



RAVALLI REPUBLIC

Missoulian

VOTER GUIDE



2024 GENERAL
ELECTION

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

LEE MONTANA

Welcome to the Lee Montana 2024 Voter Guide.

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

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

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

Mission statement

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

Who's doing the work?

Lee Montana journalists will cover the 2024 elections at both local and 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.



STOCK IMAGE

The 2024 Montana general election day is November 5.

How do we choose what to cover?

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

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

tana choices might determine national outcomes.

What won't we cover?

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

How do we minimize bias in political coverage?

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

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

How do we report on hateful rhetoric, actions?

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

How are we doing?

Let us know, and we'll respond. Want to see all our political election coverage? Follow online at missoulian.com, helenair.com, mtstandard.com, billingsgazette.com and ravallirepublic.com.

2024 General Election Voter Guide: The Questions

U.S. Senate/House

1. Montana saw soaring temperatures this summer. The climate is warmer and drier because of changes in the climate, fueling larger wildfires around the West. Montanans suffer with poor air quality and from serious heat-related illness. Farmers and ranchers are dealing with the impacts of warmer summers through changed growing seasons and challenges maintaining herd health. If elected, what policies would you support to help Montanans navigate these changes?

2. What role, if any, do you believe the federal government should play in either ensuring or limiting access to abortion? Under what circumstances do you believe abortion should be legal?

3. What spending reductions would you propose in Congress to address the national debt?

4. Affording a home, either renting or buying, has become out of reach for an increasing number of Montanans. What would you do at the federal level to ensure people can find a place to live that fits within their budget?

5. Do you support the U.S. sending aid to Ukraine and Israel?

Governor

1. Would you sign a bill continuing Medicaid expansion in Montana past 2025? Why or why not?

2. What more can state government do to ensure housing in Montana is affordable?

3. What is the most effective way state government can reduce property taxes on Montanans? What do you identify as the main catalyst in increased property taxes in Montana?

4. What obligation does the state have in reducing carbon emissions? How would you accomplish this? What do you interpret the state constitution's provision for clean and healthful environment to mean when it comes to crafting state energy policy?

5. Native Americans in Montana die a generation younger than their white neighbors. What will you do to improve health outcomes in tribal communities?

Attorney General

1. What are the most effective things to be done within the state of Montana to stem the fentanyl overdose crisis?

2. How much should the state be involved in litigation at the federal level that



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD FILE

The Montana State Capitol in Helena.

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 trust in our elections and relationships with local elections workers?

2. What can this office do to ease the process of registering a business in Montana?

3. Do you support open primaries in Montana?

4. Are you satisfied with the office's business fee collection model? If not, how would you change it?

5. What do you hope to accomplish in your role on the state Land Board?

Montana Senate/House

1. Would you vote to continue Medicaid expansion past 2025?

2. What is the most effective way that state government can reduce property taxes on Montanans?

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

4. How would you ensure you're communicating with the voters in your district and understand what issues they identify as most important to your district?

Superintendent of Public Instruction

1. How would you improve the impact of and accountability to the state's Indian Education for All program?

2. How would you work to improve teacher recruitment and retention in Montana?

3. The Office of Public Instruction has seen massive turnover over the last four years. What would you do to rebuild the agency?

4. Do you support the expansion of charter schools in Montana?

5. What do you hope to accomplish in your role on the state Land Board?

State Auditor

1. How would you use this office to advocate for consumers in Montana?

2. Where would you focus this office's investigatory branch?

3. How would you elevate awareness about the resources offered by the state auditor?

4. What policies or laws would you like to see implemented to address the role of pharmacy benefit managers?

5. What do you hope to accomplish in your role on the state Land Board?

Supreme Court Justice

1. How do you believe your judicial philosophy is distinct from your opponent?

2. How would you work to ensure an independent judiciary and preserve the non-partisan nature of this election?

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



MONTANA 2024 GENERAL ELECTION VOTER GUIDE: STAFF

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

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Supreme Court Clerk

1. How would you balance the partisan nature of this office with the nonpartisan positions of judges?

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

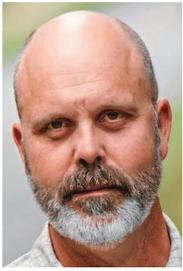
Public Service Commission

1. Montanans are struggling with high utility bills. How can the PSC bring those down?

2. Legislative audits in recent years have found "commission misconduct and management issues." What steps would you take to ensure the agency's operations are efficient and accessible to the public?

3. As Montana faces changes to its energy landscape and Colstrip retires units, what should the PSC do to ensure Montanans have access to reliable, affordable energy?

4. What are your qualifications for this position?

GOVERNOR**Ryan Busse — D****Age:** 54**Home:** Kalispell**Family:** Married to Sara for 25 years; two teenage sons**Occupation:** Writer, firearms expert and former executive (Vice President of Sales,

Kimber America: 1995-2020)

Education: Bethany College (Kansas)**Contact information for voters:**

busseformontana.com, info@busseformontana.com

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

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

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

3. This is a fact: Governor Gianforte is solely to blame for your record-high property tax hikes. Gianforte knows his tax hike is his political disaster, so he falsely blames his increase on county and municipal governments that "spend too much." This is a lie, and Gianforte knows it. So do many local elected Republican leaders across Montana, who are publicly criticizing Gianforte for lying about them. Only Montana's Governor approves the residential property tax rate and only he signs it into law. So the sole reason you're paying record high property taxes is Greg Gianforte. How can we reduce your property taxes? It's an incredibly simple fix: Lower the residential property tax rate from 1.35% to .94% (or by whatever amount the Department of Revenue recommends to keep property taxes "revenue neutral"). This will be a Day One priority for my running mate Raph Graybill and me, because Gianforte's property tax increase has been as high as 111%. I don't know what you call that in New Jersey, but in Montana we call that highway robbery.

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

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

**Greg Gianforte — R****Age:** 62**Home:** Helena**Family:** My wife Susan and I have been married since 1988. We have four children, and four grandchildren.**Occupation:** Governor of Montana**Education:** Bachelor of Science in engineering, Stevens Institute of Technology; Master of Science in electrical engineering, Stevens Institute of Technology**Contact information for voters:**

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

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

During the pandemic, the federal government didn't allow states to verify eligibility for Medicaid, and Medicaid enrollment spiked. Last year, the federal government required states to begin

verifying eligibility again. Since then, we've ensured only those who are eligible can participate, and enrollment is back down to pre-pandemic levels.

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

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

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

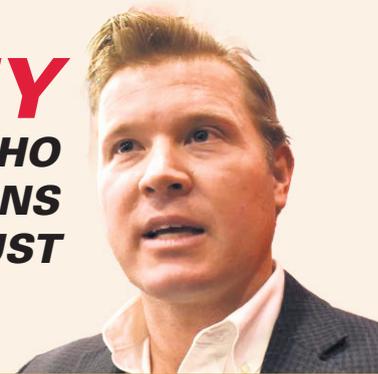
3. Property taxes in Montana are too high. About 85% of property tax revenue from Montana homeowners goes directly to local governments, with the other 15% going to fund local schools. Unfortunately, some counties have not been fiscally responsible, needlessly driving up Montanans' property taxes. In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

The task force I launched this year recently suggested long-term solutions, including a homestead exemption for Montana homeowners. This will provide Montana homeowners with long-term relief and ensure out-of-staters — who don't live here, don't pay income taxes here, and own second homes here — pay their fair share to fund our schools, law enforcement, and roads and bridges. Our plan could reduce property taxes for

COMPARE THE CANDIDATES ON THE ISSUES



JON TESTER
THIRD-GENERATION DIRT FARMER DEFENDING MONTANA EVERY DAY



TIM SHEEHY
WEALTHY OUTSIDER WHO MONTANANS CAN'T TRUST

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING



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

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

HEALTH CARE



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

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

FREEDOM TO CHOOSE



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

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

PUBLIC LAND



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

Paid for by Montanans for Tester.

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

JON TESTER FOR U.S. SENATE

about 350,000 Montana homeowners and renters and for about 30,000 Montana small businesses. Unlike our plan that benefits Montanans, my opponent would raise taxes on Montana small businesses, farms, and ranches by up to 20% to give rich out-of-staters a huge property tax break.

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

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

5. Working with tribal leaders, we've made 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 brings. It is not for me to say. But I will listen.

U.S. SENATE

Tim Sheehy — R



Age: 38

Home: Bozeman

Family: Wife, Carmen, and four young children

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

Bridger Aerospace

Education: U.S. Naval Academy

Contact information for voters: info@timformt.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

America is \$35 trillion in debt, and Jon Tester has done nothing about it. In fact, he's voted to raise the debt ceiling 14x.

Let's be clear: the federal government has a spending problem — not a revenue problem.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Sid Daoud — L



Age: 56

Home: Kalispell

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

Occupation: Senior Consultant at Summit7 Systems

Education: CMR Graduate and two years at MSU

Contact information for voters: [HTTPS://LibertySid.com](https://LibertySid.com); Sid.Daoud@

libertysid.com

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

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

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

4. Compensation should not be set, this lowers compensation for all. The free market should dictate wages. Wages will increase naturally in years where we have extreme forest fires. Additionally, The State of Montana should be given the charge of taking care of not only state but federal forests so that we can responsibly thin them to prevent large scale disasters. Local control surpasses Federal control every time.

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



Jon Tester – D



Age: 67

Home: Big Sandy

Family: I first asked my wife Sharla on a date when she struck me out during a game of softball at a youth barbecue. We got married during my

senior year of college. Sharla and I have three children: our daughter Christine, our son Shon, and Melody, a close friend of Christine's who we were blessed to welcome to our house years later. We also have five wonderful grandchildren who we are very proud of.

Occupation: Dirt farmer and U.S. Senator

Education: College of Great Falls

Contact information for voters: info@jontester.com

1. Sharla and I see the impacts of climate change firsthand on our farm. Oil and gas remain a critical part of how we power our country, and we should also be developing clean energy technologies to tackle climate change, create good-paying American jobs, secure our energy independence, and invest directly in Montana companies researching innovative ways to produce energy technologies that lower costs for consumers. My infrastructure bill invested in updating energy grids to prevent and protect against wildfire, and I'm pushing to invest in research and development of technologies like carbon capture and storage to reduce carbon emissions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Austin Knudsen – R



Age: 43

Home: Helena

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

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

years in private practice

MONICA TRANEL

From Montana. For Montana.



“ I've spent my career working for Montana families. I've gone toe-to-toe with some of the most powerful corporations in the world and won. I'm running for Congress so all our families can afford to live here.

Monica
TRANEL
FOR MONTANA

PHOTO BY MONICA TRANEL FOR MONTANA



Education: B.A. from Montana State University, J.D. from University of Montana

Contact information for voters:
AustinforMontana.com

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

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

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

3. The disproportionate number of missing Indigenous persons is a tragedy I've worked to address by dedicating more resources to investigations and improving coordination with tribal and federal agencies. We've launched awareness campaigns and expanded partnerships with nonprofits to ensure these cases get the attention they deserve. I will continue to push for the federal government to step up and protect Indian Country, better communication between law enforcement agencies, and community engagement to combat this epidemic, find the missing, and bring justice to affected families.

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

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

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



Ben Alke – D

Age: 45

Home: Grew up in Helena and lives in Bozeman

Family: Husband and father of four children

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



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

Contact information for voters: ben@alkeformontana.com

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

The exact type of support depends on the county. To provide just two examples, the State is not prosecuting felonies in

Lake County on the Flathead Reservation. That creates a law enforcement vacuum where cartels and other drug dealers can operate. In Yellowstone County, the Attorney General needs to support efforts to expand the county jail capacity to get drug dealers off the streets.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECRETARY OF STATE

Christi Jacobsen – R



Age: 48

Home: Born and raised in Helena

Family: Husband and five children

Occupation: Secretary of State

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

Contact information for voters: info@christijacobsen.com

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

2. As Secretary of State, I led and streamlined unprecedented reform and registered a historic number of businesses in the state. Now, filings are completely

electronic, filed 24/7, from any device—while providing exceptional customer service to the business community. I've successfully cut red tape, including eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic processes and fees from the office, reducing the steps involved for every business filing, and massively expedited the process for our customers, turning them around at record speed. Most importantly, through hard work, we've cut fees for Montana businesses in half and waived annual fees.

