

*Independent Record*



# 2022 PRIMARY ELECTION GUIDE

FEATURING SURVEY RESPONSES FROM THE  
CANDIDATES IN CONTESTED HELENA-AREA ELECTIONS

## ABOUT

Primary election ballots were mailed to voters on the absentee list May 13 and must be received by election officials by the time the polls close at 8 p.m. on Election Day June 7. The candidates in the following contested primaries provided these written responses to an Independent Record survey. Surveys were not sent to candidates in uncontested primary elections.

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## US HOUSE DISTRICT 2

### Kyle Austin, Republican

**Age:** 39

**Address:** 1410 38th ST W Billings, MT 59102

**Contact info:** www.pharm406/congress  
pharm406@outlook.com



Austin

**Education:** Doctor of Pharmacy

**Occupation:** Pharmacist

**Relevant experience:** 14 years of health-care experience and over 30 years

of agricultural experience

#### Why are you running for this office?

Montana needs a stronger candidate from Montana to tackle the main problems facing Montana and the United States. Those issues are healthcare and agriculture.

#### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I hope to accomplish an active leadership role among other representatives so we can make progress regarding Healthcare and Agriculture. I have 2 platforms this election, "one plan" is directed to fixing healthcare nationwide and "Ag for All" is directed towards fixing agriculture.

#### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I was born and raised in Montana, I am a pharmacist, and I am a farmer.

I was born and raised in Havre, MT and graduated from Havre High School in 2001. I completed my pre-pharmacy coursework at the Montana State University Northern prior to being accepted to the University of Montana Pharmacy School in Missoula, MT. I graduated with my Doctorate in Pharmacy (PharmD) in the fall of 2008.

I was raised on my grandfather's farm west of Havre where I learned the challenges of dry land farming and the care of his livestock. Following graduation and my grandfather's passing, I continued my passion for the agricultural industry while working as a pharmacist.

Considering the pandemic of 2020, I took my staffing company Pharm406 to the next level to serve Montanan's. I opened an innovative retail pharmacy in Billings, MT in August of 2020. The pharmacy offers all the services of a normal pharmacy but exceeds the expectations with our walk in, no appointment necessary model, offering specialized prescription packaging, vaccination, cryotherapy, and our lab. I created a mobile vaccine clinic that we have used to reach the entire State of Montana, mostly rural communities. I partnered with other locally owned businesses, like brewery's, to provide access to all vaccines for those who wanted them. My wonderful staff and myself have proudly vaccinated over 40,000 residents in this great state this past year that chose to do so without mandates!

Through my career and childhood, Montana born and raised, I have endured the same challenges all Montanan's are facing when it comes to healthcare, agriculture, and the new problem of rapid population growth. Our current and preceding elected officials have failed Montanan's; therefore, I have decided to step forward and give voters like you a choice for our future. My main platforms this election is "ONE PLAN" and "AG for ALL"

Let's talk about a healthcare solution, it called "ONE PLAN". One plan will do many things for example, Establish the "United States Health Plan Corporation", leveling the playing field in the marketplace between providers, consolidating government resources, and once and for all create an affordable health plan for all. ONE PLAN will build the strongest healthcare system in the world. Healthcare is about "people helping people"; not how profitable an insurance company can get.

Let's talk about an agricultural solution, it called "Ag for ALL". Ag for All will do many great things for our state and our country. Currently, agricultural producers are underpaid every

year with market prices and are heavily subsidized by taxpayers leading to an increase in national debt. One portion of Ag for all will require USDA to set market floor limits on commodity prices. Therefore, the farmer and rancher will get paid fairly for there commodity from the country they are sold to. Ag for all will also restrict the importation of commodity's we have in our own country. Ag for All will also allow for local ranchers to have their own feed lots and processing facilities without the red tape of the USDA and local health departments!

I created the campaign slogan "Gear Up Montana", like air-planes departing and retracting the gears. In DC, Montana is continually stuck in the mud and us Montanans deserve more from our elected officials. As a pharmacist I have focused on accelerating my patient's health to higher altitudes and stepped forward during this pandemic. As a representative my focus will be to move us forward while gaining us altitude, so "Gear Up Montana" and support Austin for Congress!

