



Independent Record

VOTER GUIDE



2024 PRIMARY
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 hottest 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 state-wide 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.



The 2024 Montana primary election day is June 4.

How do we choose what to cover?

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

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

What won't we cover?

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

How do we minimize bias in political coverage?

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

about the work we do, and pledge to be responsive to public feedback.

How do we report on hateful rhetoric, actions?

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

How are we doing?

Let us know, and we'll respond.

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

2024 Primary Election Voter Guide: The Questions

U.S. Senate/House

1. How would you improve relations between U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife managers on ESA protection?
2. Where would you direct federal energy investments in Montana? Beyond “all of the above,” what energy options would get your priority attention?
3. What is your top priority in addressing how the VA serves Montana veterans and how will you hold the agency accountable?
4. Where would you like to see Congress set wildland fighter compensation and how would you propose paying for it?
5. Native Americans in Montana die a generation younger than their white neighbors. What will you do to improve health outcomes in tribal communities?

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 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



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD FILE

The Montana State Capitol in Helena.

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?
5. What are your wildlife management priorities for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and why?

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?



MONTANA 2024 PRIMARY ELECTION VOTER GUIDE: STAFF

This 2024 primary 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.

Regional President
Dave Worstell

Executive Editor
Steve Kiggins

Capitol Bureau Editor
Holly Michels

Content Coordinator
Tandy Neighbor

Contributing Reporters
Victoria Eavis, Carly Graf,
Seaborn Larson and Nora Mabie

Enterprise Editor
Rob Chaney

**Statewide Political
Advertising Coordinator**
Mandy Schilling
Mandy.Schilling@lee.net

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

Supreme Court Clerk

1. How would you work to ensure an independent judiciary and preserve the non-partisan nature of this election?
2. How would you make the court more accessible and understandable to Montanans?

GOVERNOR

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. I understand the cost of living is quickly becoming out of reach for many Montanans. 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, leading the charge and 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."

Because government cannot spend our way out of the housing crisis, we've emphasized reforms that increase housing

supply while protecting our way of life from sprawl.

3. Property taxes are too high, and must be reined in. About 85% of property taxes go directly to local jurisdictions, like counties and cities. Unfortunately, some counties have a spending problem, with some growing their spending at three times the rate of inflation. As a result, Montanans have seen their property taxes rise.

Last year, we delivered Montana homeowners with rebates of up to \$1,350, the largest in state history, as well as permanent reforms that save them over \$120 million. These measures completely offset property tax increases for the average Montana homeowner.

For long-term reforms, I support reining in out-of-control county spending and ensuring out-of-staters, who own second homes in Montana, pay their fair share.

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

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

We must continue to expand energy production, from all sources, to keep pace with rising demand and ensure electricity is affordable and reliable for Montanans. That's what guides my approach to energy policy.

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

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

Sadly, the fentanyl crisis has disproportionately impacted our tribal communities. Fentanyl seizures have increased by 20,000% since 2019. This crisis has left no community untouched. We must cut off the supply by securing our southern border, where drugs are entering our country with Joe Biden's open border policies.



Kaiser Leib — L

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.



Tanner J. Smith — R

Age: 49

Home: Lakeside for the last 30 years

Family: Five kids and wife Kelly

Occupation: Owner of Tanner J. Smith



Construction/Excavation Contractor

Education: Graduate Stevensville High School 1993. Somers/Lakeside School Board, Montana House of Representatives

Contact information for voters:

TannerForMontana.com

1. I would not. Medicaid expansion is fiscally unsustainable. We see that at the federal and state level. Medicaid for children and the elderly is needed but people that are able to work need to work. We are a meritocracy and being in service to others helps our collective social health. Whether it's waiting a table, performing open heart surgery or putting in a water main we all have a calling in life. Every job and career is important.

2. If you vote for Democrats this is what happens. I.e. COVID lockdowns, mass migrations, printing money/inflation, bad energy policies, etc. The state of Montana shouldn't be picking winners and losers when it comes to "affordable housing". Government never solves a problem, it only makes things harder for those that didn't benefit from the perceived solution. There's plenty of money in the private sector to build affordable housing but currently it's just too expensive to build. I know this because I do the excavation for these wealthy developers. Everything in construction runs on Diesel and the current green energy policy from Washington won't allow for cheap inexpensive energy production. Inexpensive energy equals inexpensive housing and durable goods. As long as oil stays at \$100/barrel rent will stay at \$1800/room. I am all for the state of Montana issuing tax abatements, lessening the burden of impact fees and cutting

regulations to help developers get these projects started. As governor we will make Montana energy dominant, independent and resilient to outside pressures.

3. Montana needs to return to responsibly using our natural resources. 30-40 years ago tax proceeds from logging, mining, coal and oil production is what funded our schools. Today that tax burden has shifted to the residential property owner. This shift affects the elderly, renters and folks on fixed incomes the most. 30 years of Democrat Green Policies and Liberal lawsuits have all but destroyed these industries in Montana. That is the reality. A short term fix for property taxes is easy and all of us conservatives tried doing it in the 2023 legislative session. I.e. reset back to 2019 values before the COVID housing market spike. Use acquisition value for the assessment, what YOU paid for YOUR property is what YOU should be taxed.

The catalyst and reason for the increase in property taxes is the Montana Uni-party consisting of Democrats, RINO's and Greg Gianforte. They don't want the problem fixed...because they want your tax dollars. Gianforte's "Property Tax Task Force" is composed of the same people that wouldn't give taxpayers any substantive relief for the last three years. This can all be fixed by using conservative principles that have worked in the past and that are working in other states. Helena needs a change and I am it.

4. The state of Montana has an obligation to leave Montana clean, safe and here for future generations. No one does things faster, cleaner, safer and better than Americans. I will push back on the climate alarmists that think regulating our Montana businesses out of existence somehow saves the environment? The leftists fail to realize that if we don't create our own things here then they will be done in China, India and elsewhere with much more carbon emissions. I have yet to hear a coherent explanation about how there was twice as much carbon in the atmosphere BEFORE humans walked the earth? Carbon is plant food. I would think the left would want to feed the plants? The carbon emission/credit debate and fear mongering is spearheaded by the same groups that were banning styrofoam cups, counting chlorofluorocarbons and the ozone layer in the 90s. Follow the money.

A clean and healthful environment means just that. We all deserve clean air and clean water for generations to come. As

governor my administration will countersue every time a logging sale is stopped by a judge. The forest fires we are experiencing every summer aren't because of climate change, they burn hotter and are more devastating because they haven't been logged or thinned in 40 years. These bad management practices will lead to loss of lives and more structures if we don't change course. We all have a constitutional right to clean air in July/August the way it was in the 70's, 80's and 90's. Forests need to be managed just like the garden or landscaping in our yards. If you don't weed and trim things back they will eventually destroy your entire property. With regards to the Held Vs MT case my administration will not be crafting energy policy based on the feelings of 12-18-year-olds that have never signed the front of a check. These reckless actions cost our fellow Montanans jobs. They cost my friends and neighbors their jobs. We can have a safe, clean environment and create jobs and low cost energy at the same time. Wind and solar are part of the solution but the technology isn't quite there yet. Hydro and fossil fuels must remain the key components of our energy policy. I will enact my ORACLE act on week one. Fuel reduction in the forests and low cost electricity from Biomass Incinerators will help all Montanans.

5. This June 2 is the 100 year anniversary of the American Indian Citizenship Act. In the past 100 years things have only declined for our neighbors on the reservations with the life expectancy of a male native American being 47 years old. Missing indigenous women is a travesty and shouldn't be occurring either. Having a "Sovereign Nation" inside America isn't working. The Reservation system is just like Chicago, Baltimore or New Orleans. The local leadership and local government gets richer and the folks that need the most help never receive it. Pouring more money at this problem isn't, hasn't and won't fix things. Greg vetoed HB 797 which was our attempt in the legislature to see where the Tribal governments are spending the taxpayers dollars...Greg vetoed it? Giving taxpayer dollars to a sovereign entity without any oversight, law enforcement or mechanism of checks and balances is futile. We are seeing that. Like all conservative republicans we don't care what color or creed a person is. We are all Montanans and Americans. My hope is that the Native American people will stand up for themselves, abolish these

"sovereign borders", and finally join our American team. This movement has to originate from the people and when it does my administration will be there to stand shoulder to shoulder with them.

U.S. SENATE

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.



Michael Hummert – D

Age: 65

Home: Helena since 1996 after retiring From the U.S. Navy

Family: Raised in southern Illinois with my brother and three sisters by my father who



was a single parent since I was 8-years-old. I became a single parent two years before I retired and finished raising my two daughters in Montana. I have been happily married for the past 23 years.

Occupations: U.S. Army tank Mechanic, concrete construction laborer, U.S. Navy Deck Seaman, Mess Specialist (Cook), 2nd Class Salvage Diver, Marine Mammal Operator and Trainer, 1st Class Salvage Diver/Salvor, Quartermaster/Ships Navigator, Diving Technology Instructor/Unlimited Diving Operations Supervisor, Post Retirement-Montana Highway Patrol, school bus driver, car salesman, 18 years as a general house remodeler/business owner helping people protect their investment. Retired again, it is difficult to understand the plight of the working class if you have not experienced it. Candidate for the U.S. Senate; so far totally unpaid position.

Education: High School, Army Technical training, Naval Nuclear Weapons Accident Recovery Training, Shipboard Fire Fighting Training, 2nd Class Dive Training, Marine Mammal Behavior Modification Training, 1st Class Diver/Salvor Training,

Underwater Demolition Training, Adult Instruction Training, Gulf Coast College Real-estate Appraiser and Agent Course, Gulf Coast College Corrections Officer Academy, Montana Highway Patrol Academy, Montana Life and Health Insurance License, Montana Contractor License, Lewis and Clark County Septic Systems Installation License. I have many self-taught vocations such as Ships Navigator, Watch Captain of a Ships Galley responsible for feeding over 700 crewmen three meals a day (talk about constituent complaints, I had a few). Learned the home remodeling industry and the value of trust between me and my costumers. I always believe a person should have a fallback plan.

Contact information for voters:

mikeformt.com, mikeformontana.com, montanaformike@gmail.com

1. U.S. Fish Wildlife Service falls under the Interior Department. It is the duty and responsibility of the United States Senate to confirm a president's Department of Interior appointment for secretary. Regardless of the party the president belongs to, as a U.S. Senator I would not vote to confirm any secretary who is unwilling to answer direct questions in a forthright manner. Currently we have misguided laws governing wilderness areas in our state. We spend millions of dollars establishing wildlife in these areas just to watch them die in forest fires. I would be a strong advocate for reintroducing roads into wilderness areas so we can battle wildfires appropriately and save our endangered species and manage our forest.

2. Upgrading and fortify our electrical grid along with increasing production. Reducing the federal EPA's Authority over the states. All 50 states have an EPA that is capable of protecting the environment. The only time the federal EPA should be involved is if one state is impeding another state's ability to have clean air and water. In the current environment of federal overreach and corruption it is imperative that states' rights are preserved.