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

4. The Secretary of State's Office operates as an enterprise fund. No taxpayer dollars are used for funding. The office is run like a business, efficiently, doing more with less by providing exceptional service to the Montana business community. As your Secretary of State, I have cut new business filing fees in half, waived annual report filing fees, eliminated numerous bureaucratic fees all together, and intend to continue to look for opportunities to further reduce fees. The number of employees in the office has been reduced by half, while providing exceptional service. The business community grades my performance an "A+".

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



Jesse James Mullen – D



Age: 40

Home: Deer Lodge

Family: father of five

Occupation: small business owner

Education: Studied journalism at the University of Wyoming

Contact information for voters:

jessejamesmullen.com

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

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

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

4. The Secretary of State overcharged Montana businesses and refused to issue

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

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

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION STATE SUPERINTENDENT

Susie Hedalen – R



Age: 40

Home: Townsend

Family: Married to my husband Derrick

Occupation: Superintendent of Townsend School District

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

Contact information for voters: info@susieforschools.com

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

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

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

Collaborating with the Montana University System to recruit students into education and mental health professions is essential. Streamlining administrative processes in education redirects resources to classrooms. Advocating for federal authorities to ease unnecessary mandates empowers educators. As State Superintendent, I'll champion these efforts to ensure quality education reaches every Montana community.

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

4. Last year, the Legislature approved public charter schools in Montana, a pivotal move for educational advancement. As a Board of Public Education member, I advocated for 19 top-tier charter schools statewide, 17

of which opened this fall. Montana now aligns with 45 states in broadening school choice within public education through these pioneering institutions.

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

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



Shannon O'Brien – D



Age: 55

Home: Missoula

Family: Husband Chuck, son Carter, high school sophomore

Occupation: Retired Educator

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

Contact information for voters: campaign@montanansforshannon.com

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

OPI should provide the professional

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

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

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

3. An independent audit of the financial and programmatic situation at OPI would identify major gaps and suggest triage priorities, but the complaint I hear repeatedly from school districts is the need to be responsive. Not answering the phone or getting back to people is unacceptable. Under my leadership OPI will be responsive. I'm committed to building a culture of service and restoring the pride we all once had in that office. Working with educators, community leaders, business owners and universities over the last 12 years, I know Montana has an abundance of talent that can be tapped to rebuild OPI.

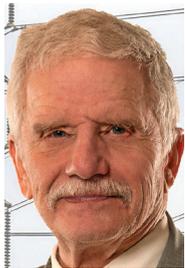
4. We have a responsibility to our taxpayers to spend their money effectively and transparently. The PUBLIC charter schools are showing great promise and innovation in both areas. The PRIVATE charter schools, however, with limited oversight and no obligation to meet public expectations, are unconstitutional.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

5. Simply put, we must protect our public lands. Because the revenue generated from our public lands helps fund public schools, the Superintendent's role on the Land Board is especially important. As a Land Board member, I will vote to protect public access and make sure that leases of public lands

are fair and equitable to both the state and the people leasing the land, while providing optimal support for public education. I will never support the sale of Montana's public lands.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION DISTRICT 2

Brad Molnar – R



Age: 74
Home: Laurel
Family: Married, three children, 12 grandkids, five great-grandkids
Occupation: Senator, retired
Education: three years

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

4. Experience.

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

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

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

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



Susan Bilo – D



Age: 62
Home: Bozeman
Family: Married, and I belong to a dog.
Occupation: Montana State University–Gallatin College Instructor

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

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

1. Multiple ways that include:
 a. Ensuring more affordable energy options are compared and given fair consideration. Today's utility-scale solar and wind with battery storage power plants are cost-competitive/cheaper than fossil fuel-powered plants. Montana has world class wind, but other utilities such as Puget Sound are using it more than

we are to keep bills low and meet clean energy goals.

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

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

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

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

2. These issues resulted in an Executive

Director being hired to oversee operations and manage misconduct. There should be a dock in pay for not showing up for meetings and hearings and dismissal for breaking the law and mis-use of taxpayer dollars. Transparency and access to utility plans and PSC decision-making information is critical: Laurel citizens were not told about plans for Northwestern Energy's new natural gas plant. That would not have happened on my watch! I would have made sure Montanans – especially in Laurel – were informed and invited to public meetings to learn more and provide input. I will work with PSC staff to proactively inform Montanans about all major energy decisions and plans.

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

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

4. The majority of the PSC's work centers around energy, and I have over 25 years of energy program, project, and policy experience. I was an energy specialist for a state energy office, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. As an instructor, I research and teach fact-based energy information to students

in my Montana State University–Gallatin College classes. I have also taught energy courses for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Once elected, I will step back from teaching and be fully dedicated to the job. I have served on advisory boards and committees providing guidance on long-range plans. Energy is my chosen profession, and my knowledge and experience will help me provide a fresh perspective and hit the ground running.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION DISTRICT 3

Leonard Williams – D



Age: 67

Home: Butte America

Family: Two children

Occupation: Inside Wireman/retired

Education: Graduate Twin Falls High School; Idaho State Electrical Apprenticeship Training

Contact information for voters:

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

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

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

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

The recent adoption of a formal Code

of Conduct for the Commission and management staff seems not to have gained the trust of the electorate.

The creation of an oversight board consisting of interested parties would also be a conduit for staff to voice concerns over what may seem like their research falling on deaf ears.

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION DISTRICT 4

Elena Evans – I



Age: 39

Home: Missoula

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

Occupation: Environmental Health Manager, Missoula County

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

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

1. My family is one of many Montana families that moved to budget billing after the PSC approved the 28% rate increase for Northwestern Energy last year. The PSC is legally obligated to ensure ratepayers have "reliable, sustainable, and affordable" power, and the PSC can force NorthWestern to work harder to meet that standard when it submits requests for new rate increases or requests to purchase new power sources, for example. The PSC can also require utilities to expand programs to assist low-income customers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I've also completed the Incident Command System and received my Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response certification. For

years, I've demonstrated an ability to simplify complex systems, interpret regulations, and understand how small details impact real people.



Jennifer Fielder – R



Age: 58

Home: Thompson Falls

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

Occupation: Public Service Commissioner

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

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

1. Whether its gas, groceries, fast food, or utilities, steep price increases have impacted everyone, and almost all of these increases have been driven up by

bad government policies on a national level. In spite of that, since I was elected to the Montana PSC in 2021 we have actually saved gas and electric customers more than \$35 million dollars. In fact, Montana's utility rates are now lower than 37 other states. We also approved a new garbage company in Missoula County which offers considerably lower prices. I will continue working diligently to lower costs while keeping service quality up.

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

3. We are working very hard with the utilities and the legislature on Integrated Resource Planning to ensure adequate

utility supplies will be available when Montanans need them now and in the future. At the root of this is to step up energy efficiency measures, accurately forecast energy demand, and allow Montana utilities to maintain and develop enough energy to meet consumer demand. If we are short on energy supply in Montana, our utilities are forced to enter bidding wars to obtain energy from other states, and this can be very expensive especially during extreme cold weather when demand is highest.

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

in Applied Science.

STATE AUDITOR

James Brown – R



Age: 53

Home: Dillon

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

Occupation: Lawyer/public servant

Education:

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

Contact information for voters: Jim@jamesbrownformontana.com

1. Protecting Montana's insurance and securities customers is the most important duty of the State Auditor. For the last 20 years, I have, first as a private practice attorney, and second as President of the Montana Public Service Commission, worked to defend

TIM SHEEHY
Navy Seal ★ U.S. Senate

★ **END**
Biden-Harris-Tester Inflation

★ **SECURE**
 Our Border

★ **STOP**
 Democrat Tax Increases

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the interests of consumers and investors and will continue to do so in this key position.

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

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

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

4. Having grown up Dillon, a small Montana community, I understand the importance of protecting access to quality health care services for all Montanans. This includes the need to ensure small independent pharmacies have a level regulatory playing field in which to compete against chain retailers. Montana's legislature recently passed legislation to give the Auditor's office more oversight of pharmacy benefit managers. However, the Legislature should consider taking additional action to protect consumers



and make prescription drugs more affordable, including investigating how PBMs fit into a national drug pricing structure and highly concentrated health care markets and providing greater transparency to PBM practices.

5. Montana's Constitution clearly denotes that it is the primary job of the land board to maximize revenue generated from school trust lands for use by Montana's public schools. While, in 2023, State Trust Lands produced

roughly \$54 million for Montana's K-12 public schools, we can do better for Montana's children by generating more revenue through proper stewardship of state trust properties. Thus, from day one as a member of the land board, I will work to ensure each project is generating sufficient revenue to educate Montana's kids as required while ensuring the public interest is served by protecting access to public lands for all Montanans.



John Repke – D



Age: 67

Home: Whitefish

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

Occupation: Retired

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

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

Contact information for voters: www.repkeformontana.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

services of the office through partnerships with phone, text, and email providers.

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

5. Montana's state trust lands were established for the purpose of generating funding for K-12 education. That's an important mission and with my four-decade background in finance, I will bring a higher level of financial scrutiny to the leasing decisions that generate that funding. I will also ensure that our state lands are managed for the long-term benefit of all Montanans, and I will ensure that Montanans maintain access to our public lands for hunting, fishing, hiking, and other recreation.

**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE
1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

Monica Tranel – D



Age: 58

Home: Montana

Family: Married with three daughters.

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

clients across Montana.

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

Contact information for voters: info@monicatrael.com

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

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

I would introduce my own bills that

focus on:

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Yes. The United States must stand with our democratic allies. Providing aid to Ukraine and Israel aligns with our values

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

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



Ryan Zinke – R



Age: 62

Home: Whitefish

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

Occupation: United States Congressman for Montana's First

Congressional District

**Re-Elect County Commissioner
Josh Slotnick, Democrat**



For the People. "When the Governor and Republican Legislature raised property taxes I immediately worked with other County commissioners, legislators, business people and advocates to spread the word on how property taxes work and to design new solutions for citizens, not corporations and millionaires."

I will keep fighting for a fair and just solution.

[Signature] - Josh Slotnick, Missoula County Commissioner

A Trusted Voice & Experienced Leader for Missoula County



Paid for by Friends to Re-Elect Josh for Missoula County Commissioner, Democrat, P.O. Box 5861, Missoula, MT 59806 • Barbar Berens, Treasurer



the US unless radical environmentalists like environmental lawyer Monica Tranel are pulling the strings. Her plan to ban fossil fuels and force a transition to all electric vehicles would literally leave Montanans to freeze.

2. I do not support a federal abortion ban and regardless of what my opponent says, it's never been the case. She will lie and tell you what her DC strategists told her will win this race, but at the end of the day my record and my word is consistent. I personally am pro-life but understand restrictions should be put in place after the first trimester and that there are heartbreaking situations where exceptions should be made available such as rape, incest and to protect the life of the mother. Monica Tranel on the other hand supports elective abortions up until the moment of birth and would not require emergency care for a baby who survives an abortion. Absolutely unthinkable. She will tell you that doesn't happen –without denying it's her position—and frankly that's just incorrect. Practically speaking, I believe the best way to reduce abortions is to make birth control widely available and affordable so those difficult situations aren't even faced in the first place. On the other end of the family planning issue, IVF makes the miracle of a family possible and should remain an option for parents.

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

\$25,000,000 in water systems to support more housing, and additional funding for law enforcement and emergency services across the district. Not all government spending is bad spending so its important to root out the garbage and frivolity and make investments in core functions.