### James Boyette, Republican

**Age:** 29

**Address:** 15 Macee Lane Bozeman, MT 59718

**Contact info:** 208-859-4285  
James.m.boyette13@gmail.com

**Education:** Boise State University

**Occupation:** Medical Sales-Women's health



Boyette

**Relevant experience:** Aside from being 29, an American citizen and living in Montana, I do not have many of the "stereotypical" qualifications

that many politicians have. What I do have is a culmination of experiences from working in the medical sales field, from speaking with a variety of people throughout the country and in other countries. I believe

that knowing and experiencing first hand what Americans struggle with when it comes to job income, housing, healthcare, and many other struggles is a huge factor for me. I believe that the country needs less "politicians" and more representatives who care about the people they are representing, representatives who are willing to listen to those whom they do not always agree with, and representatives who are willing to seek solutions that will benefit the people they represent and strive to leave the country and their districts better off than what it was when they were elected.

#### Why are you running for this office?

I'll be straightforward with you, for my entire life, I have always disliked politics and politicians. I had always seen politicians as overpaid, corrupt individuals, who lie and talk a big game, but do nothing to represent the wants or needs of the people and only care about their own self interest. To top that off, I never would have ever thought that I would even consider getting involved in the political scene, nonetheless running for any political office.

This had all changed after my wife, Alivia, and I had been seeing our daughter struggling with her schooling and the mixture of social media, bullying and lack of care from a variety of schools that had pushed her into a bad spot mentally. Which resulted in us making the decision to homeschool her. We had experienced first hand the financial struggles that many others have had as a result of Covid and decisions made by the Biden administration that had resulted in us missing out on multiple paychecks, which had made it difficult to pay for bills, groceries and rent. We had seen everything going on with our economy, with China, with Russia, with fuel prices, supply chain problems, healthcare and so much more.

#### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

What I hope to accomplish as

## US HOUSE DISTRICT 2

Congressman is to bring back what it means to be a representative of the people. If elected, I believe that my primary responsibility is to the people of Montana and to ensure that I am doing everything in my power to address the issues that are being faced here at home and then making sure their voices are heard in D.C. I am tired of politicians who have so much to say, but take no actions to change the problems. I will be fighting tooth and nail to make changes happen, and to find solutions to problems that are being faced. In today's political environment, it feels like both parties are so caught up with fighting back and forth, that they forget that their responsibility is to do right by the people that they are representing. I want to begin putting an end to that division and strive to find ways to work across the aisle and ensure that every piece of legislation that is proposed and passed is in the best interest of the American people.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

What makes me stand out as a candidate is that I am not a politician and do not have a political background. I am not tied to the idea that in order for one political party to be right, the other has to be wrong. The only reason that I am running for Congress is to ensure that Montana has a representative that genuinely cares more about the people than himself. I am tired of seeing so many politicians who become so entrenched in how they can make the most money from whomever they can, begin selling out their integrity to the highest bidder and lose sight of their purpose which is to represent the will of the people who elected them. I want to change that.

### Matt Rosendale, Republican

**Age:** 61

**Address:** 1954 Hwy 16, Glendive, MT 59330

**Contact info:** info@mattfor-montana.com, 406-763-1234

**Education:** Queen Anne's

County High School

**Occupation:** Montana's Congressman

**Relevant experience:** I have an extensive background in both business and real estate. I served in the Montana State Legislature from 2011 until 2016, when I was elected as Montana's State Auditor and Insurance Commissioner.



**Rosendale**

During my tenure in the legislature I also served as the Senate Majority Leader. I have served as Montana's Congressman since January of 2021 as a Member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, (Subcommittee on Health, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization). As well as on the Committee on Natural Resources (Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, the Subcommittee on the Indigenous Peoples of the United States).

### Why are you running for this office?

I am running for re-election because I would like to continue working for the people of Montana in Congress. We need a Representative who will fight against Biden and Pelosi's socialist policies — and I've proudly voted against their reckless spending and fought government overreach at every turn.

As Montana's Congressman, I have introduced and supported legislation to unleash American energy independence, support our veterans, secure our southern border, defend the sanctity of human life, and protect our second amendment. I have a strong business background, and if re-elected, I will continue to support Montana businesses and work to stop the irresponsible government policies that are hurting our economy.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

After just a little over a year in Congress, I have seen just how dysfunctional things are in D.C. — especially when it comes to our

budget. Congress is responsible for setting our nation's budget and being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars — and they have failed miserably. One of my goals moving forward is to continue to focus on doing everything I can to rein in the out-of-control spending in DC and increase transparency so that we can hold government accountable. As we've seen over the last year with the jump in inflation, the policies passed in DC have a direct impact on our economy, and our economy does far better when it is not weighed down by bureaucratic red tape.