3. The VA is over burdened with administrators and bureaucracy. Fix this and it may fix many problems at the VA. Since 2000 the budget has exploded from \$100 billion to \$335 billion. This is the unseen cost of our country waging war in the Middle East. Our debt as a nation is almost \$35 trillion and it increases by \$1 trillion every 100 days. This is Jon Tester's

18-year legacy. Can your children's future survive another six years of Tester? This is what Jon Tester is responsible for, and you cannot expect it to be fixed by the people that caused it. Unlike Tester, I support a balanced budget amendment.

4. This is another area that the federal government should block grant funds to the states and let them manage their interior. The state should set the wage based on local needs and availability. The land is owned by the federal government, but it lies within the interior of our state and we the people of Montana should have more dominion over that land. I trust the people managing our state wildlands far more than I trust the federal government. The future of our country must include streamlining agencies to cut cost. Aggressive Forestry management is the answer to forest fires. It may be their land but it's our air that they pollute when it burns.

5. The answer may be as simple as quit isolating them. They are American citizens with all the rights and privileges including self-determination. The reservation is an invention of the 1800s. We are now in the 21st-century. It's time to stop telling them they are victims. I doubt their health outcome is any different than any other American that lives in a city or a small town. Having gainful employment, living in a culture of family and friends, refraining from alcohol and tobacco while maintaining a reasonable weight will probably solve any problems they have. It's obvious that government intervention is not the answer. If it were the answer, the problem would have been fixed decades ago, after all we are talking about their very existence.



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, Bachelor of Science in Music

Contact information for voters: jontester.com

1. When managing the wild spaces and habitats that make Montana the Last Best Place, we need science-based solutions. Over the years, I've made sure Montanans, scientists and local Montana wildlife experts have a seat at the table in D.C. to make sure the Endangered Species Act works for Montana, and that's what I'll continue to do.

2. America is stronger when we are energy independent, plain and simple. We've set record highs for natural gas and crude oil production over the last year, and we need to continue on that track. But we have more work to do to lower costs, because massive multinational corporations and foreign countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran are taking advantage of customers by jacking up prices. That is why I supported common sense projects like the Keystone XL Pipeline. Montana also has the opportunity to create jobs by being a leader in renewable energy resources. We should invest directly in Montana companies researching innovative ways to produce next-generation energy technologies that are affordable and lower costs for consumers.

3. As Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I've always believed that we need to take care of our veterans when they come home - and if we can't do that, we shouldn't send them off to war to begin with. That's why I've successfully pushed for more doctors, nurses, and health care personnel, and for the VA to open new and better clinics across the state. We also fought hard to make sure we righted a generational wrong with the passage of my PACT Act, which finally expanded care to toxic-exposed veterans, including thousands in Montana. But we have more work to do, and I'll keep fighting to cut red tape at the Department and ensure our veterans get the care and benefits they've earned.

4. Unfortunately, due to extreme weather events, fire season in Montana is longer and more intense. It's critically important that the wildland firefighters who put their lives on the line are fairly compensated for the work they do to protect our Montana

communities. My Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill secured pay increases for wildland firefighters, and I am fighting to make these pay increases permanent. I'm working to pass the bipartisan Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act and my Wildland Firefighter Fair Pay Act, which would ensure our wildland firefighters have reliable and competitive pay and are fairly compensated for their overtime work.

5. As long as I'm in the Senate, Tribal Nations in Montana will have a partner and a seat at the table. It is critical that everyone, including Native Americans, have access to affordable health care regardless of where they live. That is why I have pushed for solutions to address the shortage of medical professionals in rural Montana through my bipartisan Rural Physician Workforce Production Act. I will continue to work with Tribal leaders to fulfill our trust responsibilities and make crucial investments in housing and public education. Finally, we need to deliver the resources and tools to law enforcement to tackle an ongoing fentanyl crisis that impacts all of Montana.

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



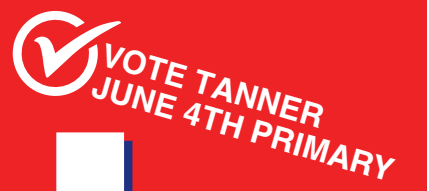
TANNER SMITH

FOR GOVERNOR

YOUR ONLY REAL CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN CHOICE

FIGHTING AGAINST TAXES, ILLEGALS, WATER COMPACT

RANDY PINOCCI, LT. GOVERNOR



TANNERFORMONTANA.COM

PAID FOR BY TANNER FOR MONTANA, TREASURER RYLEE KUNTZ
P.O. BOX 921, LAKESIDE MT 59922, REPUBLICAN



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: 39

Home: Deer Lodge

Family: Married, 4 daughters, 1 son

Occupation: Newspaperman

Education: Studied at the University of Wyoming

Contact information for voters: jessejamesmullen.com

1. The credibility of our elections is being undermined by the current Secretary of State playing political games and fundraising on misinformation and fake news. Republican and Democrat election officials across Montana run the most secure elections in America. My opponent knowingly used public money to distribute fake voting information in 2022. She tries 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 to the truth. I will continue to prioritize accurate and timely information and highlight the achievements of Montana's dedicated local officials.

2. High-level customer service is a necessity. I built customer-oriented centers for some of the largest media companies in the US. State employees must be capable, competent, and accessible to the public whenever they are needed. We must work for Montana's small-business owners, not just the out-of-state-owned mega-corporations and tech millionaires registering Lamborghinis and RVs while dodging California taxes. I don't want special rules for small businesses; I want a registration process that works and a realization from our officials that Montana's locally-owned businesses are the backbone of Main Street.

3. Like most Montanans, I vote for the person, not the party. Partisan candidates must be accountable to all Montanans if they want to use public resources for ballot access. Let's give Montanans a real choice in primary elections and weed out the extremist politicians. Independents are the fastest-growing segment of the voter population, and partisans shouldn't have special rules while forcing the rest of Montana to join an organization they don't

support. Yes, I support open primaries. Frankly, if both party executive directors are against open primaries, that's a good argument in favor.

4. Our current Secretary of State overcharged Montana businesses and refused to issue refunds unless Montanans navigated a complicated red tape process. Businesses had to sue to fix a known issue that her department ignored, costing Montanans money. The public shouldn't have to pay to defend an executive who refuses to do the job. The public must be put 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.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Sharyl Allen – R



Age: 64

Home: Helena

Family: Lots of nieces and nephews, eight siblings still living, adult daughter

Education: BS Education – Western Montana, MBA – Northern AZ University, Certification work in Ed. Leadership – Northern AZ University, Urban Superintendent Credential – Georgetown University

Contact information for voters: sharyl2024@gmail.com

1. Meet with the elders and knowledge keepers in consultative circles, seeking their wisdom and guidance on improving IEFA's impact. Begin every workshop and gathering with knowledge keeper stories and wisdom being shared. Expand the

"Youth Rising" project, led by tribal students. Utilize the OPI data communications team to capture stories of tribal land and share the resource with our Montana schools. Accountability is a natural outcome of implementing opportunities like those described above because it immediately impacts the curriculum and how IEFA integrates into student learning.

2. Here are the top three:

Continue to build out the teacher residency project, one of my innovations, while at the OPI. It was done with crucial stakeholder representations. This project builds new teacher capacity so they are ready to teach on Day 1 in their classroom.

Work with legislators to create a statewide, funded salary schedule that ensures minimum and maximum salaries for teachers.

Implement a statewide campaign, "Why I'm a Teacher," to build interest in teaching and increase value for great teachers across our state.

3. My team and I are visiting with folks who have left the OPI with an invitation to rejoin the staff when I am elected State Superintendent.

Develop a culture of confidence in the competence of each employee.

Visit the 200 OPI employees and hold listening sessions with them to identify needed improvement.

Review every position identifying the skills and attributes needed to recruit excellent "fits".

Go through the process with State HR to ensure the OPI compensation schedule is competitive.

Network with Montana educators and encourage them to apply at the OPI.

4. First, I am a big supporter of excellent public schools in Montana and getting the what of learning and the how of practical impact on student learning, addressed through ensuring our Montana Constitutional promise is fulfilled for each Montana student: "Build an educational system that fulfills the full education potential of each person."

Under my leadership, we will focus on keeping this Montana Constitution promise to each student rather than expanding charter schools. Montana needs to keep its promises to kids.

5. Effectively maximize the use of state lands to bring revenue to our public schools.

Identify ways that state lands might be used to address the lack of teacher housing in far too many Montana school districts.

Be a good steward of the State Lands and the purpose of state lands.



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 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 ensure OPI supports districts in the 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 youths 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, many set to open 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 choices, 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 for 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. We can expand public access and provide strong returns for our local schools by ensuring proactive management of these areas.



Shannon O'Brien – D



Age: 55

Home: Missoula

Family: Husband Chuck, son Carter, high school freshman

Occupation: Retired Educator

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

Contact information for voters: campaign@montanansforshannon.com

1. In keeping with our constitutional obligation, I would ensure the goal of Indian Education for All is met – that every Montana student learns an accurate history that includes Native people, understands tribal sovereignty, and is aware of contemporary Native issues. IEFA funding should be used for these purposes and OPI can ensure accountability for those dollars through school finance reporting systems. That said, my emphasis would be on impact, not paperwork. OPI should provide the professional development, curricular resources, and encouragement that help the professionals implementing IEFA programming actively engage teachers and students in elevating Native history and culture.

2. We need to meet this crisis head-on by addressing the issues driving Montana teachers out of state or into another profession. To start, we must ensure Montana teachers earn a living wage. We must encourage and help replicate creative local efforts to provide affordable teacher housing. Beyond that, we need to lift up teaching as a profession. Working with the Montana University System, we must ensure students heading off to college see teaching as a viable career path and have financial incentives to pursue it. Once in the classroom, teachers should see OPI as the valuable resource it once was.

3. An independent audit of the financial and programmatic situation at OPI would identify major gaps and suggest triage priorities, but the complaint I hear repeatedly from school districts is the need to be responsive. Not answering the phone or getting back to people is unacceptable. Under my leadership OPI will be responsive. I'm committed to building a culture of service and restoring the pride we all once had in that office. Working with educators,

community leaders, business owners and universities over the last 12 years, I know Montana has an abundance of talent that can be tapped to rebuild OPI.

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

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

STATE AUDITOR

James Brown – R



Age: 53

Home: Dillon

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

Occupation: Attorney and President of the Public Service Commission

Education: I grew up in Dillon and attended Beaverhead County High School before attending and graduating from the University of Montana – Missoula. I earned my law degree from Seattle University School of Law and my Master's degree in tax law from the University of Washington.

Contact information for voters: Jim@jamesbrownformontana.com

1. The Auditor's Office is given broad consumer protection duties. This includes rate review and approval, as well as keeping a watchful eye on the insurance companies

operating in the Treasure state. As your next Auditor, I will focus my efforts on ensuring that Montana remains an affordable place to live, to raise a family and to retire. In this vein, I have zero tolerance for those who violate the law or attempt to financially abuse Montana's senior citizens. I will zealously defend all Montana consumers, especially our vulnerable seniors, from the fraudsters and scammers who would seek to prey on them.

2. Once elected, I will focus the agency's investigatory branch on the securities sector in order to protect against bad actors. More needs to be done to shield Montana's most vulnerable citizens from the pervasive and exploding use of artificial intelligence to commit fraud.

3. Having grown up in rural Montana, I know how difficult it can be for Montana citizens to access resources offered by state agencies located in Helena. Therefore, I will continue the education efforts undertaken by the agency to get out and into to Montana's local communities, visit with stakeholders directly, and to be accessible on a one-on-one basis to all Montanans regardless of where they reside – from Alzada to Libby – such that rural areas are well represented. I will also strive to provide resources to Montana businesses to find investors to grow their companies and to employ more Montanans.