4. Household finances are tight right now and a lot of young people feel like the American Dream of home ownership is unrealistic. This is due to high inflation for gas, groceries and rent or high interest rates and building materials costs if the want to buy or build. Even a family of 3 with two good jobs can't make ends meet in this housing crisis. The answer is not more government housing, it's making the American Dream affordable again. I truly believe that folks who work in the community should be able to live there, which is why my family has provided affordable rental homes in Whitefish for the better part of 20 years. In Congress, I sponsored the HELPER Act to establish a new home loan program under the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to make homeownership more accessible to K-12 school teachers, first responders, law enforcement officers, and other essential public servants by eliminating some of the barriers for first-time homebuyers including high down payments and monthly mortgage insurance premiums. Like a lot of you, I grew up in a trailer park. Trailers are quality homes and buyers shouldn't be treated as second rate citizens if they seek federally backed mortgages through USDA, HUD or the VA. For folks who aren't in a position to purchase a home and need a hand up, making sure those programs are viable and Montana gets its fair share is important. I worked with Montana Housing Authority to hold DC accountable and prevent HUD from swiping millions of dollars from Montana's housing aid accounts helping keep hundreds of Montanans in their homes. Lastly, I've taken the time to investigate and invest in the root causes of the housing shortage. It's not my family's little vacation rental as Monica Tranel would lead you to believe. In most towns, like Seeley Lake, Lolo and Lakeside, it's lack of infrastructure to support more building. I worked with County Commissioners and planners to identify four water infrastructure projects for federal funding. Once funded, the projects will build the necessary infrastructure to support additional housing in areas that need it most.

5. Israel is our closest ally in the

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

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

Katherine Bidegaray



Age: 63
Home: Sidney
Family: Mother of five children, grandmother of six grandchildren.
Occupation: District Judge, Montana 7th Judicial District

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

Contact information for voters: bidegaray@bidegarayformontana.com

1. During more than 21 years as a district court judge, my judicial philosophy has centered on fairness,

respect, and impartiality, not swayed by partisan interest, public opinion, or fear of criticism. It is rooted in a firm commitment to the rule of law. I approach each case with an open mind, basing decisions on the relevant facts and legal principles, while adhering strictly to the 1972 Montana Constitution, the U.S. Constitution, and established legal precedents and statutes. My opponent describes himself using political terms and attends partisan political events.

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

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



Dan Wilson



Age: 60
Home: Kalispell
Family: Married 28 years to wife, Tia; daughter Live, 22-years-old
Occupation: District Court Judge, Flathead County

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

Contact information for voters: info@wilsonforjustice.com

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

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

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

To preserve the nonpartisan nature of this election, I will run a campaign focused primarily on my own experience and qualifications.

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

SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE

Cory Swanson



Age: 47
Home: Townsend
Family: Married with two children. My wife Julie is a speech therapist in Townsend.
Occupation: Broadwater County Attorney, and Colonel in the Montana Army National Guard

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

Contact information for voters: swansonforjustice.com; Facebook Page; X Profile

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

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

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

I have resisted efforts to turn this campaign into a partisan race by confirming that I have not accepted or solicited endorsement by the Republican Party. My opponent has failed to disclaim support from the national Democratic Party, and has publicly endorsed Jon Tester and Tim Walz. I can assure every future litigant that I will serve as a non-partisan and impartial judge.

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



Jerry Lynch



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

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

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

3. The Montana Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to a quality education. Government and civics lessons are a fundamental part of a quality education. I am an enthusiastic supporter of civics education in every school. I will also continue the important work begun by Chief Justice McGrath to modernize our courts. This includes embracing technology that allows for e-filing documents, livestreaming arguments, and making case dockets searchable online. These technologies help bring the court into our communities. I will continue to embrace the power of technology to make our courts more accessible and understandable. As well, I will advocate for increased funding for Montana legal services and public defenders throughout the State of Montana, not just urban centers.

CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT

Bowen Greenwood – R



Age: 52 (53 by election day)

Home: East Helena

Family: one sister

Occupation: Clerk of the Montana Supreme Court

Education: BA from Georgetown University in 1994.

Contact information for voters: www.GreenwoodForMontana.com

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

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

Second, I've listed high-profile cases on the Clerk's office website. The court's docket isn't always intuitive for non-attorneys. Listing the big cases on the front page makes it easier.

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



Erin Farris-Olsen – D



Age: 40

Home: Helena

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

Occupation: Strategic Public Interest Consultant

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

Contact information for voters: erin4montana@gmail.com

1. This is a partisan race for a nonpartisan job. The partisanship is an historic relic and I would support a legislative change to make it nonpartisan. While Justices are nonpartisan to insulate the Court and preserve a separation of powers, that insulation does not exist with current partisan Clerk's office. Per the Appellate Clerk Ethical Code, Clerks should observe high standards of conduct to protect the integrity, impartiality, and

independence of the judiciary in order to avoid even the appearance of bias or impropriety. I would act impartially to give every litigant a fair shake.

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

HOUSE DISTRICT 12

Tracy Sharp – R



Age: 66

Home: Polson, Montana

Family: Married, four kids; seven grandkids

Occupation: Retired former military (Air Force pilot)

Education: Hot Springs Montana High School, Purdue University, Master's from the Army Command and General Staff College.

Contact information for voters: tracyasharp4MT12@gmail.com, 406-407-2197

1. I would want to see what commitment we get from the Federal government. I suspect that the ultimate goal is to start this program and then eventually dump it in its entirety on the State, which I do not support. If that is the case, I would not support further expansion, for that would mean that the budget priorities for the State of Montana would be decided by DC and not our State legislature. They could tie our hands completely, and that is unacceptable.

2. Homestead/Comstead/Agristead exemptions to start, followed by a commitment to stop spending. County Levies need a significant voter participation rate to be valid and should then pass only if they are approved by

60%. We also need to consider whether this tax on unrealized gains – which is what property tax is – should be terminate in favor of some other revenue raising method. State government should also turn away from the automatic assumption that education must/must always get more and more money, and in no case should a judiciary determination result in an increase in property taxes; that is not within the purview of the judiciary.

3. The State Legislature should remove impediments to construction of such housing and eliminate regulatory burdens. Subsidies are not appropriate and inject government too far into the process, and the results of this have been seen elsewhere. Communities must resolve these problems unimpeded by bureaucratic governmental meddling.

4. Town hall meetings and open lines of communication are essential. I will have my official email focused on constituents. I intend to personally walk my district and all its communities on a regular basis, and to use social media to fullest extent possible.

HOUSE DISTRICT 13

Shirley Azzopardi – D



Age: 59

Home: Ronan, Montana

Family: Husband, John, and two children ages 24 and 26

Occupation: Mental Health Coordinator for Early Childhood Services with

Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes and retired special education teacher (30 years)

Education: Graduate of the University of Montana

Contact information for voters: shirleyformontana@gmail.com

1. I would vote to continue a permanent Medicaid expansion without any caveats and simplify the application process.

2. Reduce the residential property tax rate to .94%. I support passing the Montana Housing Fairness Tax Credit, a program that provides property tax relief for people based on income. This tax credit, similar to the existing Elderly Homeowner's Tax Credit, provides an

income tax refund to individuals who pay more than a set percentage of their income in property taxes. Increase the property tax assistance program (PTAP), expand the elderly homeowners' tax credit, and support the Homestead Exemption.

3. This is a very complex issue with no easy solutions, but Montanans need to be able to afford to live, work, and play in Montana. I plan to collaborate with politicians across party lines to provide more affordable options. I support the state providing low-interest loans to communities to expand water and sewer infrastructure and other subsidies that expand affordable housing.

4. I am available via email and cell phone (text and phone calls). I am an active member of House District 13; I shop locally and attend community events. If elected, I would respond to texts, emails, and phone calls promptly.

HOUSE DISTRICT 15

Ralph Foster – R



Age: 61

Home: resident of St. Ignatius for the last 28 years

Family: married to Phyllis Haynes and two grown boys, Zachary and Zane.

Occupation: Mortician

for 42 years.

Education: I graduated from the State of Kansas Regent system with a Mortician's degree; served practicum at KU Med and the Menninger Clinic. Further studies in religion and ethics were pursued at Friends University.

Contact information for voters: Email sti0101@blackfoot.net; Website fostermthd15.net; phone 406-531-9197.

1. Yes. The Sunset provision that is currently attached should be removed. This provides a needed service in two ways. First and foremost this helps pay for programs that keeps the funding for the services we receive at Indian Health Services, CHIP and other state funded programs that help HD15. Secondly, the health care industry employs approximately 20% of the workforce in Montana and accounts for 18 to 21% of the GDP so these funds are important

to families that have a stake in the healthcare industry.

2. Make a homestead exemption for residents by establishing a program where value of your property (primary residence) is locked into the purchase price you paid. Families receive this exemption only on properties that are lived in and associated with their Montana Income Tax form. A vacation home, business or second home would not be eligible for this program.

3. No, subsidies are not appropriate. Contractors will cater to those with the funds to purchase what they build and real estate agents will also prefer to work with people who can afford these properties as their income is based on commissions. The state of Montana can look to the past and give incentives for employers to furnish housing for their employees by letting them build or provide housing that would be considered a business expense for tax purposes and make employer provided housing a non-income non-taxable benefit for the employee.

4. HD 15 represents two reservations and numerous grizzly bears. It is very gerrymandered and difficult to cover so I'd maintain a Facebook page with links to official sites from the State of Montana that gives updates of what is happening in Montana. Also I'm very able to answer my phone. As a mortician of 42 years you become very use to being on call and answering your phone at all times. Lastly I'd make it a point to have meetings with commissioners of Glacier, Pondera & Lake counties as well as tribal councils of the Blackfeet and CS&KT.

HOUSE DISTRICT 85

Laura Jackson – D



Age: 81

Home: Darby

Family: Great-granddaughter of Bitterroot homesteaders

Occupation: Retired USFS fire dispatcher, subsistence farmer,

artist

Education: BA English, MFA Technical Design and Lighting (Theater)

Contact information for voters: lauraforHD85@gmail.com

I have lived in the Darby School District

since 1976, when I bought the land I have made my home, about 5 miles from where my great-grandparents homesteaded. My working years from that time on were mainly spent with the US Forest Service, including 12 years as fire dispatcher and lookout in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Throughout my life I have been a practicing artist.

I am standing for office because I believe voters should have a choice of candidates. The values I represent are those that I have developed in the process of learning to care for and be sustained by my small homestead and the surrounding Bitterroot landscape. Being a participant in this landscape and local community with the goals of long-term resilience and sustainability while being a responsible landowner are my first concerns as a candidate.

Our valley has changed greatly over the past couple of decades and is projected to continue to do so. To best manage these changes and their impacts for our common good, we are challenged to be clear about our local resources, how they function systemically, and their limitations. For me, as a candidate, this means a commitment to listening to diverse voices, while researching and working to be fully informed by up-to-date data on the issues we must confront together.

1. Yes.

2. Institute measures like those suggested below and use the income generated to reduce the general property tax burden, reducing our funding dependency on property taxes from average residents.

Establish increased tax rates for properties owned by out of state individuals or entities not occupied by owners at least 6 months of the year.

Set increased tax rates for all "second homes" valued at over one million dollars, but not occupied by owners at least 3 months/year.

Increase tax rates for all residential properties valued over five million dollars, excluding certified active and producing agricultural properties that are the primary residence of the owner(s) who occupy them at least 9 months/year.

Work to establish a statewide tax policy that is less inherently regressive than property taxes.

3. Consider restricting by statewide law zoning that limits high density housing in urban areas.

Create a state bond issue to create

funds for housing construction for workers and families in areas where the cost of housing is significantly higher than what a local basic average wage would generate.

Are subsidies appropriate?

Possibly, if properly designed to benefit those genuinely in need who are currently unable to afford decent, basic housing on an average local minimum wage.

4. Being open to hearing all concerns and constructive ideas for our common good is the first requirement. I believe open civil dialogue is how we arrive at best policy directions for our common future. This means accepting all opportunities for honest conversation in my constituent community.

