituent who shared their views with me and the board. During my campaign I have spoken with my neighbors to better understand their priorities, frustrations, and values, and if elected, I will continue that dialogue to find common ground and get things done for House District 79.



Jill Sark – R



Age: 62

Home: 6475 Foxwood Court, Helena

Family: Married (Joe); two adult children

Occupation: Retired

Education: Graduated Lincoln County

High School (1980); Villanova Project Management Certificate (2006)

Contact information for voters: 406-202-2476; JillsarkHD79@gmail.com; 6475 Foxwood Court, Helena, MT 59602; www.facebook.com/JillsarkHD79; www.jillsarkforhousedistrict79.com

1. I would need to read any bill regarding Medicaid expansion to evaluate the costs. I would support significant changes to the current policy that will ensure individuals' eligibility for coverage, such as: 1) modifications to the determination and verification of household income to assess current income rather than the recent year's tax return; 2) require verification rather than client attestation of medically frail; 3) include policy that removes automatic renewal of eligibility; 4) implementation of a resource limit; and, 5) an individual eligible for health insurance coverage through an employer or spouse's employer must enroll in the plan.

2. Consider a change in state law to adopt the counties' view on how the equalization mills should be capped and reduce the total number of mills from 95 to **85**. Explore the possibility of a cap on the annual increase of property values. Only allow legislatively approved increases based on a percentage. Allow for population growth as a factor in limitations. When increases are proposed, provide voters with the cost and detailed information including a sunset date of all levies. Continue to support the property tax assistance program for disabled veterans and individuals with low fixed income.

3. A streamlined process of applications for access to land and water supply will save builders' time and money. The recent stalled gravel pit permit requires builders to transport gravel from miles away that drives up the cost of new building projects. If a permit for a local area gravel pit is submitted, a speedy response will alleviate this increase in costs. Multi-family structures are an opportunity, including current structures such as larger homes and upper stories of buildings in town. A subsidy to consider, depending on cost, may be pursuing a six-week training program to increase the workforce availability.

4. The best method to hear from constituents is meeting with them in person as I campaign door-to-door in my district. I am sending out postcards to voters in House District 79 with my contact information. My information is also available on FaceBook as well as on my website. I attend campaign forums and other community meetings

that feature candidates to hear the voters' questions and concerns. I will respond to all voice and E-mail messages as soon as possible not to exceed 24 hours.

HOUSE DISTRICT 80

Rachel Burright – R



Age: 40

Home: Helena

Family: Married; two children.

Contact information for voters: Phone 406-616-2380; Email info@revive-montana.com; Website www.rachelformontana.com

rachelformontana.com

1. First, I don't find it honorable to ask or answer this question before the bill is drafted or seen. Medicaid is paid with taxpayer funding no matter if it comes from a state or federal level. I am curious why the discussion isn't centered around ways to make this program more prudent for those footing the bill and less centered on profits.

For example: ASPE reports that prescription drug prices in the U.S. are 172% to 1,028% higher than in 33 other countries.

2. Stop spending. Here is the truth of the matter: Our government agencies are NOT known for being prudent in their spending, efficiency, or clear in their processes. How can we keep pushing families beyond what they can bear? Aren't good leaders supposed to “eat last?” We need an honest conversation about where we really are, what our specific goals are, and how to effectively use our resources to accomplish those goals.

3. What we are experiencing is an example of a free market when supply can't cover demand. This issue started before 2020 and continues to present. The large number of people moving here in 2021/2022, coupled with increased building costs, are two major factors contributing to the increase in final sales prices. However, if we had a sufficient inventory of homes, we would not be seeing such inflated values. If state government wanted to be proactive, they could have cut regulations allowing builders to effectively supply the demand long before we reached this level of hurt.

4. In-person conversations are always

LUKE MUSZKIEWICZ

for MONTANA HD 79



“Luke listens attentively, contemplates, and makes independent decisions. When considering proposed legislation, Luke will actively consider all viewpoints and assess the impacts to all Montana citizens – whether young or old, individuals or small businesses, educational institutions or government entities.”

—Gary Carlson

lukeformontana.org

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my preferred way to communicate, so you will most likely see me knocking at your door in the coming weeks and months. My number is posted above and, as your future representative, I will return phone calls.