4. The 2021 Montana Legislature passed legislation, namely the Montana Pharmacy Benefit Manager Oversight Act, to provide the auditor's office greater regulatory authority over PBM professionals. Such authority includes requiring pharmacy benefit managers to be Montana licensed, as well as requiring PBM transparency reports to be filed with the office. These are critical consumer transparency steps and will help to ensure customers have access to affordable drug pricing. Having grown up in a small Montana town, I also understand how important it is to maintain access to critical health care access, such as access to a local, independent pharmacist.

5. Coming from a multi-generational Montana agriculture family, I will use my voice on this important board to express the interests of rural Montanans. As a backcountry outdoorsman, I have a deep appreciation for Montana's public lands and will work collaboratively to protect the historic Montana conservation practices of multiple use and sustainability. Having been educated at Montana schools, I will optimize the use of state trust lands to

bolster funding for public education, to promote proper stewardship of critical properties so all Montanans benefit, particularly those who earn their livelihood from working the land, and to protect private property interests.



John Jay Willoughby – R

Age: 63

Home: Winston, Montana

Family: Married with three grown children and six grandchildren

Occupation: Owner and CEO of Willoughby Insurance Services LLC



Education: High school graduate, North Dakota; Peace Officers Academy graduate; attended NDSU but did not graduate

Contact information for voters:
willoughbyforauditor@gmail.com

1. The Auditors Office has been a political stepping stone for the past 25 years. I'm not a politician nor do I have any desire politically outside of this office. I bring 25 years of experience in the insurance industry to this office unlike any of those currently in the office or others running for this office. I know the struggles Montanans are facing with rising premiums and lack of available options and carriers. My goal is to bring more quality carriers to Montana and be vigilant on what rate increases we allow and negotiate with those insurance carriers.

2. I don't believe we can have a narrow focus in our investigative branch. I do believe it is an area lacking within the Auditors Office based on the case loads that I have seen for the investigators. I'd like to see more investigators with a broader focus on fraudulent practices not only by bad actors in state but by those who are focusing on our elderly and all Montanans via the internet and telephone. This would be my primary focus as well as actively pursuing any and all complaints that are brought to our office.

3. I think education and communication are key components to providing awareness of what the Auditors Office has to offer our citizens. I would do this through public information networks via electronic means, social media, radio and television.

I'm also a huge proponent of providing not only awareness but educational classes to all corners of our state some of which is currently taking place, but I believe it needs to be further enhanced to make sure all areas of Montana have an opportunity to participate in our classes and provide valuable feedback to help us improve the product we are providing.

4. My role as Auditor is to make sure that all Montana citizens have the opportunity for the best possible pricing available on all medications. I believe we have made it to difficult for Pharmacy Benefit Managers to actively provide their services to obtain the best rates for Montanans, but I want to see the hometown pharmacy be able to offer the same rates as the box stores and out of state providers. We need to review the laws we have in place to make sure it's a level playing field for all those concerned. Then we can look at how we can improve it.

5. I would hope we can be better stewards of our state lands making sure we not Only protect them but enhance them so they can provide the maximum revenue Possible for our school systems and other agencies those funds are allocated.

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, 2ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Kyle Austin – R

Age: 41

Home: Billings and Havre

Occupation: Pharmacist and farmer

Education: Doctorate of Pharmacy, General Aviation



Contact information for voters:
austin4mt.com

1. As a Montana native and future representative for the state of Montana, my goal would be to consolidate resources to make our government more cost effective and cost efficient to lower our national debt and tax burdens. I would remove the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from all states and allow the states to be responsible for all the Fish and Wildlife Services on state and federal lands.

2. As Montana's representative, I would direct energy investments back into hydroelectricity. We need more dams and reservoirs to retain water in our state as our climate changes. Hydroelectric

energy is clean and will be a win win for our economy, agriculture, and lifestyle here in Montana for future generations to come.

3. My top priority is to pass my "United States Health Plan Corporation" Bill. This bill will eliminate the broken VA system, will eliminate the hassles our Veterans endure, and allow our veterans to have a health plan to utilize the physician of their choice and a pharmacy of their choice.

4. As an expense, congress needs to figure out a budget, where is the money coming from and how much can we generate. As a congressman, we need to focus on lowering our national debt and lowering taxes for everyone. We need to start being creative on how our federal government generates income without generating higher taxes. I would like to see higher federal park fees for non-US citizens, I would also like to see boarder entrance toll fees charged to non-US citizens entering the United States by land, air or sea. These funds can be used to help pay for our boarder security as well as wildfires.

5. Tribal leaders need to stand up and take the lead on tribal lands to promote health and wellness. Throwing money at any problem is not a solution. The federal government should however help support tribal initiatives to build self-sustainable economic growth so the tribes can be independent and sovereign.



Ken Bogner – R

Age: 37

Home: Miles City

Family: Engaged

Occupation: Montana Senator

Education: Columbia University



Contact information for voters:

Facebook: Ken Bogner for Congress
Website: kenbogner.com

1. By delisting the grizzly bear.

2. I will direct them to the most reliable options, and that is what we have in Montana – oil, gas, and coal.

3. We can hold the VA accountable, and all other government agencies, by making the firing process easier for federal employees who don't do their jobs. As a military veteran

who uses the VA, I have personal experiences with its failures and the thing that must be improved first is the customer service of the VA, making it easier for veterans to communicate with VAs.

4. I would like to see it set based off the free market rate.

5. Reform BIA and FBI resources to focus on drug enforcement operations. This includes increasing the penalties for fentanyl traffickers.



Ming Cabrera – D



Age: 65
Home: Billings
Family: Married with two children; wife–Digna aged 60; two children–Stephanie 34, MJ 37; two grandchildren 4 years, Lyla and Damian

Education: BS in Biology, two years School of Medicine

Contact information for voters:
www.mingformontana.com; ming@mingforcongress.com

1. The jurisdictional conflicts between State and Federal Officials regarding Endangered Species, particularly those located on private lands, have been ongoing. In response, the Interior Department has implemented rules aimed at encouraging landowner participation in voluntary conservation programs. An ambitious goal has been set to restore at least 30 percent of land and water by 2030, achievable through the reduction of time and cost associated with developing and negotiating permit applications. However, cooperation between state, federal, and tribal entities has been marred by jurisdictional conflicts. Improving these relations requires streamlining permit processes and encouraging volunteer participation, to foster better communication.

2. We must utilize the resources of solar and wind power. Also, diversify our energy portfolio to protect our environment but ensure economic prosperity. Unfortunately, coal faces economic challenges as the demand diminishes. We must ensure that Eastern Montana, is allowed to enjoy the same benefits of a diverse energy investment portfolio without putting all our eggs in

just one basket is risky and vulnerable to economic downturns and market fluctuations. By embracing a diversified approach to energy investment, we can create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and safeguard our environment for future generations – without destroying the coal communities.

3. A significant number of veterans reside in rural areas, far from accessible healthcare facilities. Ensuring access to essential services for these veterans is a high priority, that means that transportation options for health checkups be maintained – particularly in areas where clinics are scarce. Additionally, the utilization of teleconferencing for mental health consultations remains a cornerstone of veteran care services. To uphold accountability and enhance patient care, ongoing patient surveys and an emphasis on follow-up after appointments is necessary. These are just a few straightforward solutions that will help ensure that our veterans receive the quality care they deserve.

4. We must ensure a pay increase for our wildland firefighters. A bill proposed enjoys bipartisan support but faces scrutiny in the 2024-2025 budget. Every

summer, a significant impact of wildfires, leads to hazardous air conditions. The need to advocate for these essential emergency workers, among the lowest paid, despite their crucial role in protecting our land resources. The average pay for wildland firefighters is less than twenty dollars per hour, for such an important and dangerous service. Securing improved funding in the budget is essential, rather than relying on temporary line-item earmarked solutions.

5. My past career in hospital settings on reservations, I witnessed a concerning trend; the utilization of lower quality prescription products compared to other public health facilities. It is time to end the government's neglect of tribal communities, and demand proactive engagement and resource allocation. Montana is home to seven reservations, with distinct issues in mental health and addiction. I know my ties with tribal communities make me the right person for the job. Drawing upon my experience working with the IHS, I am committed to bringing my expertise to Washington to advocate and address these critical healthcare needs.



✓ Proven Integrity ✓ Patriot ✓ Principled ✓ Problem-Solver

SUZZANN NORDWICK

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
DISTRICT 3

"Head for details – Heart for consumers" – Ready to work for you!

A Montana Tech Engineer with 30-years of experience, **Suzzann Nordwick** will insist that:

- Utilities fully pay for their bad business decisions – not you.
- Montana is energy independent with a Montana first use policy.
- Montana provides a safe, clean and healthful environment.
- Utilities provide the utmost service reliability and customer care.

paid for by NORDWICK FOR MONTANA PO BOX 721 BUTTE MT 59703

MICHAEL HUMMERT

U.S. SENATE
VOTE

WHY WE NEED TO SEND JON TESTER HOME!

I'm not a partisan person nor a practiced liar. It is time to come to the center and move our country forward. Trump may become the President and Tester has proven he can't work with him; another four years will be wasted. Jon voted no to a balanced budget amendment in 2011. Yes, to every spending bill for war and death. Fought closing the Southern border during the Trump administration and left it wide-open during the Biden administration, what are we to think? He has no plan to save Social Security and Medicare that will be broke soon. He has indebted our nation \$35 Trillion and enslaved our future generations, crushing their opportunities. Generated the silent tax of inflation that will never go away.

How many bad decision and lies would you tolerate from an employee before you dismiss him? There's many more but I think this is enough. Both sides need to come together. Pick up a Democrat ballot and make sure the June 4th primary is Jon Tester's last election by voting for Michel Hummert. Go to mikeformt.com. You don't have to guess what I think and why, I tell you in plain English. Have the courage to question what you believe and why!

Paid for by Michael Hummert for U.S. Senate

Troy Downing – R



Age: 57

Home: Helena

Family: Troy and his wife Heather have four grown children

Occupation: Montana Commissioner of

Securities and Insurance

Education: New York University

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

1. Protection of property rights is paramount to me in any debate around ESA. The federal government is already too intrusive, and any further actions infringe on Montanans' freedoms. Any conversation about conservation must balance our state's energy needs, the interests of hunters, anglers, ranchers, farmers, and natural resource producers. The federal government must apply science when putting something on or taking something off of the endangered species list. Once we get to the target population, we need to re-evaluate. If a species is no longer in danger, we need to remove these restrictions. A prime example of not using science to delist is the increased negative encounters of humans and grizzly bears we are seeing in and around Montana.

2. Montana is an energy and natural resource state. We need to continue to develop and unleash the full potential of our natural resources such as coal, oil, and natural gas to provide reliable and sustainable energy for Montana families. Montana should continue to be a net energy exporter. The unintended consequences of stifling our energy sector is to harm those most vulnerable. Montana families depend on heat and transportation. Affordable energy is paramount and pricing the vulnerable out of these basics can and should be avoided. Energy independence is also a National Security issue. Two high priorities for me are energy security and food security. We produce both in Montana. Additionally, the Montana energy sector creates high-paying jobs. In terms of alternatives, we should always promote innovation, but allow the markets to decide. Traditional energy will continue to drive our economy, heat our homes, and fuel our cars.