If re-elected, I will continue to fight tooth-and-nail to make sure our veterans receive the benefits they have been promised by supporting and sponsoring more legislation like my VA IT Reform Bill, which passed unanimously through the House Veterans Affairs Committee, The Department of Veterans Affairs Telehealth Strategy Act and more. Our Veterans certainly kept their promise to our nation, the very least we can do is keep ours.

I also believe our 2nd Amendment rights are essential and right now, they are under attack like never before. I've fought for the 2nd Amendment rights of Montanans by opposing Biden's radical cabinet nominees like David Chipman, a known anti-gun activist, to the ATF and I will always work to protect our right to bear arms.

Our country desperately needs to secure our Southern Border. I have been unapologetic in opposing the open-border policies of the Biden Administration and have led the charge by advocating for measures like the Secure America's Borders First Act that prioritizes increasing our border security and preventing the flow of illegal drugs and illicit substances into the U.S. If re-elected, I will continue to fight to secure our Southern Border in order to protect our Citizens from dangerous drugs.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

When I first campaigned for this office I promised the people

of Montana that I would not be swayed by the swamp of DC. During my short tenure in Washington, I have been an unwavering advocate for fighting bureaucracy, cutting red tape, and ending unnecessary spending. I am confident that I have kept the promise I made, and have never based my votes on which way the political winds are blowing, but on the content of the legislation and what it means for the State of Montana.

### Charles A. Walkingchild, Republican

*Candidate Charles A. Walkingchild did not respond to the candidate survey.*

### Penny Ronning, Democrat

**Age:** 59

**Address:**

Penny Ronning for U.S. Congress, PO Box 22445, Billings, MT 59104

**Contact info:** campaign@pennyronning.com; 406-579-9778

**Education:** Billings Public Schools; Billings West High School; Montana State University. Bachelor of Science in Film; University of Mary. MBA



**Ronning**

**Occupation:** Photographer

**Relevant experience:** I have created and led organizations to build economies, provide for the homeless, promote the arts, and conserve our country's wilderness. I put my degree in film to work as a photographer and filmmaker, and my degree in business to work as a business owner and policy maker. As an advocate for victims of human trafficking, I cofounded the Yellowstone County Area Human Trafficking Task Force, secured Montana Legislature funding for additional agents to investigate human trafficking, and co-authored state and municipal bills to strengthen laws on sexual exploitation. In 2020, I was the lone Montanan

invited to attend the White House Summit on Human Trafficking.

On the Billings city council, I led on issues of public safety, economic development, energy cost savings and conservation, infrastructure, mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness. I worked with Senator Steve Daines to bring home Montanans stranded in eastern Europe at the onset of the pandemic. I sat with Senator Jon Tester on a panel giving voice to issues impacting our tribal nations, and I've worked with the Gianforte Foundation on the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People. Working across the aisle to achieve results is what I do.

### Why are you running for this office?

Coming from a working-class family, I understand the principles and value of hard work. I landed my first job when I was eight, picking up trash for a quarter from the asphalt parking lot of my dad's restaurant, The Happy Diner, in Billings, Montana. I know what can happen when a work ethic is applied with a community-minded spirit, when we see through the noise and the division to what unites Montanans.

I'm the daughter of a Republican dad and a Democrat mom who dedicated her life to federal service, working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, FBI, and the military. I've seen government up close and firsthand work in a way nothing else can, and I've seen it fail, harming the people it's supposed to serve. That's why I hold tight to this guiding principle: "People Over Politics." It's a basic moral code, something too many have forgotten when we talk about politics. It's simple: It takes all of us. I'm not a politician. I'm a proven solution maker who believes that solutions can be found when the right people are at the table of common ground.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

Restore dignity and respect to Montana's representation in the U.S. House of Representatives

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From 3

Put the economy to work for all Montanans

Make healthcare and childcare more accessible and affordable

Ensure housing availability and affordability for Montana families

Strengthen our country's agriculture, manufacturing, and energy production

Increase public safety resources including funding for law enforcement and services treating mental health, substance abuse disorders, and homelessness

Protect children from predators

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I am the only candidate who has worked to successfully pass legislation at the municipal, state, and federal level. It's time to send someone to Congress who knows how to work for our cities and will work just as fervently for our rural communities. Good government is about working WITH people FOR the benefit of many.