Practically, this also means providing an email address when registering as a candidate and attending to comments sent through the legislature contact system, if elected.

HOUSE DISTRICT 86

David Bedey – R



Age: 69

Home: Hamilton

Family: married 42 years to wife, Deborah; one daughter

Occupation: retired U.S. Army colonel; currently CFO of an engineering firm

Education: B.S. in Civil Engineering (Montana State University); M.A. in National Security & Strategic Studies (U.S. Naval War College); M.A. in Strategic Studies (U.S. Army War College); Ph.D. in Space Physics (University of Alaska, Fairbanks)

Contact information for voters: phone 406-381-2059; email d.f.bedey@gmail.com; website davidbedey.com

1. I am inclined to support continuing the program, based on the following considerations: Most enrollees (72%) work, while 23% are disabled, primary caregivers, or students. About 60% of Montana businesses have employees enrolled in the program. The financial viability of Montana's rural healthcare facilities depends on Medicaid funding; otherwise, they must provide uncompensated care to the poor. The program does not increase funding of abortion because poor women are already

eligible for coverage under traditional Medicaid—the same program that covers the elderly. And enrollment decreases when the economy improves. However, any effective legislation must continue to include work/training requirements.

2. There is no simple solution to this challenge. Any equitable solution must balance tax shifts between different property classes (e.g., from residential to agricultural and commercial) or to income tax payers. That is why Republicans opted to provide tax rebates in the short term to allow time for prudent analysis prior to the upcoming session. I was one of six legislators who served on the governor's property tax task force, which completed its work in August. The most significant recommendation we put forward is a homestead exemption, which would effectively reduce the tax rate on every Montanan's primary residence.

3. Ultimately, providing attainable housing is a problem to be solved locally, so that solutions meet the needs of the citizens most affected. But the state can help increase the supply of housing by easing restrictions on the construction of duplexes and apartments, providing tax incentives for long-term rentals, performing its role in the subdivision process in a timely manner while still preserving environmental quality, reevaluating the Montana Department of Commerce's affordable housing programs, and continuing to expand education and training programs designed to grow the workforce in the construction trades.

4. The best way to get a sense of constituent concerns is to knock on doors during the campaign season. This allows me to speak to voters across the political spectrum and gain a broad understanding of voter concerns, not just the concerns expressed by special interests. Beyond this, reading local newspapers and visiting online news sites, like the Montana Free Press, provide additional perspectives.

HOUSE DISTRICT 88

Evan Schroedel — D



Age: 63

Home: Florence

Occupation: Retired locomotive engineer.

Education: some college

Contact information

for voters: schroedel4hd88@gmail.com

1. I would continue support for Medicaid past 2025.

2. I don't see that the state has done anything about the high cost of housing in Montana. I believe we need regulation of landlords and subsidies.

4. I've been very active in my area at the doors and talking with the voters; we all agree that property tax is the single biggest issue.

HOUSE DISTRICT 89

Lyn Hellegaard — R



Age: 66

Home: Missoula

Family: Husband, one son, one daughter and one Chow Chow

Occupation: Executive Director

Education: Some

college

Contact information for voters: Lyn@lynformontana.com or 406-240-2159

1. This is not a simple yes or no question. Thoughtful and diligent consideration must be paid to:

- Community Benefits, HB45, rulemaking process which is being negotiated now.
- Federal HHS and IRS regulations.
- Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) by hospitals.
- What is essential to Critical Access hospitals.

With expenses other than medical required to be Medicaid eligible, special attention needs to be placed on the inputs and outputs, to then build on and add to Community Benefits results. An examination of current "success" measures also needs to be undertaken. Most important is the people of Montana being the beneficiaries of any expansion, not corporations.

2. They can reduce the amount they collect; since we have surpluses, this should be a no brainer. We could also look for fraud, waste, and abuse within the state government. We also need improved voter input into TIFs, Special Districts, and levies. The legislature needs to work with city and county governments to eliminate conflicting or detrimental regulations that increase the cost of housing and doing business.

3. The first thing is to get out of the

housing business. When government entities compete with the private sector prices of materials, labor, and land always rise.

The Federal deficit spending which makes housing subsidies possible has triggered an inflation crisis which has led to the federal reserve hiking the interest rates: and that worsens the housing crisis.

We've all heard of the story of the \$600.00 hammers the military buys. I just recently heard of a school paying \$450.00/doorknob. Without active citizens in the role of taxpayer's advocate, our government is willing to view taxpayer money as limitless.

Are subsidies appropriate? Reagan said: "Government doesn't solve problems, it subsidizes them." Missoula has been subsidizing housing for decades. Prices of rents and homes have only increased. The solution is to improve the job market and work to develop a manufacturing, extraction and tourist economy. Which would also reduce the property owners' school funding obligations.

4. Currently, I'm going door-to-door, talking to my future constituents. I read every constituent email, as well as every constituent message sent through the Capitol switchboard, before the floor session each day, which I very much appreciate. I would continue to come home on weekends so I can meet with individuals or groups who request meetings with me. I will do my best to keep my community informed of what is going on in Helena



Mark Thane — D



Age: 65

Home: Missoula

Family: Spouse Mary Thane; daughters, Lindsay (Taylor) and Emilie (Nick). Two grandchildren.

Occupation: Worked 39 years in Missoula's public schools, retiring as superintendent of Missoula County Public Schools in 2019. Currently serving a second term in the Montana House of Representatives.

Education: Graduate of Hellgate High School; B.A. and M.Ed. from the University of Montana.

Contact information for voters: thanefornt@gmail.com

1. I fully support the continuation of our current Medicaid expansion program. Not only does it provide access to healthcare for thousands of Montanans, but it sustains our rural healthcare facilities which may not be financially viable without reauthorization.

2. I support a three-pronged approach to reduce the residential property tax burden. First, a homestead exemption to reduce the assessment of your primary residence by \$50,000. Second, a tiered property tax rate which would reduce the current 1.35% tax rate on the first \$500,000 of assessed value for your primary residence and implement a graduated tax rate on higher-valued residences. Finally, implement a housing fairness tax credit to reduce the burden on renters (who essentially pay property taxes as a portion of their monthly rent).

3. The 2023 legislature invested more than \$150 million in attainable, workforce housing and the Montana Board of Housing loan programs. This is a significant investment which needs to be monitored and audited to assess the effectiveness. While most zoning and land use decisions are best made at the local level, the state must establish a regulatory framework which supports more timely review for zoning and permitting.

4. I continue to knock hundreds of constituents' doors in this campaign. I am hosting a property tax town hall in October to get constituent feedback on property tax proposals. I prioritize replying to constituent emails and encourage constituents to reach out, particularly as bill of interest are introduced during the legislative session.

HOUSE DISTRICT 90

Curtis Cochran — R



Age: 67

Home: St. Regis, 50 years

Occupation: Retired, timber industry 40+ years, Independent Construction Contactor, former business owner, developer, St. Regis

KOA/ Nugget RV Park

Education: Helena High grad 1974, attended University of Montana 76/77, Green River CC forestry '87

Contact information for voters: 406-

280-0081, 177 Red Hill Road, St. Regis MT 59866; email curt4montana@gmail.com

1. I fully support Medicaid Expansion for renewal in 2025. This program has been in place long enough now that the supporting data and facts are in proving it works for Montana. Without it there would be nothing in place for low income kids and citizens aged between 0-64. It is funded 90% Fed 10% State. It benefits our rural hospitals and clinics supporting hundreds of health care jobs all across Montana. Without Medicare expansion in place over 75,000 low income Montanans would lose health care benefits. I'll take the 90/10 split any day.

2. The Legislature's role in the property tax equation, by law, is setting the multiplier rate for each of the 14 classifications of taxable property. The Governor's Property Tax Work Force is meeting now and will have an assortment of recommendations for the 2025 session to consider. I would vote to reduce the rate of residential property tax, although it is a double edged sword as you would move the burden to other classifications.

3. Businesses are shutting down for lack of employees that can afford to live near the jobs. Cutting red tape for the building and construction industry could help. Government spending = higher taxes. More spending to remedy an issue is not always the answer.

4. I have lived in this district and state for 67 years. I've been involved with Community Councils, high school athletics, fire departments, Forest Service Collaborative Groups, County Boards, for over 40 years. I know the people and experts personally that I can communicate with directly for advice. I don't know everything but the people do. The House of Representatives is the Peoples House in Montana. Communicating the peoples voice is key for bipartisan solutions for the common good of our great state of Montana.

HOUSE DISTRICT 91

Shelly R. Fyant – D



Age: 66

Home: Arlee

Family: I have four adult sons, six granddaughters, one grandson and a great-granddaughter. I live close to my Mom, and

we enjoy five generations in our family. My partner Curtis and I live on a piece of the property my parents purchased in the early 60s in the Jocko Valley.

Occupation: Consultant focusing on food security and food programming.

Education: B.S. Business Administration-Management emphasis

Contact information for voters: ShellyFyantHD91@gmail.com

1. I will absolutely vote for Medicaid expansion in 2025. This program has provided thousands of Montanans with affordable medical care which in turn creates healthier communities, businesses and contributes to the State economy. It also helps to close the Native American health disparities gap in Montana, which is 19-20 years less than non-Natives. IHS, Tribal and Urban healthcare facilities can qualify for 100% reimbursement at no cost to the state. The over \$1 billion in health care services it brought into MT in FY 22 provides security to rural hospitals and facilities that otherwise may be forced to close.

2. We need to revise the current property tax structure and classifications to fairly distribute taxes, taking a hard look at those centrally assessed properties, the intangible inclusion and the non-transparent tax "negotiations" they enjoy with the Department of Revenue. We should consider proportionate homestead exemptions as well.

3. Increase Veterans Home Revolving Loan Program funds. Match the federal Housing Trust Fund with State dollars. Offer incentives to developers in the form of tax credits to build affordable housing. Rent control and various tenant protections, i.e. no evictions policy that was implemented during the pandemic. Subsidies, i.e. rental and down payment assistance are especially helpful to low-income individuals and households.

4. I am currently knocking doors throughout the very large rural/urban district to meet constituents. I have distributed my contact information on materials and personally assured people I am available and open for further discussion on issues of specific concern or importance to them. Shellyformontana.com is available for anyone to reach me, including those outside the district.

I will provide regular updates on my Facebook page "Shelly for Montana" and local newspapers within the district.

HOUSE DISTRICT 92

Connie Keogh – D



Age: 68

Home: P.O. Box 7548 Missoula, MT 59807

Family: Children: Ross and Troy Keogh, grandchildren: Anya and Owen Keogh

Occupation: Retired educator

Education: BS Elementary and Special Education. MA in Education—Educational Technology

Contact Information for voters: 406-298-0985. Keoghforhd92@gmail.com. Follow me on Facebook at facebook.com/keoghformontana

1. Continuing basic healthcare like Medicaid will be a priority during the 2025 session. Why? Because it will ensure that a significant portion of our population has access to quality, affordable healthcare and can continue working and raising their families. Nearly half of Montanans covered by Medicaid are currently from small towns, and Medicaid will continue to keep hospitals and health clinics open and accessible in our rural communities – and also supply workers for our businesses.

2. Last legislative session, lawmakers missed a golden opportunity to use a \$2.5-billion budget surplus to cut property taxes for homeowners who faced higher values on their property and homes because of a changing Montana. That's why we need to work hard on a fair tax system – one that doesn't put a larger and larger burden on homeowners and renters. I'm hopeful as I look at what is being proposed that we can shift the growing property tax burden away from residential property owners by cutting the residential property tax rate and consideration of a homestead exemption.

3. Safe, accessible, and affordable housing needs to be available for all Montanans. Many Montana communities are faced with a shortage of affordable housing to meet the needs of the work force and vulnerable populations. We can't just build our way out of this problem. We need to create a multi-faceted approach that includes incorporating mixed use housing options, investing state dollars, participating in federal programs, and possibly using one time subsidies. There is not a silver bullet to this problem, but

we must tackle this urgent need to build up the supply of homes affordable and accessible to all Montanans.