3. Montana's Veterans deserve the best care possible. As a fellow veteran, I always stand up for agency accountability and will work to fight the bureaucracy that it has become. These brave men and women who stepped up to serve deserve the best quality care, the most options, and the transparency demanded.

4. We must actively protect our wildlands from fire by being willing to implement strategic logging operations that are proven to lower the chances and severity of wildland fires. Secondly, to help pay the men and women who do need to be on the ground when the fires arise, I am open to closely looking at how the federal government can reallocate funds from non-essential government programs and work to implement cost-saving measures within existing agencies as well as explore public-private partnerships to support firefighting efforts.

5. Our U.S. Southern Border is wide open, and as a result, drugs continue to pour into our country and are harming these tribal communities. Fentanyl deaths continue to rise. This crisis is preventable, but Joe Biden refuses to close our border. This is my top priority when I am elected. I have been proud of the work that my current office has done with our tribal communities and will continue that work when in congress.



John B Driscoll – D



Age: 77

Home: 30 S. Davis St., Helena, MT 59601

Family: Wife, Kathryn; four children and six grandchildren

Occupation: Retired

Education: Sacred Heart Grade School, Miles City; Hamilton High School, Hamilton; BA-Gonzaga University, Spokane; MIA-Columbia University School of International Affairs, New York, New York; Certificate, Columbia University Latin American Institute, New York, New York; MPA-Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, Massachusetts; MBA-University of Montana, Graduate School of Business, Missoula

Contact information for voters: driscolljohn37@gmail.com

1. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) keeps alive critters that serve as canaries in our collective coal mine. Since grizzlies, wolves, sage grouse and such don't get a vote, I'll serve as their Congress Person, all the time assuming that federal and state wildlife managers are making good faith efforts to have dialogue with each other, concerning essential habitat.

2. Federal investment in all forms of distributed renewable energy generation and storage needs encouragement. To make our electricity system operate at maximum reliability and lowest cost requires a "spinning reserve." This is quickly addable generating capacity for following additional electricity loads as day turns to night, summer turns to winter, rains turns to drought, and winds turn to calms. Spinning reserve provided by fossil-fueled plants must be phased out and replaced where appropriate with spinning reserve from modular nuclear plants installed using the Nuclear Power Advancement Act.

3. I feel fortunate to have the Veteran's Administration as my primary source of health care and was never impressed by ungrateful whiners during my time in military service. By the same token I've learned to keep a watchful eye out for the quiet folks who rarely complain or usually place others' needs before their own. I am thankful for all that I've been given by this country in return for my military service, and when I hear a complaint I'll consider the source before making maximum effort to correct the problem.

4. I will support a special base rate and premium pay for wild land firefighters, because we need the seasoned ones for longer and we need to recruit more new ones of good quality. They have to be paid a competitive wage for obvious reasons. The 5-year average annual cost of wild land firefighting for the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior has risen to \$3 billion from the 10 year average cost of \$2.5 billion. The money will have to come from a fire protection fee on stumpage, ground leases and recreational users of forests.

5. Indian Health Service hospitals, clinics and stations, and urban clinics, must attract and retain doctors while increasing cultural sensitivity training. These services, including transportation to specialty care in urban areas, need five times their current level of funding. Recent removal of over 129,000 Montanans from Medicaid has disproportionately impacted the health of poor Native Americans. Today's native

leaders are bringing nutritional indigenous foods back into Native American diets to address food deserts, substance abuse, and heart disease and diabetes. Suicide prevention remains the responsibility of all communities.



Steve Held – D

Age: 63

Home: Broadus

Family: Married with two children

Occupation: Fourth generation rancher and businessman



Education: Rocky Mountain College and San Diego State for undergrad. American Conservatory Theater for graduate school.

Contact information for voters: www.MontanaHeld.org; Mailing: PO Box 3, Broadus, MT 59317; Email: info@montanaheld.org

1. Federal agencies need to do a better job of customer service across the board. As someone running a business, that's common-sense. It's hard to understand decisions when no one answers the phone. Let's get back to serving people, not just special interests. No one wants to see wildlife go extinct – work with states to get ahead of a listing, and return management back when they've recovered. I'm a defender of the North American Wildlife Management Model. State management agencies are on the ground, familiar with communities, and understand the dynamics of balancing management with those who work the land.

2. We have a unique opportunity to rapidly advance energy freedom. By producing our own energy, we break free from the out-of-state corporate utilities who are jacking up our rates to maximize profits for shareholders and Wall Street freeloaders. We can also transition outdated energy production to new and more reliable sources that will create good-paying jobs. One of my top priorities would be supporting the community of Colstrip and advocating for a successful transition to other energy generation opportunities such as nuclear energy. I'm also not about to let this district become a dumping ground for waste and pollution.

3. We must do better to provide for our veterans and their families – true heroes

– after they serve our nation, bottom line. I was disgusted when one of our own celebrated after denying needed health coverage to veterans who are sick and suffering from chemical exposure. Congress has the authority and responsibility to hold VA leaders accountable, starting at the top. I would work with Sen. Tester to conduct reviews, audits, investigate, and hold officials accountable when they fail our veterans. I would also institute a direct line to my office for veterans to report any problems with the VA.

4. Living in next year county means the next devastating wildland fire could be right around the corner, and it's becoming more frequent with warmer temperatures. Firefighters need to be justly compensated for the life-risking work they do protecting all of us. When firefighters make less than what most fast food joints pay, workforce shortages are inevitable, which puts us all at risk and shifts costs on to local taxpayers. We need to treat the job with the dignity and respect it deserves by justly compensating our wildland firefighters. Congress should immediately pass the paid-for bipartisan Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act.

5. I promise to be a partner to our tribal nations, communities, and all Native Americans. A top priority of mine would be to address the inequities Native Americans face, particularly healthcare coverage and outcomes. I'm committed to ending the missing and murdered indigenous women epidemic ravaging and destroying Native families and communities. Over 132,000 Montanans, including Native Americans and kids, got kicked off of Medicaid-supported healthcare coverage. That's idiotic, insulting, and harmful. It hurts rural providers the worst and will be another tax on working families and seniors by raising healthcare prices for the rest of us.



Ric Holden – R



Home: PO Box 792,
Glendive, MT 59330

1. My family has had a long history of cooperation with the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks department. In 1991 we were one of the first ranches that participated in the Block Management Program. Through this program we have

allowed free public access to hunt and fish on our ranch along the Yellowstone River. The state FW&P's mission is to provide for the stewardship of fish, wildlife, parks, and recreational resources of Montana. We must also contribute to the quality of life for future generations. State FWP by virtue of their responsibilities and expertise, is the essential agency to preserve threatened and endangered species. I think that the state agencies must be given the opportunity to provide input prior to submission of updated federal policies. Given my background of working with the departments both as a State Senator and a landowner, I believe that reasonable solutions can be attained to balance endangered species and individual property rights. The main point is that you must be able to sit down and talk about these solutions. I have real life experience with this subject as an active participant in the ESA debate.

2. Years ago, I would have been more inclined to support federal subsidies for wind and solar energy to bring on more sources of electrical generation. In the last two years the poor results of these sources to produce electricity have become clear here in Montana. I love the wide-open spaces of the Montana skyline and we expect a minimal impact on the footprint to our state for electrical generation. We know now that hailstorms destroy solar panels, and the wind turbines don't turn when it is below zero. Hundreds of miles of wind turbines are more than I care to see. We need to get back to what we have in eastern Montana, and that is coal, oil, and natural gas. Those are the reliable resources that will provide our most reliable power generation here in Montana with the smallest footprint on the landscape. In 1990, geologist reported that "Even at current mining levels, Montana's coal reserves will last more than 2,000 years". We need to change direction and start supporting responsible development of coal, oil and natural gas.

3. I have a long legislative pro-veteran voting record with the Veterans in our state. In the early 1990's I was part of the community effort that lobbied to bring the Eastern Montana Vets Home to Glendive to serve the far eastern part of our state. Then as a senator, I met with Governor Raticot to get it opened a year earlier than expected. We then pushed through the siting of the veteran's cemetery in Miles City. As vice chairman of the senate

transportation committee, I supported letting the veterans have their own vehicle license plates. Over the course of my senate tenure, I voted for many tax, fees and licensing reductions for the veterans. My interest in serving the country goes clear back to my time in the US Air Force in the Reserved Officer Training Corps. The health of our veterans is my top priority. The VA needs to offer timely, quality services for Veterans through care and respect for one's physical, psychological and spiritual health. I am committed to seeing to it that the VA delivers top-quality services to our Veterans. A staffer will be dedicated to Veterans issues in my office.

4. I realize that without a strong federal firefighting workforce, the U.S is less prepared to battle wildfires, putting people, infrastructure, and natural resources at risk. Federal agencies also stand to lose the institutional knowledge and leadership critical to training the next generation of firefighters. The easy answer is to give the firefighters a raise. The reality is our country is broke with a 34 trillion dollar debt and a dollar that has lost its purchasing power. As of March 23, 2024, the average hourly pay for a Wildland Firefighter in Montana is \$14.69 an hour. You can make more than that at McDonald's serving hamburgers. Obviously, some wage parity is in order. In the wildland firefighting world right now, Congress's budget dysfunctions are a big distraction for firefighters. We are straining the limits of our firefighters because Congress is allowing good forestry practices including logging, to be replaced by extreme environmental lobbyists that prefer "let it burn policies". I will support the firefighters and the taxpayers. My thought would be that if we restart our federal forestry conservation plans that include logging, then we can use federal timber sale money to pay for wage hikes.

5. Native Americans endure a legacy of healthcare disparities, leading to disproportionate diseased rates. People living on the remote reservations of Montana rely on Indian Health Service clinics for medical care. The clinic focusses on health care crises rather than preventive care. Transportation is an impediment to healthcare because of the long distances to clinics. Here are some items that I think can be done more often within the tribal communities. A. Health screenings for diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer. B. education classes on healthy nutrition and diabetes prevention, C. Immunizations,

pre-and post-natal care, and parenting classes. D. Health visits with those who are homebound. Coronary artery disease affects native population in disparate ways, largely driven by higher rates of diabetes. Currently, tribal members must travel to receive weekly dialyses treatments. It would be more cost-effective to have a machine set up in a local tribal clinic and have the specialist travel to the reservation to administer the care. This would save money for everyone involved.



Joel Krautter – R

Age: 36

Home: Billings

Occupation: Attorney and small business owner

Education: Liberty University (B.S. Govt.), University of Montana



School of Law (J.D.)

Contact information for voters:

website www.joelformontana.com; email: joel@joelformontana.com; Social Media: www.facebook.com/joelformontana

1. Too often the Endangered Species Act is enforced and managed at the federal level, telling states what to do. We need to flip that approach to make sure that credible data and reliable science, from state and local officials, together with public input is informing the decisions being made.

2. As a former state representative of the largest oil and gas producing county in Montana, Richland County, I understand the importance of fossil fuel energy, now and into the future for our state. In recent years, Montana has also become an emerging leader in Montana-made renewable energy, embracing wind and solar technologies, along with hydro-electric power generation. In the future, Montana needs to embrace hydrogen and industrial energy storage solutions, as well as innovations in hydro-electric power generation.