Melissa Romano – D



Age: 47

Address: 790 Wolf Road, Helena

Family: Melissa is the proud mother of two children, Brody, who recently joined the U.S. Army, and Aila, a junior at Capital High School.

Occupation: Educator with the Helena School District

Education: Master of Science Degree, University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT; Bachelor of Science—University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT; Associate of Applied Sciences—Photography—Northwest College, Powell, WY

Contact information for voters:

MelissaRomanoMT@gmail.com

1. Yes, I would support Medicaid expansion past 2025. Sky-high medical bills have crushed our working- and middle- class families. Expanding Medicaid is crucial in ensuring our residents can access vital healthcare services, regardless of their income status. Children are especially vulnerable to Medicaid cuts, and it is irresponsible and unfair to limit their access to these services. No one should be deprived of affordable, quality healthcare.

2. Residents are strained by escalating residential property taxes, especially for fixed-income families and seniors in Montana. While vital for funding local services, our tax system must be more fair and equitable. Our current regressive property tax system disproportionately affects working families. I propose shifting the tax burden from residential homeowners by increasing taxes on other property classifications. This would bolster the local economy, benefiting all Montanans. Fairness demands everyone contributes equitably to uphold our beloved state and its essential services.

3. The affordable housing crisis is hitting communities across Montana. We must incentivize affordable housing construction that ensures we have readily available housing that is affordable and safe. We must create more affordable homeownership

paths that ensure future generations can buy a home in our state. Ensuring affordable rental opportunities is essential, and I would advocate for accessible subsidies to achieve this goal. I will support tenants' rights so that renters can be assured their properties are safe. I also support initiatives to address homelessness by investing in supportive housing programs and expanding access to mental health and substance abuse services.

4. I believe direct outreach in Helena is essential, and it is the best way for voters to understand the important issues impacting them. I love being in the community, and Helena's voters bring so much perspective and wisdom to our most important issues. My office is always open to residents, and I encourage them to make their voices heard directly during the legislative session by calling, emailing, or visiting my office. I also believe social media can be a powerful tool in understanding the issues at hand and communicating with voters the important work I've already undertaken

HOUSE DISTRICT 81

Mary Caferro – D



Age: I am grateful that my wealth of experience has improved my ability to get things done. My age does not matter to me, and I hope it does not matter to voters.

Home: Helena. Born and raised in Whitefish.

Family: Four college educated children who I raised as a single mother.

Occupation: Print Media Coordinator for the Montana Democratic Party.

Education: Helena College

Contact information for voters: PO Box 668, Helena, 59624; marycaferro@gmail.com; 406-461-2384

1. I co-sponsored Medicaid Expansion in 2015 and will vote yes. Expansion has decreased the uninsured rate and strengthened Montana's economy, businesses, and workforce. Most Medicaid expansion members are working. Thanks to dental care, one mother was promoted and is creating upward mobility for her children. Access to substance use and mental health treatment is key. A father spoke proudly of his son who for the first time is insured and



holding down a job. Scores of Veterans die by suicide each year. Uninsured veterans have a disproportionate amount of health issues. Medicaid expansion is a way to thank a vet.

2. The simple reason homeowner property taxes permanently increased \$268 million per year while corporate property taxes reduced \$76 million is because the Republican supermajority failed to equalize the \$60 billion worth of existing home value increases from the last 2-year reappraisal.

A very simple bill, amending one section of law to lower the tax rate on homes, will eliminate the current \$268 million-a-year homeowner tax increase and likewise will for the future homeowner increases of property tax reappraisals. And not at the expense of public education and local services like, fire fighters, road maintenance, and water and sewer projects.

3. Montana's housing crisis has reached a breaking point. Montanans are living in cars because they can't find a place to live. Across our state, rising housing costs are locking young Montanans out of homeownership and making it nearly impossible to find a place to rent. At the heart of this crisis demand for housing outpaces housing supply. Democrats passed a bill investing \$15 million into building over 250 new apartments guaranteed to be affordable for working folks. We want to turbocharge this successful model and dramatically increase the supply of housing that Montanans looking to rent or own can afford.