4. Communicating with my constituents is important to me. During my past three terms, I have done my best to be responsive to their questions and thoughts. In the past, I have used social media, email, and occasional articles in local newspapers to update constituents. Attending public meetings and events is crucial to understanding what is most important to my district. I'll continue to show up and do my best as a legislator to listen to my constituents and reflect their values and concerns. I'll represent all of HD 92 by working across the aisle, and listening to all.



Ted Morgan – R



Age: 30

Home: Condon

Family: Wife Julia; two pit mixes and barn cat.

Occupation: Marketer/ Entrepreneur

Education: BA from Southern Methodist

University

Contact information for voters: www.Ted4montana.com; email Ted4Montana@gmail.com

1. I would vote to continue Medicaid unless given another option that will provide for those with limited income. Unfortunately, Medicaid and Medicare have a problem...fraud. We need to direct dollars to sick people, not fraudsters. There's currently a federal case involving a doctor from Whitefish that false billed government health care programs almost \$40 Million! Imagine what that money could have done for actual sick Montanans.

2. We need more than one way to reduce property taxes. People are being priced out of their homes in Missoula County. I fully support a Homestead Exemption. The exemption would put Montana's full time residents first by lowering the tax rate on their homes compared to non resident second home owners. We also need to stop the spending on extravagances in Missoula County. The people who live in areas like Condon have no need for a new government building or voted on mill levies passed by mostly



those in the city (Purchase of Marshall Mountain). We want our infrastructure fixed and to see our tax dollars spent here. Last year, the county spent more of our tax dollars on homelessness than our town of Condon. Condon does not have an issue with homelessness, we have roads and bridges that need attention.

3. There are multiple ways to incentivize housing, and think that bipartisan legislation that recently passed will help some Montanans find a home. SB 382 & SB 245 are currently held up in court in Bozeman. They are focused on making housing more affordable by allowing apartment style buildings in commercially zoned areas of cities with population of 7000 or more. In our Missoula County outlying areas, septic restraints are a major problem for multi-family housing. We need to look at the stringent areas of

those requirements. Insurance is another issue. Montanans may be able to afford homes if interest rates fall, but without a review of insurance, they may not be able to stay in them. This is especially true when it comes to fire in our rural areas.

4. Communication is everything when creating legislation. If elected, I hope to produce legislation created by and for the people. In order to do that, you have to see what's happening in your district. I will have my boots on the ground attending community councils, local events, and visiting businesses. I will also use social media to keep people in our district abreast of current legislation, as well as phone calls and e-mail. This question, though important, isn't as important as fixing our rural infrastructure and our school funding formula.

HOUSE DISTRICT 93

Roy Handley – R



Age: 58 at time of General Election

Home: Clinton

Family: Married to Kris, two grown sons

Occupation: Rancher and Businessman

Education: Agricultural

Business Degree

Contact information for voters:
royhandley4montana@gmail.com

1. I would need to look at the projected costs and benefits before this vote to ensure that the people of Montana are protected from increased taxes.

2. State Government is primarily funded by income tax collections. By reducing the tax burden and regulations on businesses, business owners would spend less time on government red tape, and have more resources for expanding & improving business, leading to more job opportunities, which leads to more workers and more tax base.

The legislature should consider a tax on the purchase of luxury items (but no sales tax on everyday essential items). With these other tax collections, property taxes could be reduced.

3. To keep the cost of rentals affordable, a reduction in property taxes and other taxes and fees levied on owners of rental properties, needs to occur. Reducing unnecessary regulations and oversight from the government will help keep building costs down, making new home

construction more affordable.

Many small businesses are losing their employees, in part, because those workers cannot afford housing in some regions of Montana. To help with this, I propose to provide tax breaks and waiving of building permit fees to businessmen who build housing units for their employees.

4. Voters can reach me at my email address at royhandley4montana@gmail.com with any concerns or issues they have. If elected I will look into additional means (perhaps meetings, social media, mailings) as avenues for voters to provide feedback and as a way to keep voters informed of the legislature's activities.



Katie Sullivan – D



Age: 41

Home: Missoula

Family: Husband and baby boy

Occupation: Attorney and small business owner

Education: BA Human

Biology University of Montana, JD University of Montana School of Law; LLM University of Colorado Law School

Contact information for voters:

KatieSullivanMT@gmail.com, 406-616-3914

1. Yes, I will absolutely vote to continue this program. It provides health insurance for ~100,000 Montanans, supports rural hospitals and rural jobs, and helps increase access to mental health care. It would be a real shame if the Montana legislature cannot find the votes to keep this excellent program running.

2. We need long-term property tax relief, not one-time-only rebates. Last session the legislature was warned that property tax increases were coming. Sadly, the Republican controlled legislature didn't act. Now we're all feeling the pinch with ~20% higher property tax bills. We must stop the shift of our property tax system onto homeowners and renters. A few ideas include a property tax "circuit breaker" where the amount of property tax is tied to income so homeowners are not overburdened by their property tax bills; a homestead exemption that reduces the taxable value of people's homes; and

better funding our public schools by the state.

3. Affordable housing is still one of the top issues in our state and something we must keep working on in the 2025 session. Last session I supported bills that streamlined review to accelerate home construction, the establishment of a state workforce housing tax credit to fund affordable housing projects, expanded legal protections for mobile home park tenants, and an investment program through the State's coal trust fund. I will make housing a priority again next session because we are not done fixing this big problem.

4. I am running to serve my fourth term in the legislature and have had the honor of representing the voters of Missoula, Clinton, Turah and Carlton for six years. I have always made sure that my contact information is available to my constituents so they can call/email/write me at any time to let me know where they stand on the issues. I also knock doors every election cycle and ask voters face-to-face "what issue is important to you?" and "what should I work on next session?" I take every concern seriously, no matter where someone stands on the political

spectrum.

HOUSE DISTRICT 94

Marilyn Marler – D



Age: 53

Home: Missoula

Family: Husband David Schmetterling

Occupation: executive director of a nature center and former natural areas land manager. I have served

three previous terms in the House.

Education: Master's Degree in Biology from UM, 1997; Bachelor's Degree in Biology from UC Davis, 1994

Contact information for voters: 406-544-7189 (voice or text), marilynmarler@gmail.com

1. Yes.

2. State government should pay for a larger share of basic services including schools and roads. Right now the state underfunds many basic services, leaving

Common sense leadership to build Montana's future

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Mark Thane

CANDIDATE FOR HOUSE DISTRICT 89

Paid for by Mark Thane for House District 89 ★ Democrat
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the shortfall to local governments. Local governments have to make up the difference with property taxes. Instead of paying a larger share of basic services, the GOP led legislature gave big income tax cuts to the wealthiest Montanans.

Another way is to let local communities make decisions about their taxes. For example, a few years ago Missoula County voters elected to have a small gas tax. The GOP led legislature quickly took away our right to do this. The result is more pressure on property tax.

3. State law could (and should) require denser zoning in urban/suburban areas so that houses are built on smaller lots that are closer to existing infrastructure.

Subsidies, interest free loans, and grants are appropriate for new construction if the new units are affordable and maintained as affordable in perpetuity (whether managed by a housing authority or held by a land trust, for example). Raising the minimum wage is appropriate. Housing prices are complicated and it will take a combination of approaches to make a difference.

4. I'm very reachable year round via email and telephone. I go door to door to reach out to new voters. I have a regular presence on social media (Facebook and Instagram) so I'm easy to find and engage with on-line. During the legislative session, I am grateful for Legislative Staff who help us organize incoming citizen feedback (phone calls or emails to specific committees, etc.). Constituent input is very important and I take it seriously.



Adam Henson – R



Age: 56

Home: Missoula, Montana region

Family: Married to the love of his life, Nancy, a loan officer. Three biological children, six bonus children by marriage. Grandfather to nine, and three “fur babies”.

Occupation: Decorated Retired Combat Veteran, Retired Law Enforcement

Education: Twenty-six years meritorious Marine and Army service - Arizona Western College Law Enforcement Academy, Federal Police Academy and Marine Corps Police Academy

1. Every Montana citizen deserves

high quality medical options. Why is there an increase of individuals 138% below the poverty level? Medicaid does not cover a significant segment of the average Montana citizenry. Medicaid contributes to primary care shortages, and Medicaid covered individuals have limited choices in accessing vital medical specialists. Medicaid expansion is a hidden national tax on citizens, fuels the nation's outrageous debt contributing to higher prices in every category. The solution is unleashing the many innovative medical models available coupled with extraordinary action to incentivize job creators paying higher wages and offering great medical benefits.

2. Property taxes on “market value” is theft. The “state” is the problem and people should refuse to accept this robbery under color of law. I advocate the immediate return of the recent “regulatory taking” to property owners. The state machine is voracious and crushing the common man. A massive overhaul of Montana's dysfunctional taxation system and school funding mechanisms is vital. Montana's governance should return to the local counties and its citizens. If not, Montana will simply be a playground for the wealthy and a tax payer subsidized recipient class.

3. Affordable housing starts with an immediate repeal of “market value” property taxes and a refund of the improper property tax payments. Call for an urgent Governor's executive order suspending any organization, landlord, state, county or city agency from issuing benefits to tax payer dependent non-citizens. Pass legislation criminalizing organizations trafficking tax payer subsidized non-citizens and terminate “refugee” relocations.

Ban federally funded housing developments not paying property taxes to city and county tax rolls. Establish transitional structured living communities with wrap around service programs for individuals struggling with addiction and mental health challenges. “Urban camping” should be prohibited statewide.

Incentivize and streamline permitting process for developers within guidelines to create affordable quality housing with environmentally safe green spaces and view sheds. Aggressively incentivize high wage industries to Montana and encourage unique opportunities

such as citizen owned REITS or other entrepreneurial private sector avenues to home ownership.

4. I participate in community activities, candidate forums, and along with volunteers been methodically visiting people street by street in my district HD94. Voters can visit my website, Facebook or contact us on my email, HensonforMontanaHD94@gmail.com.

HOUSE DISTRICT 95

Zoey Zephyr – D



Age: 35

Home: Missoula (Slant Streets)

Family: Fiancée (Erin Reed) and an 8-year-old soon-to-be stepson

Occupation: State Legislator

Education: University of Washington (BA Business; BA English)

Contact information for voters: ZoeyZephyr4mt@gmail.com

1. Yes, I would vote to continue Medicaid expansion past 2025. Because affordable health care is something all Montanans deserve, and the role of government is to care for the health, safety, and communal needs of the people, which includes our access to health care. Further, in a year where over 130,000 Montanans have lost access to Medicaid (that's over 10% of all Montanans), we need to not only vote for Medicaid expansion, but remove the burdensome administrative roadblocks that have been used to keep people from accessing the health care they need.

2. In the short-term the most effective way to reduce property taxes on Montanans is through the creation of a property tax circuit breaker similar to HB280 that Democrats proposed last legislative session, which would cap an individual's property taxes based on a percentage of their income, thereby protecting those with low/fixed income from skyrocketing property taxes. In the long-term, home prices must be stabilized/reduced through significantly increasing the housing inventory, particularly with homes at or below current market value. State government can assist in this long-term effort

through incentivizing and regulating, in part through the ways described in Question 3.

3. The primary factor in housing affordability is building new housing at a rate that exceeds new demand. In 2023, we passed a law allowing for duplexes in areas zoned for single-family housing. To encourage building, we should use both incentives and regulations, such as revising code around ADUs to make them easier to build, limiting locations that short-term rentals & property “investment” companies can operate, removing the law against inclusionary zoning, and incentivizing affordable housing projects, such as the Community Land Trust model, in order to assist with both first-time home buyers, as well as retired homeowners looking to downsize.