3. The federal government must keep their promises to veterans and their families. More work needs to be done to improve the quality of care veterans receive and to reduce wait-times for veterans trying to access care. Veterans must have access to the most modern healthcare solutions available and they shouldn't have to travel

hundreds of miles to access care.

When elected, I intend to serve on the Veterans Affairs Committee and be active on the oversight committee, with jurisdiction over the department of Veterans Affairs. In this role, I will be a staunch advocate for Montana veterans and their families.

4. The men and women who put their lives in danger as wildland firefighters to protect us from wildfires deserve to be paid fairly and in a timely manner, that appreciates the risks associated with this profession. Unions representing these people have a right through collective bargaining to negotiate what the compensation and hazard pay should look like and that should not be impeded by any agency. Paying for the services of hardworking wildland firefighters is a net-positive and a good investment in our economy, in that their skills, knowledge and dedication have the effect of mitigating devastating economic losses.

5. The Indian Health Service (IHS) is woefully inadequate, with a failed system that leaves well-meaning healthcare providers and the people they serve in an impossible position. I believe we need to rebuild the IHS with a focus on innovation and modernization of services, based upon local needs, local knowledge and local cultures. We must improve the manner in which healthcare is provided in these areas of Montana, relying on local solutions that are culturally aware and fully funded at the federal level. The federal government must keep the promises that were made to Native Americans over a century ago.



Stacy Zinn – R



Age: 57

Home: Billings

Family: Yes

Occupation: Retired from the Drug Enforcement Administration

Education: Bachelor's and Master's Degree

Contact information for voters:

ZinnforMT.gov; @ZinnforMT; FB: StacyZinnforCongress

1. I served in the DEA as a Special Agent

for almost 23 years and built relationships across the state with local enforcement and other federal agencies. I would have been embarrassed to have asked Congressman Rosendale to help settle our differences with other entities when they occurred. However, if there is a problem that can not be resolved and it got to my level, I would ask the U.S. Attorney's Office to host a sit down meeting with all concern parties to discuss disagreements and iron out solutions. Based on experience, high ranking officials' presence at the meeting stifles honest conversation so I would have to relay on those in leadership position to be the adults in the room in order to accomplish the overall goal of working together.

2. Investments should be made to stabilize the market across the board. Tipping the scales to meet an ideological agenda is not cost effective nor is it smart. A balance is needed in order to serve the people and implement new energy sources at a pace development can take place without disrupting the overall production of energy. Coal-fired power plants need to be preserved while nuclear power production needs to be implemented.

3. More primary care doctors, PAs and NPs are needed. The ratio of one provider to many patients is not sustainable. This leads to burn-out and missed issues. Next, an urgent care facility staffed with providers is needed. This would save money in the long run. Hire more psychologist specializing in combat veteran care and look at paying a comparable rate for specialty providers in order to keep them in Montana.

4. I would support the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act (S.2272). As written, the bill makes 2022 pay raises permanent by creating a special pay rate for federal firefighters – based on percentage increases to each level of the General Schedule – and provides a new pay supplement to compensate firefighters for every day they are deployed to combat a wildfire. The funding mechanism for these new salaries would come from the money given to the UN, WHO and the NGOs. It is time to invest in our American workers rather than fund organizations that are out to cripple us.

5. I would support additional educational programs for those still living on the reservations. Heart disease due to unhealthy life styles is preventable. Health issues are also the result of illegal drug

use. In order to curb drug use seen on all of the Montana reservations, I would encourage doubling BIA's footprint on the reservations in order to provide better law & order against those trafficking drugs within these communities.

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. I work hard in my courtroom to be certain that everybody is treated with respect, in a manner that is impartial from any political or personal preference. I apply the law fairly and according the letter of the law, not embracing any political or social doctrine. The 1972 Montana Constitution, the United States Constitution and established precedent and statutes are my only guides. I do not engage in any political party activities or events. My opponent regularly attends partisan political party events, including giving speeches which creates the appearance of soliciting political endorsements. I am not politician.

2. I am not a politician, and I do not participate in political or partisan events or engagements. As a District Judge and as a candidate for the Montana Supreme Court, it is important that all litigants – regardless of gender, social status, wealth or legal status – know I will treat them fairly, impartially, and according to the law. For this reason, I avoid doing anything that conflicts, or creates the appearance of conflicting, with that policy.

3. As an ex-officio member of the Montana Justice Foundation, I am committed to its mission of achieving equal access to justice for all Montanans through effective funding and leadership.

It is not every day that a citizen is involved in the judicial branch of government and our courts. When litigants come before the court, it is important that they have access to free or affordable legal counsel, forms, and information regarding the courts. They must be given respect by the Judge and all employees and representatives of the courts. I am an advocate of increased funding for Montana Legal Service, public defenders, and Montana's judicial branch.



Jerry O'Neil

Age: 80

Home: For the last 20+ years I have lived at 985 Walsh Road, Columbia Falls, Montana 59912

Family: Pauline, the mother of my five children, and grandmother of my 14

grandchildren died from lung cancer, as well as my wife Jeanne

Occupation: I am a non-Indian, who has been licensed 40 years, since 1984, as an Advocate and Counselor with the Blackfeet Tribal Court System. Off-reservation I have worked as an Independent Paralegal.

Education: When I was a teenager, I attended both Montana State University and the University of Montana. Later, in the 1970s, I received an AA degree in math and computers from the Flathead Valley Community College.

Contact information for voters: Jerry O'Neil for Montana Supreme Court, 985 Walsh Road, Columbia Falls, MT 59912, JerryONEil5@gmail.com; JerryONEil.com; 406-250-2503

1. I am the only candidate in the race for the Montana Supreme Court who doesn't believe it is acceptable, or Constitutional, to limit the public's choice of candidates to members of the Montana Bar Association, a closed fraternity.

According to Seattle University School of Law Dean Anthony E. Varona: "When it comes to assessing lawyer competence, we saw again and again and again in our research conclusive evidence that the existing bar exam is far from a foolproof or even reliable measure of competence; and, to the detriment of both candidates and the profession, it replicates and

perpetuates bias.”

2. I would strive to uphold the legacy of retiring Justice Dirk Sandefur, and point out when the Court is legislating from the bench as he did in the recent case of the Democratic Party v. Christi Jacobsen, Montana Secretary of State. If I believe a statute before the Court is legal, but wrong, I will say that, and hope the Legislature will change it. As a Justice of the Court, it will not be my right or place to change the laws to reflect my political philosophy.

3. One of several ways I would make the Court more accessible and understandable, would be to uphold MCA, § 25-31-601 which states: “Who may act as attorney. (1) Parties in justice’s court may appear and act in person or by attorney—(2) Any person, except the constable by whom the summons or jury process was served, may act as attorney for a party.” I would give support for the people of Montana to use this statute to allow them the right of privacy to associate with non-attorneys to help them in our Justice Courts.



Dan Wilson

Age: 59

Home: Kalispell

Family: Married 27 years to wife, Tia; daughter attending UM

Occupation: District Court Judge

Education: B.A., Penn State, 1987; J.D., cum laude, University of Minnesota, 1993

Contact information for voters: info@wilsonforjustice.com

1. My judicial philosophy is simple: interpret and apply the provisions of the United States and Montana Constitutions and all laws according to their original intent and plain meaning, and do not follow the views of special interests or personal views to determine the outcome of any case. Respect the rule of law, including the law of precedent, and do not legislate from the bench.

Further, I believe judicial candidates should state their judicial philosophy for themselves. That said, I have not spoken to my opponent about her judicial philosophy,

and she has not asked me about mine.

2. I would maintain an independent judiciary by adhering to the traditions and standards established by generations of judges before me, including the faithful application of the law and legal precedent to all cases, respecting the proper role of all branches and institutions of government, and by seeking to maintain stability and predictability in the law. To preserve the nonpartisan nature of the election, I will abide by the tradition of nonpartisan races – as I have in past elections – by running on my record and my experience.

3. I would have more oral arguments in cases before the Supreme Court. Rather than holding several each year, I would urge my colleagues to conduct several each month. Oral arguments are public hearings during which the Justices and the parties engage in open discussion about the legal issues in a case, and I believe these hearings would provide the best opportunity for Montanans to see and understand how the members of the Supreme Court work through and resolve the many complex and difficult legal issues that confront them.

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE-CHIEF JUSTICE

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



VOTE KYLE AUSTIN FOR CONGRESS

United we stand United we can!

HEALTHCARE – As a Pharmacist for over 15 years I have the experience necessary to fix our healthcare system for Montana.

AGRICULTURE – Born & raised on my Grandfather’s farm & later owning & operating a farm of my own. I have the experience to support our Montana farmers and ranchers.

BUSINESS OWNER – As a small business owner, I understand the struggles & challenges. I understand why we need less government oversight.

Learn more at: austin4mt.com

Paid for by Austin4Congress; Republican

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.



Cory Swanson



Age: 47

Home: Townsend

Family: Married to Julie, children Caleb and Claire

Occupation: Broadwater County Attorney and Colonel in the Montana

Army National Guard

Education: BA in Political Science from Carroll College, 2000; JD with Honors from University of Montana School of Law, 2004; Masters in Strategic Studies from U.S. Army War College, 2021.

Contact information for voters: <https://swansonforjustice.com/>

1. My judicial philosophy can best be summarized as a judicially conservative (not the same as politically conservative). I believe any court, but especially the Supreme Court, should focus on resolving each case based upon the facts and law of that case, on a narrow basis which we call a holding. The Court should respect the work of District Courts below it, and should follow its own precedent unless absolutely compelled to overrule or modify prior precedent. If the Court is asked to interpret a statute, the Court should begin with the plain text of that instrument, and should not declare a law unconstitutional based on

mere whim, dislike, or even inconsistency. In all their dealings, Justices should strive to be fair and impartial and as non-political as humanly possible.

I was surprised to see my opponent advocate a different point of view, both in public and in private. He has made statements that appear to be advocating outcomes on certain types of cases. I do not believe judges should do that. We cannot predict an outcome on a case that may not yet exist, and which has not been briefed to us.

My opponent has also been somewhat combative toward the Legislative branch. He has accused the Legislature of creating conflict with the Court, and has cast his role as one who will fight against that branch. I cannot promise to uphold every statute passed by the Legislature, in the event it is challenged. But I won't go out of my way to pick unnecessary political fights. The Court should respect its co-equal branches of government, and demand respect in return. The Court should not take a posture of fighting against the Legislature; the case law is very clear about how statutes are to be interpreted with deference.

2. I have worked from the very first day of this campaign to preserve the nonpartisan nature of this race. I have gone to political gatherings of both parties, and I have spoken to opponents and supporters across the political spectrum. In every instance, I have resisted partisan labels and have advocated for a fair and impartial judiciary. We don't want a conservative or liberal, Republican or Democrat court. We want a court that treats every litigant fairly, and every case stands or falls on its own merits.

Judicial independence is guaranteed by the Montana Constitution. The power to maintain it lies within the hands of the judges, and no one else. Judges and Justices must ensure they evaluate every case based upon the law and facts of that case, not based upon who supports or opposes a particular outcome. I will strive to maintain judicial independence the same way I have each day of the race—I tell voters they are not voting for a particular outcome on any case or any policy issue. They are voting for my mind and my commitment to a fair and impartial Court. If elected, I will strive to carry that out each and every day.