The Constitution says it best: elected officials must come to the table of common ground to "form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for all." Working folks deserve government working as hard to benefit them as government has worked to benefit the extremely wealthy.

Politics has become a boxing ring in which politicians do nothing but throw jabs at each other. This will never create solutions to real problems and real needs being felt by too many Americans. We need people in Congress with proven track records of working successfully with both parties to create policies **that benefit the American** people. We can't wait any longer to put People Over Politics.

### Mark Sweeney, Democrat

*Editor's note: Mark Sweeney died May 6. His name will remain on the Democratic primary ballot.*

**Age:** 62

**Address:** 337 Beta Philipsburg,

MT 59858

**Contact info:** P.O. Box 1101, Helena, MT 59624; [www.sweeneyformontana.com](http://www.sweeneyformontana.com)

**Education:** Miles City Public Schools, Custer County High School, 1978; Miles Community College, Western Montana College, 1982 Bachelor of Science Degree, Natural Resource Management.



Sweeney

### Relevant experience:

Throughout college, I was a firefighter for BLM and worked construction. I enjoyed a 29-year career with the Montana Department of FWP. I started on the lower Yellowstone River, then moved to Libby as part of a fisheries research team studying the effects of the Libby Dam operations on fish. I retired from FWP in 2012 as Manager of the Washoe Park Trout Hatchery in Anaconda.

In 2005, I ran for the Anaconda/Lodge County Commission and was elected to two terms. We balanced budgets annually, worked with unions to ratify contracts and worked closely with EPA and Atlantic Richfield on the nation's largest superfund site. I served on many committees and boards during this tenure such as the Western Montana Bureau of Land Management Citizens Advisory Council, The Natural Resource Damage Council, and was the president of a community EPA information organization, The Arrowhead Foundation.

In 2018 I was elected to the Montana House of Representatives and I co-sponsored a bill to fund a study of reinstating the Southern Amtrak route.

In 2020 I was elected to Montana State Senate where I carried Right To Repair Farm Equipment, Minimum Wage and a revised Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program Bills. I am currently a sitting State Senator.

### Why are you running for this office?

I want to bring Montana dignity, common sense, humil-

ity, and civil representation to national politics. This is a great opportunity to serve eastern and central Montana in this new 42 county district; an opportunity we have not had in 30 years. This district is where I have spent the majority of my life, where I was raised and educated. I have a deep understanding of the people and their expectations of elected leaders. This new district deserves someone who will fight for their best interests. We don't need someone who sides with an aggressive, communist dictator who invaded a peaceful neighboring country and sent millions of refugees fleeing the indiscriminate destruction of their homeland. Nor do we need a representative who is supported by corporate lobbyists. We know Matt Rosendale is not good for Montana, but now the nation and the world knows it as well, and his positions have brought disgrace to Montana.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I want to bring civility to this new position and represent the citizens of these 42 Montana counties, regardless of party affiliation. I will work closely with all other Montana elected leaders and be part of a team doing what is best for our state.

I will work to pass legislation that helps increase margins for farmers and ranchers. This may mean limiting the stranglehold that international corporate meat processing companies have on our beef cattle industry.

I will support legislation that increases embargos on Russia until they withdraw from Ukraine and refugees are allowed to return safely to their homes. I will support increased privacy for women's health and bipartisan legislation to increase border security targeting drug smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal immigration. I will also support all veterans and their needs and concerns.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

No one will outwork me. I was born and raised in Montana, and

I have that Montana work ethic. I stayed here because of the great outdoors and the recreation it provides. I rolled up my sleeves and joined others in making our communities safe and a great place to raise a family. I want my daughters and our two grandsons to be able to do the same. I believe Montana is the Last Best Place and I know this new eastern and central district is the best kept secret because of its people and natural resources.

My campaign will focus on the Montana issues of Agriculture, Energy and Infrastructure and if we are successful in making great improvements in these basic areas, our economy will grow and realize its potential providing great opportunity for future generations.

I have a special love and connection to our wonderful state, and I am committed to being a public servant to make sure we are leaders in conservation and business opportunity.