4. I often work from coffee shops throughout town, where I frequently chat with Missoulians about their hopes for Montana. I also have dialogue with folks through my website, email, and social media. I knock doors regularly and attend community events to learn about the issues important to various citizen groups. Further, I meet with other legislators throughout Missoula and across the state to discuss what each of them is hearing, and I also travel the country to talk to other legislators about the issues Missoula is facing and how they have attempted to tackle similar issues in their districts.

HOUSE DISTRICT 96

Bob Carter – D



Age: 58

Home: Missoula

Family: Married to Laurie for 22 years. We have three kids, Nick, Max and Ben in addition to more than two dozen wonderful foster kids.

Occupation: Public service volunteer, community advocate, Chief Information Officer, Software Developer, farm and ranch hand.

Education: BS in Computer Science from UM with minors in Math and Media Arts.

Contact information for voters: Website: CarterMT.us; Email: Bob@

CarterMT.us; phone: 406-788-0089. FB: <https://www.fb.com/BobCarter4Montana>. Act Blue donations from individuals only (no PAC money please): <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/bob-carter-for-hd-96-1>.

1. Medicaid expansion is critical for the healthcare of many Montanans, and is especially important in rural communities that run the risk losing medical services if the legislature does not act. The Federal government covers 90% of the cost—this is not a difficult decision.

2. First, the legislature should have paid attention when the Department of Revenue warned about the spike in property taxes before the last legislative session. This would have been much easier to prevent than trying to fix after the fact. Next, legislators need to work on comprehensive property tax reform that is fair across all sources, not by simply shifting the tax burden to homeowners and reducing taxes for corporations. Visitors to the state need to pay their share as well.

3. Make it easier to put higher density housing in areas that have

existing infrastructure rather than encouraging suburban sprawl. Promote workforce housing policies. When appropriate, subsidies could be an option. The challenge will be doing this in conjunction with keeping our air and water clean, and promoting green energy.

4. It is my goal to continue knocking on every door and talking with as many voters as I can. I believe that being active in the community where I have lived and served in for the past 17 years gives me a well-rounded perspective, as well as attending community functions and town hall meetings in our different neighborhoods.



Robert Labair – R



Age: 54

Home: Missoula region

Family: Husband to Holly

Occupation: Retired Montana Peace Officer,

Rancher, 10 X Ironman Triathlete

Education: Montana Law Enforcement Academy

Contact information for voters: LabairforMontanaHD96@gmail.com

1. My personal mission is to deliver excellent medical care to every Montanan no matter where they are located. Medicaid expansionists claim Montana has an increasing number of people who fall within 138% of the federal poverty level. Yet even fast food franchises offer medical benefits but have a shortage of workers. The average working Montanan does not qualify for Medicaid yet struggles to afford groceries. Medicaid expansion drives higher taxes and escalated consumer costs nationally. Montana must pivot to the successful innovative health care models available to all citizens rural or metropolitan.

2. Property taxes on current assessed market value is robbery. This unlawful seizure must be refunded to property owners. The issue of property taxes belongs to the individual counties and its citizens.

Reformation of Montana’s out of control spending, the taxation system and school funding mechanisms must be priority in this next session.

3. Affordable housing starts with expeditious property tax reformation, a repeal of current value property tax assessments along with at minimum a credit for improper property tax assessments. I advocate for Governor Gianforte to issue emergency orders prohibiting any organization, landlord, state, county or city agency from issuing benefits to tax payer dependent non-citizens. I intend to promote legislation criminalizing organizations trafficking tax payer subsidized non-citizens and terminate “refugee” relocations.

A prohibition statewide on federally backed housing development grants that do not pay property taxes to city and county tax rolls. Establish structured continuum of care transitional living communities with wrap for those suffering from addictions and mental health challenges. “Urban camping” should be prohibited.

4. Cutting red tape, and encouraging developers with incentives within environmentally friendly protocols to

create affordable quality housing with recreational bucolic green spaces. Pursue and promote policies that bring high wage jobs to Montana and nurture homeownership for citizens with educational workshops on the federal programs available and through entrepreneurial private sector financial vehicles.

HOUSE DISTRICT 97

Melody Cunningham – D



Age: 66

Home: Missoula, Montana

Family: Married with husband and one son.

Occupation: Physician and English Language Tutor

Education: BA in Literature and MD

Contact information for voters:

MelodyforMontana@gmail.com; <https://melodyformontana.org/>

1. Yes, I would vote to continue Medicaid expansion as it is Health Insurance for our working, low-income families. Not continuing this would negatively impact, the health of many Montanans, our economy, and viability of rural, critical-access hospitals. Without Medicaid coverage, our rural hospitals are in jeopardy of closing, thus further limiting accessible care for many Montanans.

2. The Legislature can lower the residential tax rate when assessed taxable values skyrocket, as they did this year. The state government can also limit the ability for centrally assessed companies (telecom, railroads and others that cross county lines) to negotiate their tax rates and make the negotiations transparent to the public. They can also expand the ability of local communities to enact tax decisions that make sense for their communities.

3. The measures to reduce property taxes in question 2 is one step, of the many, needed, to ensure affordable housing for Montana. What the University of Montana is doing in terms of renovating dorms and making them a viable choice for students enables them to afford housing and diminishes the pressure on housing availability and affordability. Changing restrictions on

building of Additional Dwelling Units to encourage building of these and utilizing existing infrastructure such as water and sewer will also help.

4. I would continue what I am doing by listening to voters concerns at the doors and being available and responsive by my phone and email which I include on my literature. I would make Zoom office hours available and provide updates on legislative issues through easily accessible social media. Periodically, I would hold Town Halls in the district on weekends or during transmittal when back in Missoula.



Richard L. Armerding – L



Age: 73

Home: Missoula County

Family: Single

Occupation: Retired international banker; former Major in the US Army Reserve

Education: MBA from The Wharton School, U. of Pennsylvania

Contact information for voters: 406-317-1318 (voice only)

1. I am in favor of private medical insurance instead of government programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. These programs are full of waste (because people use services they don't need simply because they are free) and fraud (because the system is so complicated and bloated that the bureaucrats can't keep up with the thieves). Private charities should be encouraged and enabled to help people who do not have sufficient resources to meet medical bills. Through regulation and bureaucracy, government makes medical care far more expensive than it is in other developed countries.

2. Montanans can control property taxes in two ways: (1) they can stop demanding more spending on public services and (2) they can vote for officials like me who will not just tax and spend.

3. Officials at city, county and state levels can stop making it more difficult and expensive to build affordable housing through planning and permitting. Missoula has three separate

levels of permitting for housing (most cities have one). Subsidies always distort the information that the free market provides both suppliers and consumers. It is also subject to inefficient management (by the government) and fraud by unscrupulous people. It would be far better to get the cost of housing down by (a) reducing inflation caused by government programs and (b) simplifying the permitting process.

4. By walking the precinct and talking to my constituents; look for me after the Primary Election.

HOUSE DISTRICT 98

Jonathan Karlen – D



Age: 25

Home: Missoula

Occupation: Research Associate, University of Montana Boone and Crockett Wildlife Conservation Program (full time); State Representative; Watershed science instructor; ski coach

Education: University of Montana: Bachelors in Wildlife Biology with a Climate Change studies Minor; Masters in Public Administration.

Contact information for voters: Cell 406-851-9226; Jonathan.Karlen@legmt.gov

1. Yes, I will vote to continue Montana's Medicaid program because access to high-quality, affordable healthcare is a basic right. Expanded Medicaid is fiscally responsible and ensures that tens of thousands of Montanans have access to their life-saving medication, can seek preventive care, and it minimizes the amount of time Montanans need to be away from school and work. Reauthorizing Medicaid expansion also reduces the burden of uncompensated healthcare and is critical for the viability of Montana's rural healthcare providers.

2. Last session I sponsored HB 280, which would have saved homeowners and renters thousands of dollars and provided long-term stability for seniors. The bill capped property tax liability at a portion of household income and issued a tax credit if a tax bill surpassed that threshold. While the

legislation earned bipartisan support and passed the Tax Committee, it was killed by House Republicans in favor of one-time rebates. In preparation for next session, I've been working with diverse stakeholders on policies including a homestead exemption, housing fairness tax credit, and tax rate adjustments to ensure residential payers aren't subsidizing large corporations.

3. Public-private partnerships, along with state and local government collaboration, are needed to make housing more affordable and homeownership more attainable. There are several existing programs which the legislature can allocate a portion of the budget surplus to. For example, revolving low-interest loans are helping develop the infrastructure needed for affordable housing. Montana can also better leverage federal dollars through a tax credit that aligns with the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program. By working with local governments, we can also reduce sprawl and ensure that infrastructure is developed in coordination with housing so that our quality of life is maintained.

4. I actively solicit input from constituents to guide how I represent them in Helena. I hold town-hall events where constituents can get an update on what I am working on and share their priorities with me. I also attend local meetings, such as the Hellgate school board, Smurfit-Stone Community Advisory Group, community councils, and HOAs, when my schedule allows. I ensure that my cell number and email are readily available and I keep my website and social media updated. During the campaign, I strive to knock every door so that voters have the chance to chat with me in person.

HOUSE DISTRICT 99

Tom France – D



Age: 72

Home: 5900 Thornbird Lane, Missoula, MT 59808

Family: I am married to Meg Haenn and we have three adult children, daughters Sonja and Toni and son

Luke

Education: B.A. in History, University of Montana; J.D. University of Montana School of Law

Contact information for voters: thomasmfrance@gmail.com

1. I will vote to continue Medicaid expansion in the 2025 Legislature. In total, 239,000 Montanans, men, women and children, depend on Medicaid for their health insurance. Beyond cutting off the health care needed by many Montanans, ending Montana's Medicaid partnership with the federal government would severely impact many hospitals and lead to hospital closures throughout rural Montana. Continuing Medicaid is one of my highest legislative priorities.

2. In the 2023 legislative session, the Republican supermajority refused to address property tax reform and as a result property taxes skyrocketed for homeowners even as they were reduced for utilities and corporations. We must bring tax fairness back to our property tax system by creating a tax formula that ensures commercial and residential properties rise proportionally. We also need to protect homeowners on fixed incomes.

3. Are subsidies appropriate? In the last session, bi-partisan legislation provided tax incentives for landlords and low interest loans for builders. This legislation should help increase the supply of housing which will hopefully stabilize housing and rental costs. Through bi-partisan legislation, we also modified zoning laws to promote denser, more affordable housing development. The next legislature needs to ensure that our loan and incentive programs are adequately funded. I also think the state needs to partner with banks and credit unions to develop a mortgage program that makes housing more affordable for first time buyers.

4. Because Montana's Legislature only meets every other year and for 90 days, our state representatives and senators are not professional politicians but citizens who want to participate in government. Our citizen legislature is a great strength because legislators live in the communities they represent, hearing constantly from constituents who are also their friends and neighbors. In addition, I hear from constituents through letters, emails and phone calls and I make a point to

door-knock almost every home in my district during my campaign. There is no doubt that affordable housing and property tax reform will be priorities in the 2025 Legislature because of citizen input.

HOUSE DISTRICT 100

SJ Howell – D



Age: 43

Home: Missoula

Family: Partner, Zuri and son, Adrien (12)

Occupation: Executive Director of Montana Women Vote, a state-wide nonprofit

Education: BA from University of Montana

Contact information for voters: sjhowell4mt@gmail.com, www.howellformontana.com

1. Yes, I will vote to continue Medicaid expansion. Medicaid expansion has been a crucial program for Montana over the last decade, ensuring that working Montanans have access to quality, affordable health care. Medicaid expansion has kept the doors of our rural hospitals open, has supported small businesses by creating a healthy workforce, and has brought millions of dollars of revenue into the state. Medicaid expansion is also an important piece of the puzzle when addressing challenges such as mental health care, substance use disorder, and homelessness. I support continuing Medicaid expansion past 2025.