3. I do think this is an important objective for the Court. Part of the recent political turmoil about the Court is that very few people understand how it works and how it reaches decisions. We need to increase visibility among the attorneys and the

general public.

I would first recommend more oral arguments so more cases can be decided in a more public manner, and anyone who is interested can listen or attend. If we can obtain the resources, I would also advocate more accessible viewing options, such as video or audio streaming. As Chief Justice, I would also plan a speaker's program in communities across the State, including in schools, to raise awareness of the court and the practice of law. And I would emphasize community relations and intergovernmental relations. The more the Legislature understands the Court, the more lawmakers may appreciate our nuances or quirks that today seem to unnecessarily inflame political passions.

CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT

Bowen Greenwood — R



Age: 52

Home: East Helena

Family: Fourth generation Montanan, single, one sister, mother and father deceased.

Occupation: Clerk of the Montana Supreme Court

Education: Graduated from Billings West High School in 1990. BA from Georgetown University in 1994.

Contact information for voters: www.GreenwoodForMontana.com, bowen@greenwoodformontana.com

1. This question is factually incorrect. This office is not nonpartisan, and for good reason. As Clerk of the Montana Supreme Court, I've operated the office under budget every year. I stand up for change on the court. I fight for the court to treat all cases equally according to the rules, instead of elevating some above others. That's what makes me the conservative choice for Clerk of the Montana Supreme Court. I'm delighted and honored to be a Republican.

2. As Clerk, I began the practice of emailing every single opinion the court issues out to every Montanan who wants them. I also began the practice of listing high profile cases on courts.mt.gov/clerk. Montanans don't always know docket numbers, party names, or attorney names, which makes it hard to search court cases. Listing all the cases in the news makes it easier for the

people of Montana to find the cases they care about. I would like to see the Court itself improve transparency as well, so the people can see what their court is doing.

HOUSE DISTRICT 20

Rina Fontana Moore — D



Age: 60

Home: 200 13th St. N., Great Falls, MT 59401

Family: Married, three children and three grandchildren

Occupation: Professional Land Surveyor, Licensed Appraiser and Credentialed Home Inspector

Education: BS Construction Technology/ Surveying

Contact information for voters: rina@fontanainc.net

1. Extending and securing the Medicaid Expansion program is one of my foremost campaign initiatives. Medicaid expansion or is a joint federal-state program that benefits the Montanans that have the least ability to obtain quality healthcare, to include children, adults, pregnant women, people with disabilities and seniors. In 2015 the Montana Legislature passed the HELP Act, which expanded Medicaid to tens of thousands of Montanans who were previously excluded. The program has been massively successful and continues to grow and provide coverage for our fellow Montanans whom otherwise cannot afford health care. In 2020 there were an estimated 87,000 individuals using the program and that number has ballooned to 125,000 in 2023. According to local health care officials Medicaid expansion has stabilized the struggling health systems in our small rural communities. Also it has allowed some of the large providers to partner with small community health centers and provide medical care for our rural residents. The Legislature adopted legislation to extend Medicaid expansion until 2025, however, the extension came along with work related restrictions and higher premiums. I will vigorously support a permanent extension of Medicare expansion and work to eliminate excessive barriers and reduce costs to the enrollees.

2. I believe the 2023 legislature failed to properly address the skyrocketing property values post COVID. The so-called property tax relief in the form of a one-

time static rebate to homeowners was a failure. Furthermore, the process to obtain the rebate was also a failure. The process required taxpayers to electronically login to a state website and apply online. Many of our seniors and low-income homeowners do not possess the knowledge or resources to complete these applications on-line. Therefore, many taxpayers that were eligible for the rebate likely did not apply and therefore did not receive the rebate benefit. That being said a more reasonable and long-term solution would have been to adjust the tax rate applied to the market value of the home. By adjusting the tax rate, the increase in market value would have been mitigated year over year rather than a one-time rebate payment. The property tax formula is quite simple; Market Value x Tax Rate x Mill Levy. The state legislature has 100% control over the Tax Rate and could have and should have reduced the tax rate. Mill Levies are set by local taxing jurisdictions and already have certain legislative caps to prevent local governments from receiving a windfall when values skyrocket.

3. It is incumbent that the legislature ensure that local governments are persuaded to not implement overly restrictive zoning requirements. Overly restrictive zoning can hinder developers from building new housing starts. These restrictions drive up rents and housing prices. Montana has traditionally not been accustomed to high density zoning, which is common in most metropolitan areas. As our cities and towns begin to grow, we as community leaders need to encourage our local leaders to be more receptive to higher density zoning classifications. The advantage of higher density zoning allows developers to spread the high cost of vacant land over a larger number of units. As a state lawmaker I am very interested in addressing escalating housing costs by reducing regulatory barriers. Measuring zoning stringency is complex, but understanding the short-and long-term impact is essential. State policymakers should be exploring ways to encourage local governments to ease zoning restrictions. Zoning regulations can either be a useful tool for orderly development or a significant barrier that limits housing supply. The challenge is balancing these regulations which is crucial for creating vibrant, affordable communities. Short term rentals are a major cause of housing shortages for families, especially low-

income families and first-time homebuyers. While I support less restrictive zoning that provides more flexibility in project development, we also have to be cognizant of the neighborhoods and the homeowners in these neighborhoods. Allowing a rash of short-term rentals in a particular neighborhood was likely not what residents intended when they purchased their home. The balance between alternative zoning for new developments is far different that altering the zoning of established neighborhoods that are already built up. I am open minded to differing schools of thought on this matter. However, short term rentals do have negative impacts on communities such as excessive noise, parking conflicts, after hours partying, and impact on affordable housing (especially in high tourism areas). While STRs contribute to local economies, its essential to weigh these benefits against their effects on housing availability. Research shows that as the number of STRs increases, the quantity of affordable housing units decreases.

4. Effective communication with voters is crucial to understanding the needs of my constituents in my House District. We have a broad based media plan to include social media, but most importantly we are going to communicate with our voters the old fashioned way, by stopping by their homes. Knocking on doors is the best and most personal way to determine what the most critical issues are facing my neighbors. My approach is to be polite, personable, open minded and positive. I approach all conversation with what I call the scholastic theory, or looking at matters from a 360 degree perspective. We will also hold listening sessions at local coffee shops in my District. Regularly attending neighborhood council meeting, city and county commission meetings and school board meeting will also broaden my perspective on the issue not only facing my district but all citizens in Great Falls and Cascade County.

5. The FWP has a daunting task as they oversee more than 600 species of birds, mammals, reptiles and fish, as well as their habitats across the state. Some of my priorities would be to protect and possibly expand the Wildlife Management Areas so as to reduce conflicts between wildlife and people. These management areas not only protect important wildlife habitat they also provide vital habitat for some of our most treasured animals in Montana to include, Grizzlies, Bighorn Sheep, Elk, Mountain

Goats, Wolves, and an array of other animals. Protecting the diversity of wildlife and landscapes is vital to preserving our Montana outdoor experience.

HOUSE DISTRICT 23

Sandor Hopkins – D

Age: 37

Home: 524 Seventh Ave. S., Great Falls, MT 59405

Family: Wife and three cats

Occupation: Project Manager, Morris Land Surveys PLLC, I work in the Planning and Land-Use Fields

Education: CMR High School–2005, Montana State University–Bozeman 2013 (Political Science, International Relations Focus)

Contact information for voters:

PO Box 632, Great Falls, MT 59403; shopkinshd23@gmail.com; 406-209-4845

1. Yes. It's not perfect, but it is an economic driver for my community, and a safety net for those in need. I would like to see broader Health Care Reform, but keeping Medicaid is a decent place to start.

2. Effective? A Sales Tax, but that's just shifting the burden from one source to another and doesn't address the underlying issue, which is taxation on those who already struggle to make ends meet. To be clear, I am not in favor of a sales tax. To me the solution is to shift the burden of taxation to large commercial and industrial corporations that invest in avoiding their taxes rather than simply paying them. Calumet in Great Falls is an excellent example of an organization that protests their taxes every year, which is used to fund the GF Public Schools. We need housing, and with the market exploding, steep residential property taxes are only going to hurt average citizens more and more.

3. I work directly with Local Regulations that are enable by Montana Code, and I think the current Montana Subdivision and Platting Act is broken and outdated. The Legislature needs to streamline the development process and reduce hurdles to municipal development. Even minor subdivisions can take up to 2 years, and the State is growing faster than we can build new housing. We need to incentivize dense urban development, rather than suburban and rural sprawl, if we want affordable

housing, improved costs of living, while preserving open spaces and rangeland. Inclusionary Zoning and affordable housing requirements for new developments are tools that Local Jurisdictions need to be able to implement to ensure their housing supply can meet the demands of modern growth. We need less NIMBY and more YIMBY. I am in favor of subsidies for affordable housing, although I don't necessarily think throwing money at the issue is the only solution when regulatory burdens can be reduced or streamlined at a minimal cost to developers and jurisdictions.

4. I am active both on social media, as well as local events. I volunteer on a local non-profit, and am active in the small-business and political community. A lot of community outreach is simply showing up.

5. I would like to facilitate the expansion of wildlife migration corridors that reduce the risk of wildlife fatalities where these corridors intersect with human transportation corridors, as well as facilitate conservations easements and public-private partnerships where private lands can be reserved for conservation in prime areas. I am committed to the preservation of our natural resources, but I also believe in the responsible management of our natural resources as a factor in economic growth and good stewardship of our public lands. Wildlife management isn't my forte, but is something that I consider with any land-use proposal I work on. I do regularly interact with Local Conservation Districts, and am on good terms with those in my area. I am not a hunter, but I have taken hunter's safety and I support organizations that advocate for responsible hunting practices and conservation, such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

HOUSE DISTRICT 79

Emily Harris – D

Age: 31

Home: Helena

Family: N/A

Occupation: Small Business Owner & Political Consultant

Education: Bachelor's from Seattle University in American Politics and Women & Gender Studies

Contact information for voters: emily@harrisforlegislature.com, 406-461-2482



1. I will enthusiastically vote in favor of continuing Medicaid expansion in Montana. Not only does Medicaid allow hundreds of thousands of Montanans security regarding their health insurance, it also provides tens of thousands of Montana kids access to pediatric care. Medicaid also ensures that rural hospitals across Montana are able to keep their doors open to provide lifesaving care.

2. The most effective way the state can lower taxes on residential property is by rebalancing the property tax system completely. We should begin by making sure corporations and businesses pay a fairer share of the property tax burden. One way to do this would be to provide a “homestead exemption” for individual property owners. This would exempt some part of the homeowner’s market value from taxation, lowering the residential property tax burden for homeowners and increasing the costs that corporations and businesses have to pay.

3. Communities across the state are experiencing a housing crisis and the homeless population of Helena, specifically, has skyrocketed in recent years. The legislature has the ability to pass legislation that creates a workforce housing tax credit to incentivize affordable housing developments (and they did, in fact, try last session). This is a great example of where subsidies are appropriate and would be put to use in an effective way. I will make it a priority in the legislature to find solutions for more affordable housing and will work with our local government here in Helena to discuss ways of housing all our neighbors.