4. My favorite part of campaigning is meeting people. I contact voters by knocking on their doors and listening to what is on their mind. Over the years people have given me much of their valuable time, and I am grateful. Folks have invited me in for hot tea on cold days and cold soda on hot days. They have opened up about their struggles, shared their concerns and their ideas for how we can do better. I always say, my best bills are not my ideas but are the ideas of the people who I represent.

HOUSE DISTRICT 82

John Looney, Sr. — R



Age: 49

Home: Helena

Family: As a father of six, family is my world. We homeschool, ensuring a personalized education that matches each child's needs. Our lives

are rich with school sports, farming, and 4-H, embedding values of responsibility and teamwork. These activities deepen our bond and our connection to Montana's community and traditions. I'm dedicated to fostering an environment where all families can thrive, supporting policies that recognize the importance of education, community involvement, and the agricultural roots that many of us share.

Occupation: As the business owner of Bad Boy Bail Bonds, my entrepreneurial spirit and leadership have driven the success of the company, contributing significantly to the local economy and supporting community initiatives. My business acumen is complemented by my dedication to ethical practices and community service.

Education: My journey has been one of continuous learning and service. From my early years in Montana, through distinguished service in the US Army and roles in law enforcement, to becoming a successful business leader, my education has been both formal and life-enriched. These experiences have equipped me with a deep understanding of the challenges facing our communities and the leadership skills necessary to address them.

Contact information for voters: Email: john@looneyformontana.com; Website: www.looneyformontana.com; phone: 406-431-2542

1. I support policies that prioritize the well-being of Montanans while ensuring fiscal responsibility and sustainability. Medicaid expansion, while well-intentioned, requires a careful evaluation of its long-term implications on our state's budget and the overall quality of healthcare. My stance is to explore innovative solutions that expand access to healthcare without imposing unsustainable financial burdens on the state. This could include seeking efficiencies within the existing healthcare system, encouraging market-based solutions, and leveraging technology to reduce costs and improve care.

2. The most effective way to reduce property taxes for Montanans involves a multifaceted approach: broadening the tax base through economic development, ensuring fair and accurate property assessments, and exploring targeted tax relief programs for those most affected, such as seniors on fixed incomes and low to middle-income families. Additionally,

prudent state fiscal management and the exploration of alternative revenue sources can alleviate the need for high property taxes to fund essential services.

3. Addressing affordable housing requires a collaborative effort between the state, local governments, and the private sector. Streamlining regulatory processes and reducing red tape can lower construction costs and encourage development. Incentives for builders to include affordable units and the use of public-private partnerships can also contribute to increasing the housing supply. While subsidies can play a role, they should be carefully targeted to avoid distorting the housing market and ensure long-term sustainability.

4. Transparent and open communication is key to understanding and addressing district concerns. Maintaining a robust dialogue with constituents is fundamental to effective representation. I commit to regular, accessible communication channels, such as town hall meetings, newsletters, and a strong online presence to keep voters informed and engaged.

HOUSE DISTRICT 83

Wes Feist — R



Age: 40

Home: East Helena

Family: Married to a wonderful wife of eight years with two incredible boys (ages 7 and 12).

Occupation: Business Operations Analyst with

the Montana Department of Administration and a City Council member with the City of East Helena

Education: Bachelor of Science (B.S.)—Management from Johnson & Wales University; Master of Arts (M.A.)—Higher Education: Organization & Governance from the University of Denver

Contact information for voters: wesfeistforhd83@gmail.com; 406-465-7158; P.O. Box 70; East Helena, MT 59635

Lenny Williams for PSC



Leadership for the Montana Public Service Commission District 3

I will work tirelessly to advocate for the citizens in my district to ensure they have access to utilities that are affordable and sustainable. The cornerstone of my campaign is to represent my district while balancing the need for a financially sound utility infrastructure that is capable of providing reliable service.

Find out more about me and my campaign at:
<https://lennyforpsc.org/>

1. It depends. In its current iteration, not necessarily. However, there are those in need that we must all ensure have necessary safety nets to help. There should be stipulations on Medicaid, just as there are with other state and federal entitlement programs. This includes Medicaid as a secondary plan, if an individual's employer offers a medical plan an individual must be enrolled in that first. In addition, more coordination and enrollment with SNAP, Healthy Montana Kids, workforce, and other programs is necessary to better utilize and prioritize funding to those in need.