2. I believe there are two important ways the state can reduce the property tax burden on working Montanans: first, by creating tax credits for all Montanans (similar to the Elderly Homeowner Tax Credit) that limit property taxes based on income, so nobody is taxed out of their home; and second, by stopping the tax shift from corporations and utilities to homeowners and renters. We all benefit from the infrastructure and services that government provides - including big corporations - so we should all be paying our fair share - including big corporations.

3. I believe the state can do a lot more to create affordable housing in

Montana. We can invest directly in development of new affordable and market-rate housing, we can offer low-cost loans to private developers, we can strengthen renters' rights and protect existing affordable housing like mobile home parks from predatory out-of-state buyers. The state has an existing emergency rental support program as well as a voucher program for veterans and families that can be expanded.

4. I love communicating with voters in my district! I've been out knocking on doors to meet and hear from folks and will continue to do so throughout the year. I try to attend as many community events as possible and of course make my website, email, and phone number available for voters to contact me directly. I've learned a lot from my constituents while serving as a state representative over the last two years, and look forward to continuing to ensure that the voters in House District 100 have someone in Helena willing to fight for them.



Christopher Paul Buckles – R



Age: 53

Home: 8420 Pheasant Drive, Missoula

Family: Married with four children, two boys, two girls

Occupation: CEO Big Sky Life Support HCBS

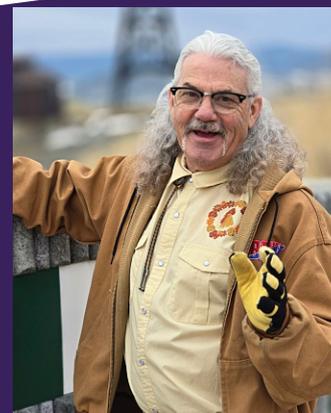
Education: double major in healthcare administration and sociology graduating magna cum laude. 18,000 certified life coaching hours. Provider for the state of Montana on the SDMI & DD waivers

Contact information for voters: 406-880-0184, bucklesco@live.com, https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554565462391&mibextid=LQQJ4d

1. Yes! Our members and the more than 5,000 on the waitlist for services depend on it.

2. The only way to reduce taxes for individuals is by producing commodities within the state of Montana that we can tax in lieu of taxing an individual's property.

Lenny Williams for PSC



Leadership for the Montana Public Service Commission District 3

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



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

3. Without subsidize housing, there would be thousands of Montanans who cannot afford to live. A housing voucher should come with your SSI or SSDI benefits.

4. The population of members that we serve currently live in house district 100. I've been walking through the neighborhoods and talking to citizens. I am always available for a phone call and try my very best to respond to emails. I also make it a point to shop small businesses within HD 100 to stay in touch with business owners.

SENATE DISTRICT 5

Matt Regier – R



Age: 44

Home: Kalispell

Occupation:
Construction

Education: Flathead High School, BA from University of Montana

Contact information

for voters: 406-284-5639; regierSD5.com; regiersd5@gmail.com

1. Montana, as well as America, has a welfare cliff math problem. The welfare cliff is where the government, State and Federal, offer so many welfare benefits that low income earners will actually lose money by increasing their earned income. This is causing an incentive to stay on all forms of welfare and a disincentive to secure employment and earn income. This is backwards. We have a traditional Medicaid program with 130,000 Montanans currently enrolled. The expansion program is on top of those numbers and has enrollees that are able bodied adults, earning higher wages. I believe that the government safety net is there to help citizens get back on their feet. Success of a welfare program is working till no one needs it anymore. Failure of the welfare system is getting as many as you can enrolled. We already have traditional Medicaid, Montana does not need to continue a billion dollar a year expansion program too. Also in 2018 the voters of Montana said no to the Medicaid Expansion program, the legislature should listen to the people and not renew the program.

2. Across our state but especially in

the west property taxes have become unmanageable. There is not a single silver bullet that can drastically reduce our property tax. Each contributor to the high tax price tag must work together to provide relief for homeowners. At the state level we could start by mitigating the state property tax rate. In 2017 I supported House Bill 558 which lowered the state property tax rate. It died before getting to the Governor's desk. In 2021, House Bill 636 would have done the same, lowering the state's rate on property tax. Unfortunately it didn't even get out of committee. The state can do with less revenue from homeowners. At the state level we can also implement code reforms. One example are levies that are approved by voters are property tax increases that stay forever. A community of two or three decades ago could be quite different then the community today. Why should the residents of 30 years ago determine part of your property tax mills? At least every ten years a community should get the chance to review levies in place and vote if they want to continue that property tax burden. These are a few simple ideas the state could implement to help relieve property tax burden.

3. The state can help lower the price of housing by getting out of the way. Growing up in the Flathead in the 90s, I used to see signs all over the place that stated "this family supported by timber dollars". It is no coincidence that our lumber mills are gone as well as those signs. All of the decisions by judges, legislators (state and federal) and elected officials to stop managing our natural resources has contributed to housing material rising in cost. As well as the decisions to over regulate, what can and cannot be built and how big the lots must be. Also the demand has risen with the influx of migration to our state. I don't blame anyone for moving here. There is no better place on earth to live, work and play. However we as a state do not have to spend state dollars on a marketing blitz in New York or San Francisco to get people to come to Montana. At the state level we need to do a better job of protecting life here in Montana and not trying to incentivize out of state change. Those are a few contributing factors to an increase in housing costs. There are not enough tax dollars in the state for housing subsidies to even move the needle. Cup



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

The Montana State Capitol in Helena

of water on a forest fire.

4. That is what is great about living in my district. I was born and raised here. I went to grade school in Senate District 5. Living life in this district is the best way to know what neighbors, friends and the community are living too. For example I have many good friends with homes on Flathead lake (hopefully someday I can join that club). When the lake never made it to full pool that was a detriment felt by all of us.



Link Neimark – D



Age: 70

Home: Whitefish

Family: wife, Marya, and two rescue dogs, Indie and Sadie

Occupation: ski instructor and real estate Investor

Education: Bachelor's Degree, Zoology, University of Wisconsin; Bachelor's Degree, Psychology, University of Wisconsin; Master's Degree, Oceanography, University of Alaska

Contact information for voters: Phone 406-500-5484; email info@Link4SD5.com; Website Link4SD5.com

1. Absolutely! Thousands of our neighbors rely on this program for

access to health care. Ninety percent of the funding is provided by the Federal government and results in a huge infusion of capital into our economy. Additionally, Medicaid and Medicaid Expansion dollars are an income source for rural hospitals and medical centers. Constricting this income stream would impact the profitability of rural health centers. If these were to close, then rural citizens (with or without Medicaid) would loose access to health care. Not only is reauthorization the right thing to do, it is also economically the smart thing to do.

2. Due to an influx of out-of-state buyers, property values and the associated property taxes have skyrocketed. It is only fair that some of this burden gets shifted to out-of-state buyers and wealthy individuals with more than one home. The easiest way to accomplish this is ironically with a small property tax rate increase, more than offset by a rebate to local residents on their primary home. Currently those residents can file for a \$650 rebate. I would increase that amount to \$1200 (but not to exceed their tax bill) and have it appear as a credit on their tax bill.

3. Formulate state-wide rules for ADUs to encourage construction of these "backyard homes" as long as they are used for long-term rentals. Encourage developers (through permitting restrictions or tax incentives) to construct a percentage of deed-

restricted units (inside or outside a development) for purchase by moderate income families. Likewise promote development of deed-restricted affordable tiny-home subdivisions. Coal trust funds could be allocated to provide low-interest mortgage loans. Taxpayers dislike the cost of subsidies; but there are also real costs to having people unhoused including safety concerns, interference in local commerce and tourism, and a general degradation of ambiance in our communities.

4. I am a servant of the people. Open communication is the first step in identifying the needs of my constituents. Besides the obvious lines of communication like phone, email, and social media, I feel that face-to-face contact is a must, best accomplished with an open-door policy and by hosting town hall meetings. Recently, I have been door-knocking and asking you what issues are most important. It's been a pleasure meeting so many of you and learning what I will need to do to address your concerns and improve the quality of life here in the beautiful Flathead Valley.

SENATE DISTRICT 39

Bruce Shultz – D

Age: 59

Family: I have been married to my wife, Wendy Palmer for 33 years. We have a son, Jack who is 30. We have a daughter Georgia, who is 28. Her husband is Rowdy Hansen. They have a daughter Laynie, who is one.

Occupation: I am a rancher, but I have had several different careers to go along with ranching. I have been a crop adjuster, forester, life insurance agent and vice-president of National Farmers Organization.

Education: I have a BS in Forestry Resource Management from University of Montana.

Contact information for voters: phone 406-750-1776, Email tfranch@3rivers.net, Social media: facebook Bruce Shultz SD39

1. Yes I would vote to expand Medicaid past 2025. Health care is vital and should be a fundamental right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Many Montanans need the financial help that this program affords. Without Medicaid, many citizens

would not see a health care professional when they first feel sick due to cost. It has been proven that it is way more cost effective to have expanded Medicaid than to have to pay emergency room expenses and to help prevent catastrophic illnesses which are more expensive to treat.

2. Our governor could have made an adjustment to the tax rate, as many governors have done before. I believe this was done to create a push to install a sales tax in Montana. A sales tax would negatively affect year-round residents and only benefit the rich out-of-stators who live here part-time and do not spend a high percentage of their money in Montana. We need to tax vacation house rentals as commercial properties. This revenue can be used to offset residential taxes. We need to adjust the value of vacation homes, where people live in Montana less than six months.

3. In the last few years our governor and legislature have taken away local control of municipalities which were mandating that new developments be required to have some affordable housing incorporated in the plans. They have sided with developers who only care about profit and not Montanans. We need to allow communities to zone themselves; they know best what

the needs of the residents are.

4. The main way of communicating is listening to the concerns of the voters in Senate District 39. I plan on visiting the various counties and towns that SD 39 encompasses. I would work with the local governments, whether city or county to prioritize the needs of the people. I have started a social media page for my candidacy and will use it to also communicate to my district's citizens directly.

SENATE DISTRICT 45

Devin Jackson – D

Age: 46

Home: Lolo

Occupation: Small business owner – audio engineer

Education: Associates Degree – Recording Engineer



Contact information for voters: Jackson4MT.org; djackson@jackson4mt.org; 406-239-5304

JON TESTER
votes with Biden-Tester-Harris
95% of the time

Reject Jon Tester on Nov. 5th

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1. Yes, There are multiple hospitals and clinics in my district. They only way they stay open is if Medicaid expansion is continued. They are key economic drivers in these small communities and any good legislator must try to keep them running.

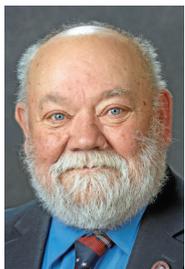
2. The same way they did every other time our property values changed in the last 50 years, the legislature must adjust the Mill Rate. The Department of Revenue told the GOP Supermajority that if they didn't adjust the Mill Rate from 1.35 to 0.95 Montana residents would face the largest property tax increase in history, and they just didn't do it. We must do it.

3. Are subsidies appropriate? Yes. The only way to address our housing shortage is to increase inventory. The legislature took every roadblock stopping development out last session but the housing still isn't being built. The only way to guarantee that housing gets built is if the state actually invests in building housing.

4. I have put on thousands of miles trying to cover a district that includes part (or all of) 3 counties. The best way to communicate is in person. However a lot of my business is in conferencing systems, and I think we need to upgrade the outreach and testimony standards to make it easier to hear from Montanans without making them drive to Helena. My first goal is to be available to the people I represent. Montana deserves us to put community before politics.



Denley Loge— R



Age: 73

Home: 1294 Four Mile Road, St. Regis, Montana

Family: Single

Occupation: Rancher

Education: BA Geography, UM

Contact information

for voters: Phone 1-406-544-5220, www.denleyloge.com, denleylogehd14@gmail.com; Denley Loge for SD45

1. The statistics show that 60 percent Montana employers have one or more workers on Medicaid. It is essential to continue for a healthy workforce and so taxpayers do not end up paying for emergency room services for uninsured persons.