4. I have been meeting voters where they are – this is often at their homes when I’m door knocking, via social media when they post a question, or when I run into folks around town. As their Representative, I would make sure to consistently publish editorials with updates from the Capitol, send constituent mailers with policy updates, and I will always respond to questions or comments that I receive from voters.

5. Initiatives like Habitat Montana are vital to the protection of and investment in our public lands and wildlife management. I will prioritize increased support of this initiative and vote against any attempt to overhaul money meant to invest in the program (such as SB 442 from last session).



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, they 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 our low-income children and families is a broadly supported policy to bolster our economy and reduce state expenditures over the long-term.

2. Montana families are understandably concerned about the drastic increase in their residential property taxes. However, we must recognize that property taxes are a critical source of investment in public education and many other public goods. Article VIII of the Montana Constitution diagnoses the problem and compels the solution: “The state shall appraise, assess, and equalize the valuation of all property which is to be taxed in the manner provided by law.” Our current system places an unfair burden on residential property owners. The next Legislature must ensure that we equalize residential home valuations with corporate and other business properties.

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, out of control 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 housing and incentivizing higher density housing development that meets the needs of low-income workers and young adults entering the workforce.

4. Montanans rightly expect their elected officeholders 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 responded to each and every constituent who shared their views with me and the board. I am talking with my neighbors to understand their priorities, frustrations, and values, and if elected, I will continue that dialogue in an effort to find common ground and get things done for House District 79.

5. Wildlife conservation, habitat protection, and public land access are core values of the Montana way of life. Whether hunting, fishing, or hiking, Montanans are grateful for what our state provides. Additionally, public access to the outdoors is critical to the tourism industry that supports many families. Montana FWP is tasked with managing hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in addition to our state parks. I would like to see FWP rely upon science and stakeholder input to continue restoring ecosystems and protecting native wildlife such as grizzly bears, wolves, and trout, while promoting fair chase hunting in lieu of trapping.



Jill Sark – R

Age: 61

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 and evaluate the costs; however, I will be looking for 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; and, 4) 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. Each time property taxes are increased, the voters should be provided with the cost and detailed information 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 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.

5. I fully stand behind the department’s conservation efforts especially in the areas of Aquatic Invasive Species prevention and

Chronic Wasting Disease management. A healthy and viable fishery and wildlife population is vital to our Montana values and economy.

I support the department's adaptive harvest management plan to address mule deer population decline in certain areas of the state. Also, continued support of coyote predator control projects to address the predation effect on the mule deer survival rates. These efforts will maintain a viable mule deer population which is also vital to our Montana values and economy.



Anne Woodland – D



Age: 56

Home: 916 Park Lane
Helena MT 59601

Family: Married to Eric
for 28 years, two children
ages 21 and 17

Occupation: I worked
about 25 years in Environmental
Consulting. I am not currently employed.

Education: M.S. in Ecology, B.A. in Biology

Contact information for voters:

Woodland4Montana@gmail.com;
Website—www.Woodland4Montana.com;
Phone 406-285-1388

1. The data indicate that expansion results in increased utilization of health care and coverage, which are incredibly important in our rural state. It also increases revenue for the state due to federal fund matching for Medicaid enrollees, so to that extent, I would support expansion in the future. I also support transparency in the administration of the program, and a review of existing subscribers to ensure that people getting benefits meet those criteria. With over 300,000 people on Medicaid in 2023 and the first formal review of eligibility since COVID-19 began, some reduction of subscribers is to be expected.

2. Property taxes are necessarily high in Montana because we are one of a handful of states that do not have a statewide sales tax. (We do have “resort tax” in a few areas of the state.) Most states rely heavily on sales tax, which is shared across all consumers, as opposed to property tax which is only levied on property owners. We are leaving a lot of revenue on the

table by not having a statewide sales tax that would be collected on not only our **1.1** million residents but also our 12 million nonresident visitors.

3. We cannot control the price of housing in Montana. However, we can work to ensure that our low wages are keeping up with other states, so that our residents have a higher paycheck. We can also work to either: 1) limit the number of short-term vacation rentals that are taking away from the available long-term rentals, or 2) add a tax on the short-term rentals that would go towards a housing trust fund designated for low-income renters. This tax would be in addition to the Lodging Facility Sales and Use Tax that is already collected on short-term rentals.

4. I have spoken to many people while knocking on doors this spring and in so doing, I have learned about a variety of issues that are important to them. I want the voters in my district to email or call me as needed to keep me informed of their issues. I will commit to responding to their communications in a timely manner.

5. I have a tremendous respect for FWP. They have a very difficult job of managing the widely ranging interests and opinions that we all have about our state's wildlife. For example, our residents are very

passionate about wolves and bears, and FWP can't really make everyone happy with their policies. That said, I think they need to focus on the management of wildlife that move in and out of both Glacier National Park and Yellowstone National Park, to ensure that an adequate buffer zone exists between the parks and the nearest hunting district.

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

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

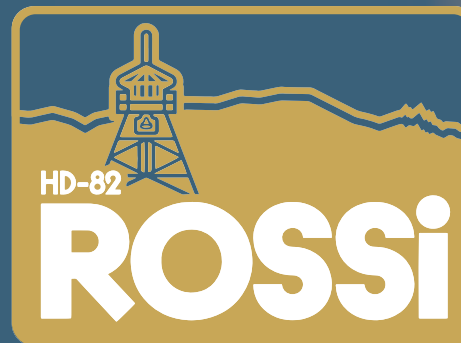
EXPERIENCE MATTERS

My professional life has been entirely committed to bettering the lives of Montanans. In our current political climate, where thousands of bills are moving through the legislature that could help or harm workers, the public education system, public lands, LGBTQ+ people, and our constitutional rights, we need experienced advocates in the building who have a proven record of getting things done.

15 YEARS OF ADVOCACY AND POLICY EXPERIENCE

I AM HONORED TO BE SUPPORTED by people who know my work and who I have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with in the state legislature and in our communities to pass good legislation and stop bad bills.

- Raph Graybill
- Denise Juneau
- Tara Veazey
- Mayor Wilmot Collins
- Senator Janet Ellis
- Representative Melissa Romano
- Representative Laura Smith
- Representative Jill Cohenour
- Commissioner Melinda Reed
- Christine Kaufmann + Pat Kemp
- Rob Farris-Olsen
- Jenny Eck
- Linda Carlson
- Charlie Crawford + Chelsia Rice
- Lauren Caldwell
- Jacob Kuntz + Jessica Stewart-Kuntz
- Rylee Sommers-Flanagan
- Shawn Reagor
- Kev Hamm
- Dayna Swanson
- Jenifer Gursky
- Kendra + Drew Miller
- Neal Ullman
- Jake Brown
- Derf Johnson
- Madalyn Quinlan



Paid for by SK Rossi for HD82 • Treasurer Raph Graybill, Democrat
Post Office Box 71 • Helena, Montana 59624

“SK Rossi has a proven record of stopping bad legislation and passing bills that improve the lives of Montanans. In a time where educators, librarians, and working Montanans are under attack, we need experienced advocates in the legislature now more than ever. Rossi has my full support.”

— REPRESENTATIVE MELISSA ROMANO, 2018 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

JOIN US! SKROSSIFORHD82.COM



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 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.

5. I want to discuss our past reintroduction of the wolf population in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. This move has had a positive impact on the ecosystem and wildlife in Yellowstone National Park over the years, which is both rare and wonderful! However, the livestock on surrounding land continues to suffer, causing serious harm to ranches and small farms.



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 vote to continue Medicaid expansion past 2025. Sky-high medical bills are crushing families in Montana's middle class, and healthcare is becoming more and more inaccessible. Expanding Medicaid helps ensure that more people, specifically children, have access to vital medical services. We must prevent individuals from being kicked off Medicaid to ensure stable coverage for some of our most vulnerable populations.

2. I understand the significant burden that rising residential property taxes place on Montanans, particularly on fixed-income families and seniors.

Our current property tax system is regressive, with working families spending a larger percentage of their income on property taxes than most. I would work to shift the burden of property taxes away from residential homeowners by increasing the percentage of property taxing coming from other classifications of property. The money working families save on property taxes will be put back into the local economy to benefit all Montanans.

Everyone should pay their fair share to live in the state we love!

3. Future generations of Montanans need to be able to afford to buy a home in our state. I will fight for affordable housing and to incentivize the development of affordable housing by implementing zoning reforms, working to reduce land value taxes, and making housing subsidies more accessible to Montanans who need them most. Secondly, Montana is facing a housing affordability crisis, with many families struggling to find safe and affordable housing options. To address this issue, I advocate for legislation that incentivizes the construction of affordable housing units, protects tenants' rights, and provides assistance to low-income families facing housing insecurity. Additionally, I support initiatives to address homelessness by investing in supportive housing programs

and expanding access to mental health and substance abuse services.

4. As a lifelong resident of Helena, my commitment to representing HD 80 stems from a desire to give back to the community who has raised me. With a career in public service, I've honed problem-solving skills and fostered collaboration. Specifically, my work in education, both in the classroom and beyond, has equipped me to understand the needs of our community.

I've listened to concerns and addressed challenges firsthand. Since being elected, I've worked to have an open dialogue and stay connected with voters, ensuring their voices are heard, and prioritizing the issues that matter.

5. I am an avid user of our public lands and I strongly believe a clean and healthy environment is a huge part of what makes Montana the state it is.

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks must prioritize conservation, access, and environmental protections to ensure everyone is able to hunt, fish, hike, and more. This means responsible wildlife management practices that prioritize the well-being of species and their ecosystems. This involves implementing science-based approaches to population monitoring, ensuring that hunting and fishing regulations are sustainable and using methods of wildlife management like habitat restoration, fencing, and educational outreach.

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.

5. The Executive needs to have compassion for the state employees who work at FWP, listen to them, and manage based on science not politics. Transparency, to clear up seemingly misplaced hatred for FWP.

Prioritization by FWP of Montana resident sportsmen and women and not outfitters and their clients. It would be beneficial to form committees and councils of Montana sportsmen and women as a priority for membership rather than load committees with outfitters and outfitting landowners. And last, the current system of non-resident licenses needs to be fixed.

This is a fairness issue. We need to make sure that those who work hard to pay their mortgage are the ones who benefit from a tax-break. Not people with second homes or the millionaires who are snapping up property and driving the housing crisis.

Our proposals would make sure that the benefits of property tax relief get to the folks who need it most, and will even make it to renters—who have seen the effects of property tax increases through higher rents.

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.

5. My priorities for wildlife management center on conservation practices that ensure the health of our ecosystems while respecting the rights of property owners and supporting our state's outdoor heritage. This includes promoting responsible wildlife management strategies that balance species preservation with the interests of agricultural and recreational stakeholders. By fostering partnerships between state agencies, landowners, and conservation groups, we can achieve sustainable outcomes that benefit our wildlife, our economy, and future generations of Montanans.

HOUSE DISTRICT 83

Wes Feist — R

Age: 39

Home: East Helena

Family: Married to a wonderful wife of eight years with two incredible boys (ages 6 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

1. It depends. In its current iteration, no. 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. The legislature could propose or support a long-term solution to balance how mills are determined and ensure that if a surplus occurs due to property tax revenue, money is returned to property owners. However, it is always best to avoid collecting more property tax revenue than necessary, which is why a reevaluation of mills should have been completed in the 2023 session. We also need to address the rate Montana second homes and short-term rental property taxes are collected. Responsible growth for all housing is needed. To stabilize housing prices, we need more inventory, which in turn reduces prices and taxes.