2. A reevaluation of mills should have been completed in the 2023 session and can be accomplished in 2025. There is a need to address the rate Montana second homes and short-term rental property taxes are collected. To stabilize housing prices, we need more inventory, which in turn reduces prices and taxes. Other ideas to reduce and control property taxes include basing property tax levels on purchase/selling price, removing the need to evaluate based on often arbitrary appraised values. Additionally, placing a cap on any property tax increases is needed to limit taxation.

3. Many programs already exist to assist with down payments, housing opportunities, and property tax assistance for those in need. To ensure affordable housing we need to ensure that local communities can responsibly grow and develop. This is done through expedited water rights rulings, environmental reviews, and if any assistance is available to help all Montanans it is in the form of water, sewer, streets, and bridges grant opportunities to upgrade current and infrastructure systems. Investment in infrastructure not only encourages responsible growth, but benefits new and existing homeowners and municipalities.

4. I am running in HD 83 because I am a product of it. I was born and raised in East Helena and Helena and am the only candidate that lives in the district. On the city council, I have learned that you must live and be active in the community to understand it. Involvement includes listening, and understanding to find common ground and benefit. Active involvement in civic groups, community events, at the coffee shop, and earning trust is the best way to remain engaged with fellow residents. Accessibility and response is something I am proud of and will continue.



Jill Cohenour – D



Age: 58

Home: East Helena

Family: My husband is Joe Cohenour. We have two daughters, three grandsons, and two granddaughters.

Occupation: Chemist at the State of Montana

Environmental Laboratory in Helena. I provide testing of pollutants for private wells and Public Water Supplies across Montana.

Education: Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the University of Montana.

Contact information for voters: Phone 406-227-1144; Email JillforLegislature@gmail.com; Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/JillCohenourHD83>

1. Of course, I will support the continuation of Medicaid Expansion to provide healthcare for hard-working low-income Montanans. Most folks who use this program for healthcare are working. Those that aren't working are mostly disabled or primary caregivers for family members. This is a support system that is needed in our state. Rural Montana will lose community health providers without this program requiring long distances to access care. With approximately \$700m of economic benefit to the state, we would be remiss if we did not remove the sunset and make the program permanent to protect community healthcare across Montana.

2. Property Taxes will be addressed in the next session. We can start by reducing the Classification tax level to 0.93 which was proposed last session but not supported. That one change would have mitigated much of the huge increases seen across Montana. Increasing the homestead exemption for all Montanans, and using income tax to reduce the property tax obligation on low-income Montanans and renters, will provide help to those that need it the most.

3. In housing, we did nothing to help increase the number of available affordable housing units during the last session. We should provide additional tax credits to match federal ones to make building affordable units pencil out. We must create a housing trust to allow more long-term investment in local community efforts at low interest rates. I would also support low or no interest loans for first time homebuyers to access down

payments to purchase a new home.

4. I have knocked doors in this district for 8 campaigns, 6 House campaigns and 2 Senate campaigns, with a few changes in the boundaries over the 3 Legislative redistricting commission processes. Knocking on doors is visiting my friends and neighbors, checking in to see what they think and how I can help. I have a home phone that is available for folks to call.

HOUSE DISTRICT 84

Julie Dooling – R

Age: 52

Family: Mom to Tyler Simonson - Navy Soldier, currently deployed on the carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt

Occupation: Registered Financial Assistant - employed with Sullivan Financial Group for 13 years

Education: Graduated High School at Flathead High School in Kalispell, General Securities License - Series 7 & 63 and Montana Life and Disability Insurance licensed

Contact information for voters: PO Box 1933, Helena, MT 59624; 406-471-4125; www.julieformontana.com; Email during session: julie.dooling@legmt.gov // outside of session: jd2.dooling@gmail.com

1. Medicaid Expansion in 2019 was one of the most controversial issues we dealt with during my freshman session. Many freshman experienced bullying by their peers while the bill was debated on the House floor. I voted No on behalf of my constituents in Broadwater County, as that is what most voters requested me to do. Obviously, in the 2025 session, I want to see what the current bill proposal will state, what it entails and how it will affect the voters of my new district - the voters of HD 84 in Lewis & Clark County. I need more facts and figures and until I fully know how it will affect the district (positive or negative) and the benefits it will bring.