### Skylar Williams, Democrat

**Age:** 24

**Contact info:** [SkylarforUS-Congress@gmail.com](mailto:SkylarforUS-Congress@gmail.com), 406-702-0458

**Education:** Montana HiSET

**Occupation:** Carpenter/Security Officer

**Relevant experience:** U.S

Citizen

### Why are you running for this office?

As a person of the younger generation I am sick and tired of seeing Climate, College and Healthcare



Williams

put of the "We'll get to it later" pile. These are real issues affecting everyone everyday and I will write bill after bill until they all get addressed.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I am going to propose legislation to move our power grids to cleaner, renewable and more sustainable power. I want to save more Americans lives with a better Healthcare system than we

currently have, the only Health Insurance you should ever need is that you're American and you will be taken care of.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

To be honest, it's probably that I have no political experience. I am not a politician, I'm just a guy who is very unsatisfied with my current supposed "Representation". I always hear talk about people unsatisfied with the political environment but refuse to nurture change or make a meaningful push for anything.

What also makes me stand out is that if anyone were to go through my life they will find no controversy, no bribes, no lies, no friends in high places, no secret bank accounts, I have and always will play it straight and above the table.

### Sam Rankin, Libertarian

**Age:** 77

**Address:** 1645 Parkhill Dr. #3 Billings, MT 59102

**Contact info:** [rankinforcongress.com](http://rankinforcongress.com)—website; [sam@rankinforcongress.com](mailto:sam@rankinforcongress.com)—email; 406-601-1271—phone



Rankin

**Education:** B.A.—J.D.

**Occupation:** Attorney

**Relevant experience:**

Combat in U.S. Army and

working toward a common goal. I worked with people I didn't like (I'm sure it was mutual), but we were nonetheless a cohesive group that worked together and accomplished common goals.

### Why are you running for this office?

(1) To fix the House of Representatives by making it more representative of a majority of Americans. A majority of Americans don't follow orders from corporations, PACs, or lobbyists. It is textbook cause and effect: More money for House members from corporations, PACs, and lobbyists = more revulsion with the House and its gridlock. (2) To show Montanans you don't need

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to be morally empty or speak in vulgar and childish terms to be in office. Multiple political parties are in a partnership to run our country. Would anyone speak the way they do to their partner? Not without destroying the reason you are partners, which in American's case is peaceful coexistence. Why is there no accountability?

Because politicians' money from corporations, PACs, and lobbyists pays for diversion from their behavior by funding relentless negative ads about their opponent or attacking their opponent's values. Montanans are better than that.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

By being elected, like Republican Jeannette Rankin, I would continue the Rankin tradition of introducing to the House a much-needed change improving it. Jeannette Rankin broke the all-male dominance of Congress and

we've better off with women in Congress.

Likewise, if elected, I will bring into the House a politician not addicted to money from corporations, PACs, or lobbyists. It would be a much-needed change improving the House and allowing it to accomplish worthwhile goals. Let's be honest: is a U. S. Representative from Montana ever going to introduce a major bill? Doubt it. But I can establish a way for Congress to be populated by a higher caliber of people.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

(1) I am not trying to please every voting group or interest by pretending I have a legislative answer to their every concern. The way forward involves More Compromise – Less Fighting. My primary opponents have firm policy ideas, many I agree with, but have an attitude of “my way or the highway” which is not the answer in these unique times.

Political parties need to change to reflect what Americans want in these extraordinary times and should. Americans don't want more threats of violence, name-calling, or grade school behavior. What is needed is More Compromise – Less Fighting.

(2) I am not asking for money in order to win the primary. Only Montanans' votes. (3) I have more experience running for office than the 10 vying for the MT CD-2, plus those running in MT CD-1, put together! But my message has not changed: Money given to sitting Congresspeople from corporations, PACs, and lobbyists is the problem. The only way around that corrupting money, and the Supreme Court's incorrectly decided decisions allowing it, is to vote for politicians who do not owe favors to corporations, PACs, lobbyists as a result of taking their tainted money. Period.

Vote for Sam Rankin on the Libertarian ballot.

### Roger Roots, Libertarian

**Age:** 54

**Address:** 113 Lake Drive East, Livingston, MT 59047

**Contact info:** rogerisaac-roots@outlook.com 406-220-3064

**Education:** BS Sociology, Montana State University—Billings, '96, J.D., Roger Williams University, '99, Ph.D., Sociology, UNLV, 2004.