3. The best way to avoid increased housing costs is for the state to get out of the way. There are programs available currently to assist with down payments, housing opportunities, and property tax assistance for those in need. We do not need more programs, we need to ensure that local governments 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 and sewer grant opportunities to upgrade current and future water and sewer systems.

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 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. It isn't about just showing up to vote and remaining uninvolved. The key is involvement, 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.

5. The priority is to ensure Montanans have accessibility to Montana's public lands and waterways. Montana's constitution grants the right to hunting and fishing and should forever be enshrined. Fish, Wildlife, and Parks should continue to provide open, accessible opportunities at the lowest or non-existent fees possible for Montanans to enjoy the outdoor splendor of our state.



Christopher St. Jean – R



Age: 49

Home: Helena, born in Florida

Family: Married, 20 years, one daughter

Occupation: Healthcare Executive

Education: MBA

Contact information for voters:

stjeanforMT83@gmail.com or 406-389-4183

1. Medicaid Expansion: I am opposed to continuing Medicaid expansion past 2025. I believe in finding more sustainable, market-driven solutions to healthcare that reduce dependency on government programs, focusing instead on lowering costs and improving quality through competition and innovation.

2. Reducing Property Taxes: To reduce property taxes, the state should reassess the property tax system, enhance homestead exemptions, and implement caps on rate increases to protect homeowners from abrupt tax hikes.

3. Affordable Housing: The state can promote housing affordability by incentivizing new developments and streamlining zoning laws. While subsidies can play a role, they should be carefully targeted to avoid long-term dependency and ensure efficient use of resources.

4. Communicating with Voters: My best ability is availability. I encourage constituents to reach out directly via call or email for discussions on any state-level issues. I am committed to maintaining open lines of communication and responding promptly to ensure that I am truly representing their interests.

5. Wildlife Management Priorities: My priorities for wildlife management emphasize supporting hunting and recreational sports, which are vital to our local culture and economy. I advocate for robust wildlife populations that sustain responsible hunting and fishing practices. Additionally, I support the timber and logging industries, ensuring they can operate sustainably while contributing to our economy. Effective management will balance these activities with conservation efforts, ensuring long-term health and accessibility of our natural resources.

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.

5. While I am not on the House FWP committee, I do receive communications regarding delisting grizzly bears and allowing farmers/ranchers/landowners (rural and urban interface) the ability to protect their livestock and lives. We've heard and supported numerous bills during my terms in the House Agriculture committee.

SENATE DISTRICT 35

Ray Shaw – R

Age: 78

Home: 251 Bivens Creek Rd, Sheridan MT 59749

Family: Single

Occupation: Rancher

Education: Some College



Contact information for voters:

shaw@3rivers.net and 406-596-5039

1. The program provides healthcare coverage to over 1,100 of our low-income working neighbors in Beaverhead and Madison Counties. These counties received Millions of new money each year. Without the enhanced payments healthcare facilities receive from this program, we could very well lose our small hospitals and clinics. Losing healthcare providers in our local communities negatively impacts us all, not just those folks on the program. I voted for the HELP Act in 2015 and believe the program should continue.

2. This is one of the most difficult questions because there is not an easy answer. Our state and local government tax system is extremely complicated, and everyone is going to have to work together to find a solution that works for the entire state. What works for our community, may not work in Rosebud County, for example. I know the increase in residential property taxes is really hitting some folks in our community hard, especially those on fixed incomes. I'm committed to going to Helena and

working with all stakeholders to come up with an effective solution.

3. Affordable housing is a huge, multifaceted issue in our community—from the housing supply shortfall to finding someplace to build affordable housing to the fact that young working families cannot afford much for housing, especially with large childcare costs and other necessities, it is a complex issue. We should allow some time to see if any of the 2023 legislation to help with affordable housing help chip away at the problem, but I am committed to working with state and local officials to pass legislation that will help address some of the problems associated with affordable housing.

4. I go visit with my voters. I like to get out in the community and talk to the folks living our communities. I talk to ranchers, business owners, healthcare workers, educators, the local governments, and folks at the grocery store. Through these conversations, I know what is important to folks in my district and can let them know what I am doing in Helena to pursue these priorities. My door is always open for anyone to contact me to discuss issues or answer questions.

5. I have been actively working with FWP for the last 2-3 years to increase wolf collaring measures because livestock predation from wolves is a huge issue in my area. I will continue to work on this issue if I am elected to the State Senate. I have also been working with Senator Daines at the federal level on grizzly bear delisting. The population of grizzly bears has increased to the level where they should be delisted so we can appropriately manage them as livestock predation from grizzly bears is also a large issue for ranchers around the state.

SENATE DISTRICT 38

Becky Beard – R



Age and home: Born in 1960, Becky Beard represents five generations of family living in Montana. Originally from Central Montana, she spent a good deal of her childhood there and in

the Missouri River Breaks country. She relocated with her family to Helena in the early 1970s, then to Elliston in 1996.

Education and occupation: BA in International Relations from Carroll College in Helena. In 1997 she founded a consulting firm, partnering with her husband, Alden, a civil engineer. She provided funding administration for rural communities constructing water and wastewater improvements across Montana. She navigated the myriad of state and federal infrastructure policies and regulations in order to promote project cost efficiencies and compliance.

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

Becky was first elected by residents of Montana’s House District 80 in 2017. In 2019, she was elected by her peers in the House as a Majority Whip, and was assigned to the House Taxation (serving as Vice-Chair), Agriculture, Education and Rules Committees. In 2021, she chaired the House Taxation Committee while retaining her previous committee assignments. She also served on the Revenue Interim Committee (RIC) as Vice-Chair in the last interim, and has chaired the Forest Lands Taxation Advisory Committee. Just ahead

of the 2023 Session, she was appointed by a dual county central committee to the recently vacated Senate District 40 seat. She is currently chair of RIC.

Now, with four Sessions behind me (2017 through 2023), my voting record is documented on the State of Montana’s Legislative website (<https://www.leg.mt.gov>). I remain committed to my campaign platform, to strengthen fiscally and socially conservative values while advocating for smaller, more accountable state government. I maintain a respectful and responsive manner of communication, conversing with peers in the legislature, with the executive branch, and most importantly, with constituents.

Because tax revenue resources are finite, I gather as much information as possible about overall demands on revenues, including income tax (I sponsored a bill last session to decrease the income tax rate from 6.5% to 5.9%). We, as your legislators, need to address pressures on skyrocketing property tax rates by examining a variety of constitutionally appropriate options to drive them down, especially on the state’s residential classification.

The RIC is looking at the drivers of

accelerating property values, primarily because the demand for limited real estate opportunities is extremely competitive. Even the Governor’s office is analyzing this with the help of a task force, and will be identifying some potential options to present to the interim committee - many of which mirror conclusions among our members.

Here in Montana, we have a multitude of needs for projects, programs and assistance. All of these require funding. Before I can commit to spending programs, including Medicaid expansion, I weigh the priorities and apply a realistic approach about what we ask our neighbors to pay for with their tax dollars.

I’ve been very lucky to have been raised here in Montana. Like many of you, I’ve seen a number of changes, especially in how we recreate outdoors. I remain an outdoor enthusiast, having spent many years playing in the gumbo of the Missouri River Breaks, and archery and rifle hunting, and fishing here in Western Montana. We learned early to respect the land, and to respect our neighbors. My one frustration is that while resource agencies sometimes try to make everyone happy, they can end up pleasing few.

Looking forward, if elected to the newly drawn Senate District 38, it will be my continued honor and privilege to serve the voters and our state. I intend to represent my 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.

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



WHAT I BELIEVE:

- ▶ Property taxes are out of control
- ▶ Montanans must have access to affordable housing
- ▶ I am 100% pro choice
- ▶ Montana’s public lands need to be protected
- ▶ LGBTQ+ rights must be ensured
- ▶ We need to fully fund our public schools

**Paid for by Pete Elverum for HD 82
Democrat - Ryan Cooney, Treasurer
P.O. Box 2033 Helena, MT 59624**



**COMMON SENSE
LEADERSHIP**

LUKE MUSZKIEWICZ
for MONTANA HD 79

“If we want to improve our politics, we must elect the right kind of people—those who put our public good ahead of personal politics. Luke is a listener. He is thoughtful. He is respectful of others while at the same time holding true to his own values. He is a consensus builder and oriented toward progress. Luke is deeply qualified and will be a great legislator.”

—Chuck Hunter
Former Democratic Minority Leader

lukeformontana.org

PAID FOR BY LUKE FOR MT HD 79 • DEMOCRAT • PO BOX 1534 • HELENA, MT 59624 • LISA CORDINGLEY, TREASURER

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.

5. The wolf population should be managed better. They are overrunning areas of the state and have decimated the deer and elk herds.



Laura Smith – D



Age: 41

Home: Helena (in Senate District 40)

Family: Married to Mac Smith. We have two young daughters and a lab, Smoochie

Occupation: Attorney and former prosecutor, current Representative for House District 79, and Vice Chair of the State Audit Committee

Education: J.D., Penn Law School; Bachelor's Degrees in Political Science and English, University of Utah

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

1. Yes. Medicaid expansion is critical to the health of Montana's businesses, hospitals, and families. The majority of individuals on Medicaid expansion work. They are your neighbors, friends, and coworkers. Medicaid expansion helps businesses keep employees healthy and maintain a reliable workforce. It keeps costs down for the rest of us, too, by addressing medical issues before they become expensive, landing a person in the ER. Without Medicaid expansion, those uncompensated medical costs result in higher health insurance and medical costs

for the community.

2. Last Legislative Session, Democrats sponsored common sense legislation to help keep property taxes reasonable for working families. These proposals were killed by the Republican supermajority. We must restore balance to Montana's property tax system. This includes ensuring that non-residential property owners pay their fair share of property taxes, including big businesses and corporations. We must also protect property tax assistance programs for individuals such as older homeowners and disabled veterans, which can help prevent individuals from losing their homes.

3. While there is no silver bullet to ensure housing is affordable overnight, state government can bolster support for programs that forge public-private partnerships, such as spurring investments in affordable housing and infrastructure so that Montana's working families have a safe and affordable place to live. We must ensure that state agencies charged with housing-related programs are fully funded and staffed so that these programs are effective and efficient for citizens. I also co-sponsored a bill last Session to increase low-interest loans for multifamily housing, which improves housing supply across the state. I will continue to champion this issue in the Senate.

4. As the current representative for House District 79 in Helena, communicating with constituents is a high priority, which is why I provide my personal contact information to folks. As a State Representative, I have worked with constituents on everything from their property tax appeals to Medicaid insurance coverage for their kids. This summer, I will host neighborhood-based "Town Halls" so that I can hear concerns and show up prepared for work on day 1 of the legislative session. And as a candidate, it's especially important to me to get out into the neighborhoods and talk one-on-one with people about their priorities.

5. State government must prioritize common sense, collaborative, and science-based solutions to increasing challenges in wildlife management, whether it's elk or Montana's fisheries. On a broader level, transparency in agency decision-making must be a priority, as well as a commitment by the agency to allow meaningful public participation, which many constituents have expressed concern about.