2. Without a doubt, Montana's rising residential property taxes, will be one of the big focal points of the 2025 session. I feel that we are past time for major overhaul of the methods used to calculate taxes. I am extremely optimistic that the Governor's Property Tax Task Force will be able to identify various problems our communities face with budget needs and be able to provide solutions and relief to the fixed and low income, elderly, and disabled Montana veterans. That being said, we need to remember that most of the

property taxes paid by landowners support our local city and county governments and schools.

3. This is an ongoing discussion. We passed a few bills in 2023 to help address the situation and provide some relief but there is no quick fix and many variables to consider. I will consider any and all bills that will help to address this issue, but we need to realize that it will not be an easy or fast solution.

4. My contact information is easily available with a quick Google search and has been since I first ran for office in 2018. I attend many community and public meetings held throughout the district every year, so I can report what we are doing during and after the session, but to also get input, good and bad, from voters in attendance.

SENATE DISTRICT 38

Becky Beard – R



Age: 64

Home: Elliston

Family: Fifth generation Montanan, married, one daughter

Occupation: Retired Consultant, Beard Environmental & Technical Assistance LLC

Education: BA Carroll College, Helena, 1991, International Relations

Contact information for voters: becky4sd38@blackfoot.net, 406-479-3048

1. The continued level of government spending here in Montana is paid for using taxpayer dollars. These revenues are finite; therefore, during the 2025 Session we legislators and our constituents have to prioritize the costs for projects, programs, and services to achieve a balanced budget, per our Constitution. Medicaid expansion should be deliberated at length and adjusted as necessary in this context.

2. The most effective way to reduce property taxes is to reduce spending. Property tax revenues not only fund our local governments' essential services and operations, but also our education system. In 2024, 57 percent of these dollars went to education. All parties need to engage in the critical evaluation of budgets. Reductions, where feasible, of property tax-related expenditures across all programs are essential to keeping costs (and taxes) in check.

3. We need to acknowledge the circumstances driving up the cost of housing in Montana. We have a slightly increasing population, but wage growth has not kept pace with skyrocketing property values, most notably in western Montana's urban areas. We have a limited supply of housing, which also drives up home values, costs and tax rates. During the 2023 Session, a couple of Senate bills passed to ease requirements for building duplexes on home lots, and to require local governments to ease regulations to allow for the construction of secondary housing on shared parcels. Regulations and permitting costs at the local and state levels, along with inflationary costs of building materials, result in increased costs for housing development projects. Without careful forethought, subsidies could add to pressures on inflationary costs. Nonetheless "market incentives," whether legislated or through the free market, should be explored. Reduced regulatory complexity and more expedient project approvals will also help expedite projects to address the housing shortfall in the near term.

4. Looking forward, it will be my continued honor and privilege to serve the voters in

our state. I intend to represent my SD 38 neighbors in Powell, Jefferson and Granite Counties, along with individual precincts in Lewis and Clark, Anaconda-Deer Lodge, and Missoula counties during the 69th Legislative Session. I make it a priority to respond to every call and e-mail from the district's voters, and I can be reached at 406-479-3048, or becky4sd38@blackfoot.net.



Jeffrey Benson – D



Age: 67

Home: Boulder, Montana

Family: Married, father of two children, two grandchildren

Occupation: Rancher, along with my wife we raise Welsh Cobs and

Ponies

Education: BS in General Science and Education, South Dakota State University. Also received numerous designations and

business degrees.

Contact information for voters: PO Box 1291, Boulder, MT, bensonforsenate38@gmail.com

1. Yes! Expansion benefits Montana's small businesses. Employees get affordable health coverage and employers can keep and attract workers. Rural healthcare would be in serious jeopardy if not available and with fewer revenues, many clinics, hospitals and senior centers will close and face an economic breakdown.

Having Medicare Expansion, has transitioned many from emergency room treatment to preventative services. This saves substantial expenses for both the hospital and patient. Costs for Medicaid expansion is born mostly by the Federal Government and Montana's expense is administrative. The failure to renew this important coverage will actually increase Montana's costs for Medicaid.