2. It is not an easy solution since the property tax rules are so complex. Readjusting the classification percentages

can help. Hitting second trophy homes with a different rate can help as well as a homestead formula for long term residents. Raising the threshold percentage for passing mill Levy's may create a more accountable voter.

3. No subsidized housing that takes pride away from ownership. Speedier permitting helps save interest money. Some tax incentives to builders if properly administered, especially set for workforce housing. Possible revolving grants.

4. My phone number, website and email address are all easy to find. I receive information through those sources and share information back out through those means as well as the newspaper. The size and population of this district will mean very different areas of importance but with my wife background and experience, I can help those various important issues.



Kelley Durbin-Williams – I



Age: 54

Home: Huson

Family: Husband Jason Williams, four children

Occupation: CEO/ Founder of Mismo Gymnastics, Dance, Cheer & Ninja (23 years)

Education: Bachelor of Science Degree in Exercise Science Fort Hays State University—Hays, KS 1994

Contact information for voters: kdwformt@gmail.com

1. YES

2. There are currently 12 recommendations coming to the legislature from the Property Tax Task Force. I found the "Truth In Taxation", "Homestead/Comstead Exemption", and "10-Year Sunset on Voted Levies" to have the most value. I am currently in support of the committee's recommendations. We will have to look closely at the models created to see the effects on the budget to insure we don't inadvertently reduce state income to a point that negatively affects government services supported by SD 45. I do want to see us taking a deeper dive on TIF reform.

3. The latest report Aug. 21, 2024, from the Governor's Housing Task Force brings 23 new recommendations with an emphasis on building regulation reform and financial solutions. Having reviewed the initial report, I think the bigger challenge will be to find a balance between the state government

recommendations and local government support. We need to ensure any laws passed support the desires of the communities being impacted. I tend to lean towards keeping things as local as possible. I will have to do more research on whether or not subsidies are appropriate. I am open to input and wisdom from SD45.

4. Knocking the doors of SD45 has been amazing. They are good, honest, and hardworking Montanans. I also enjoy the community council meetings, school board meetings, commissioner meetings and any other "town hall" events I am invited to join. I am much more interested in the individuals and communities than I am in the parties, which is why I am running as an INDEPENDENT. It is my intent to check in at least monthly via a "Virtual Town Hall Meeting" with SD45. I want to be the conduit between the State Government and the people we purport to represent.

SENATE DISTRICT 46

Jacinda Morigeau – D



Age: 36

Home: Arlee

Family: long-term significant other

Occupation: communications manager at United Way of Missoula County

Education: BA from the University of Montana, Jacinda@JacindaForMontana.com; 406-298-3416; JacindaForMontana.com

1. I wholeheartedly support Medicaid expansion. Before Medicaid expansion, there was a gap where many couldn't afford coverage, leaving them uninsured and driving up healthcare costs for everyone. Ensuring affordable coverage is crucial as the cost of living rises, impacting people's ability to meet basic needs. Access to healthcare isn't just about financial costs; it's about enabling participation in communities—working, volunteering, supporting families—that enriches society. Continuing Medicaid expansion past 2025 is essential for fostering healthier communities and ensuring everyone can access the care they need to thrive.

2. To reduce property taxes for everyday Montanans, we can implement a Housing Fairness Credit, providing relief to families with lower and moderate incomes. Coupling this with a homestead exemption would further alleviate the burden on homeowners. Instead of income tax rate

reductions benefiting the wealthy, the focus should shift toward fairer taxation, like a top income tax bracket for high earners. This ensures everyone contributes their fair share, aligning with Montana values of community responsibility. Such measures not only address rising property taxes but also promote equity and stability in our revenue system, benefiting all Montanans.

3. Montana can enhance housing affordability by establishing housing trust funds, utilizing real estate transfer taxes and other revenue sources. These funds can leverage public and private investments, ensuring affordability for low- and moderate-income households. Implementing Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) provides crucial financial support for developers, subsidizing construction costs and rent for qualified residents. Additionally, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) facilitates neighborhood improvements, including housing development. These measures, along with sustained commitment and community collaboration, form a comprehensive strategy to address Montana's housing affordability challenges.

4. Our campaign launched just five weeks ago, and we are prioritizing direct, face-to-face conversations with voters at their doors to understand their concerns firsthand. For those we can't meet in person, we're reaching out via phone and mail to ensure we are connecting with voters, and there is a chance for everyone's voice to be heard. Additionally, we've created a website for further information and questions. We're eager to connect with voters to address the issues you care about. Throughout our campaign and my time representing the people of Senate District 46 I will prioritize communicating and listening.

SENATE DISTRICT 47

Ellie "Hill" Boldman – D



Family: Married to Dr. Tyler Smith; three kids (Elliot, Evan, Jackson) and one Corgi (Charlie).

Occupation: Montana Senator (since 2001, elected for six previous terms). Practicing attorney. Nonprofit

director. Proudly represent ALL people in Missoula. Support thrift stores, college sports, and socioeconomic justice. Always in search of common ground and good Montana beer.

Contact information for voters: Email

EllieMarieBoldman@gmail.com;
Twitter @EllieHill

1. I co-sponsored Montana's bipartisan Medicaid expansion effort in 2015, during the Bullock Administration, and how far we have fallen. Medicaid unwinding under Governor Gianforte: 120,707 Montanans, including 12,857 American Indians, 24,000 children, all lost health insurance. The vast majority – 64 percent – have had their coverage terminated due to procedural reasons, not because they were ineligible. Elections have consequences. There is nothing excusable about this. Kids having health care didn't used to be a partisan issue. Continuing Montana's current Medicaid program is critical for our Montana workforce and families.

2. 12 months ago, we walked into the Montana Capitol with a 2 billion dollar budget surplus. Yes, that says, billion. I'll tell you who is to blame. Instead of creating a once in a generation response, fully funding public schools in rural, urban, and Tribal Montana, the GOP supermajority raised taxes for homeowners by \$200 million & cut taxes for those "small business owners", the one the Governor keeps talking about... like Northwestern Energy, cut their taxes by 36 million, Charter Communications by 1.8 million, Montana Rail Link by 2.8 million. All on the backs of our counties & cities & homeowners.

3. We are limited to 100 words, which ceases to understand the complexity of the housing crisis in Montana, undoubtedly one of our most critical issues for the 2025 legislative session. I was appointed in 2021 and 2023 to the Governor's Housing Task Force, working on both sides of the aisle on solutions for rural, urban, and Tribal Montana. Incentivize the private sector and reduce the onerous, outdated regulations of local governments. Also: increase supply of market rate, workforce, rental housing, invest in crisis beds and transitional housing for targeted, at-risk populations, including mental illness/substance use, give communities essential tools to end homelessness.

4. News flash! I'll scream from the mountain tops to let my constituents know that their rights are on fire. It's never been more real in Montana. What's at stake? Our Constitutional right to make autonomous medical decisions, equality for all, a clean and healthful environment, access to voting rights, public education, your increased property taxes... shall I go on? I'll maintain my solid voting record, tout my endorsements from organizations like Montana Conservation Voters, Planned Parenthood,

MEA/MFP, AFL-CIO because they represent the values I believe in and the rights that are under attack.



Abigail Maki – R



Age: 38

Home: Missoula

Family: Married, with four children.

Occupation: Business owner.

Education: BA in journalism, from the

University of MT.

Contact information for voters: www.abby4montana.com

1. I recognize the benefits that Medicaid expansion brings to rural hospitals, ensuring essential healthcare services for our communities. Continuing this program past 2025 could be vital for maintaining these services. One area I would look into further, is a qualification for children with disabilities to automatically qualify for Medicaid. Right now, many children with disabilities are on the Medicaid waiver waitlist- preventing them from accessing crucial services.

However, we must manage entitlement spending responsibly. It's a delicate balance, and I would explore options that ensure accountability, like incorporating work reporting requirements. Another thing to consider is a termination clause for the expansion to give Montana an opportunity to reassess. Ultimately, my vote would depend on a thorough assessment of the program's impact on both rural healthcare and fiscal sustainability, while also considering ways to ensure that taxpayer dollars are used effectively and transparently.

2. Lowering Montana's property taxes is crucial due to their growing burden on homeowners. Many families are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the rising property tax bills, which are eating into their budgets and making homeownership less affordable. The current method of calculating property taxes often leads to significant fluctuations in tax increases, causing uncertainty and financial strain for homeowners. By implementing measures to lower property taxes and stabilize their fluctuations, we can provide relief to Montana homeowners and ensure that

they can afford to stay in their homes without sacrificing other essential needs. This will not only ease the financial burden on families but also contribute to the overall economic stability and well-being of our community. I would look at solving this issue by restructuring the current assessment process, and limiting rates on base increases by basing taxes on the purchase of the individual's home- and not on the data of presumed value of neighbors/surrounding properties. We need to simplify how property taxes are calculated, and bring simplicity and transparency to the formulas used for special assessments. In addition to this- Missoulians reading this must know that your local city council can also raise your property taxes- and they have through consistent levies. In their 2025 budget they voted to raise your property taxes by 4.2 percent for next year. Local government spending is out of control and forcing Missoulians to leave the city. I believe a truth in taxation bill would allow for local spending transparency, and hold city council accountable to raising the cost of living for our citizens.

3. First and foremost, we must streamline regulations and zoning

restrictions that hinder the construction of new housing units. We had several bills come out of Helena last session that were good bills on reforming zoning- this is a good start. We should do more to streamline zoning and permitting, to allow for a builder friendly environment.

Additionally, we should explore incentives for developers to build affordable housing without imposing burdensome mandates or subsidies. Tax incentives, expedited permitting processes, can all incentivize the creation of new housing units without placing undue strain on taxpayers.

4. I believe in staying connected with the residents in my district by keeping an open line of communication. I plan to use the collective voice of my voters to help create policy that fits the lifestyle Montanans need and want. Now more than ever, we need to bridge gaps and empower voters to be more involved. Whether it's meeting with individual residents or local businesses, I want to listen to their stories, better understand their needs, and make sure their concerns drive my actions in representing our community.

Vote

Melody Cunningham

CIVIL CONVERSATIONS FOR SHARED SENSIBLE SOLUTIONS

HOUSE
DISTRICT
97

As your elected representative, I will continue to advocate for:

- ▶ Affordable and accessible healthcare
- ▶ Privacy for patients, families and doctors to make best, personal medical decisions
- ▶ High-quality public schools and the Montana University System
- ▶ Fair taxes and safe, affordable housing

Please contact me with questions and ideas

E-Mail: MelodyforMontana@gmail.com

Online: Melodyformontana.com

Paid for by Melody for Montana, PO Box 5872, Missoula, MT 59806, Barbara Berens, Treasurer

RE-ELECT David Bedey

Republican – House District 86

- **Effective**

In the top 5 of all 100 Montana Representatives for passing bills into law.

- **Conservative**

Carried legislation that

- increases school choice within the public K-12 system.
- provides for secure, data-based assessment of education programs funded by the legislature.
- increases the security of Montana’s election system.
- recognizes the role played by county veteran service centers.
- ensures local elected officials play a leading role in setting public health policy.



Supports increasing workforce training opportunities.

Supports legislation that protects the unborn and your constitutional rights.

Supports amending the U.S. Constitution to require balancing the federal budget.

- **Leader**

Chairs a committee responsible for oversight of state-level education agencies.

Chairs a committee currently working on options for property tax relief.

Committed to finding prudent solutions to the challenges facing Montanans, preserving our Montana way of life, restoring civility to our politics, and resisting radical threats to our constitutional order no matter whether they come from the far left or the far right.

Montana Conservative Index	A	Montana Family Foundation	98%
Montana Chamber of Commerce	99%	United Property Owners of MT	95%
Montana Contractors Association	94%	National Rifle Association	A
Montana Farm Bureau	91%		

READY TO KEEP WORKING FOR YOU AND ALL MONTANANS!



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