2. Montana is besieged by development, people moving to the state and speculation. Working, retired and long-standing residents are caught in the middle and have very few options.

Consideration to implementing access fees to new development, secondary homes, non-residents and vacation rentals and expand assessments of mega mansions instead of reducing these assessments.

Lastly, provide protections for seniors that freeze property taxes until their property is sold. This would protect retirees on a fixed income from losing their homes due to increased property values beyond their control. Counties will be able to adjust the tax basis to the new owners.

3. Montana is experiencing astonishing growth of home values and opportunities to find an affordable place for working Montanans are evaporating. We're facing pricing pressures and it's difficult for low- and middle-income workers to find places to live near where they work.

Montana can expand outreach to community groups, counties, non-profits, and builders to response to these situations. A better use of the State's surplus could bankroll development and provide guarantees to assist communities to provide housing for residents. The State could offer tax credits, subsidies for housing, and even develop property to meet the local need.

JON TESTER

votes with **Biden-Tester-Harris**

95% of the time

Reject Jon Tester on Nov. 5th

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4. My hope is to have an open door of my activities as a Montana State Senator. Having said this, I would pen updates routinely on social media to keep constituents apprised of the legislative events. Also, I would host town hall meetings to update everyone on what's going on, but more importantly listen to what concerns Montanans have and what keeps them up at night.

As always, the public can contact me through my social media, email, and text. I would welcome personal appointments to hear concerns.

SENATE DISTRICT 40

Greg Guthrie – R



Age: 50

Home: Helena

Family: two daughters

Occupation: Aerospace Machinist, U.S. Marine Corps Retired

Education: High school diploma

Contact information for voters:

gguthrie@yahoo.com

1. Voting to expand Medicaid past 2025 depends on how and what is proposed in the expansion. I would consider expansion for Seniors and in special cases, for children

2. An effective way to reduce property taxes in Montana is to vote a limit on the percentage they can be increased. Another is to freeze the taxable property value to when they bought the property. I would also consider going back to the property value of 2019 for anyone 65 or over, and their rate wouldn't go up for them on their primary residence.

3. I wouldn't consider subsidies. I would consider reducing administrative restrictions, such as minimum land purchase sizes. It should be easier for individual buyers and developers to purchase land for homes and multi-family units.

4. I would be available via phone, email, and snail mail.



Laura Smith – D



Age: 42

Home: Helena

Family: Husband Mac Smith; two young daughters and a fierce hunting dog, Smoochie

Occupation: current Representative for House District 79 and attorney.

Education: Degrees in English and Political Science, University of Utah; Law Degree, University of Pennsylvania School of Law

Contact information for voters: 406-426-3504; LauraForLegislature@gmail.com; website: www.LauraForLegislature.com

1. Yes. Medicaid provides health care stability for Montana families & children, and I would vote to keep this coverage accessible. Medicaid is critical for small businesses to keep employees healthy and working, and to the continued operation of rural hospitals/clinics serving their communities. Continuing Medicaid expansion is good for businesses, good for Montana's rural/urban communities, and good for families to prevent higher health care costs for everyone.

2. In the coming legislative session, I will work on and support addressing sky rocketing property taxes, and a fairer tax system in general. That means creating a recalibrated, equitable property tax structure for working Montanans and ensuring that large corporations are paying their fair share of property taxes. Fixing this problem is critical because too many Montanans are being priced out of living in the state we love.

3. In addition to making property taxes

fairer, the state should responsibly subsidize the construction of more affordable housing by freeing up innovative funding strategies & designated housing funds for affordable housing. This includes ensuring the state has adequate staffing to get these funds distributed efficiently across Montana. Last session, I co-sponsored legislation to increase affordable housing, to keep costs reasonable for renters, and to ensure renters are treated fairly. I will support similar measures in the coming legislative session if elected.

4. In addition to knocking doors and speaking one-on-one with constituents, I have been mindful to ensure I read all correspondence from constituents year-round and during the legislative session, as well as meet with community stakeholders on the issues impacting constituents. I will continue to do so in the next session if elected, because hearing directly from those I represent is key to making each decision in the best interest of our community.