**Occupation:** lawyer, educator, antigovernment influencer, construction laborer

**Relevant experience:** long-time Libertarian activist, constitutional historian, chronicler of tyranny.

### Why are you running for this office?

THE US HAS BECOME TYRANNICAL. Most of us never thought we would say this. But

the United States of America has become a tyrannical nation which ignores the rights of its citizenry and trounces the Bill of Rights. In Congress I will work tirelessly to fight this tyranny. I WILL CAST EVERY VOTE AGAINST GOVERNMENT and promote legislation to cut government power and expansion.

At the beginning of the lockdowns in 2020, I thought courts would quickly strike them down. But courts—and the legal profession I once loved—were mostly silent. A few brave legislatures and governors finally stepped up; but it was too little, too late. We have lost America. We have become too obedient and too trustful of government.

I WILL SUPPORT EVERY EFFORT BY STATES and localities to secede from the US. It is past time. The US was probably too big even after the Civil War. The

Please see **HOUSE**, Page 6



**RANKIN FOR CONGRESS**

**MORE COMPROMISE-LESS FIGHTING**

**NO CORPORATE, PAC, OR LOBBYIST CONTAMINATED MONEY  
MONEY IS THE PROBLEM-NOT PHILOSOPHY**



We all have good reason to be disgusted with Congress.

There is not one action, one law, one decision that comes out of our federal government that is not poisoned by the influence of money. Agriculture, defense, education, you name it, deep pocketed special interests routinely bribe our representatives with promises of cash.

All progress is stopped because special interests pay politicians to do their bidding, not yours. The only way to create beneficial public policy is to elect representatives of good faith, motivated by the NEEDS of the people and not by the WANTS of special interests.

Jennette Rankin broke the male dominance of Congress and forever changed our country for the better. We can do it again. Send Sam Rankin to Congress and break the unhealthy hold corporate, PAC and lobbyist money has on our representatives.

**rankinforcongress.com**

Paid for by Rankin for Congress, Libertarian, 1645 Parkhill Dr. #3, Billings, MT 59102

## US HOUSE DISTRICT 2

From 5

societies west of the Mississippi River are fundamentally different from the societies east of the Mississippi. Texas is a different culture from New York. Montana is not the same culture as D.C. WE SHOULD NOT BE RULED BY A TYRANNICAL regime 2,000 miles away which ignores our rights.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I would like to see the government be much less powerful, less scary, less intrusive and less dangerous. I want to see government “workers” beg to keep their jobs rather than the American people begging them for mercy, as it is today. (Hopefully, most federal “workers” will lose their jobs before my term in Congress is over. Their wails and screams will be music to my ears.) By my final weeks in Washington, I will likely need to wear a bullet-proof vest wherever I go. But I will relish the cheers of Montanans upon my return.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE A SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE: If you want government “services,” you can pay \$200 per month or whatever. If you don’t want them, you shouldn’t have to pay for them (and you shouldn’t get them—even in an emergency.) The tax rate should be zero percent. If the government wants to pay for something, they can launch a GoFundMe. If a program

can’t meet its funding requirement, then the people don’t want it and it shouldn’t exist.

I think the roads depicted in Mad Max—unpatrolled with wreckage lining the sides—would be just fine. I will work to abolish all driver license and car registration requirements. Government has no right to know who owns or drives every car. ONLY GOVERNMENT CARS SHOULD HAVE LICENSE PLATES.

Evil government regulators now gather data and information on everyone and monitor every transaction. I will lead a movement to stop this data-gathering and eliminate government forms. Government has no right to number us or know what we are doing—or even our names, ages or addresses. I will fight to keep transaction data from government. Government has no right to know when or what we buy, sell, donate, pay or get paid. Or from or to whom.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

Voters will always know what I will do in advance. I will cast every vote against government. I will fight ferociously for lower taxes, fewer government “workers,” and less government intrusion. Lobbyists won’t even bother approaching me. (What would be the point?) I will also introduce anti-government legislation and work with other members to achieve more freedom and liberty for every American.

I am a fourth generation Montanan. My great grandfather emigrated from Estonia to homestead a piece of dry ground near Pumpkin Creek, south of Miles City.

### Samuel Thomas, Libertarian

**Age:** 26

**Address:** 2619 Roderick Way Missoula, MT 59804

**Contact info:** Samuel. thomas26@yahoo.com; 406-499-1952



Thomas

### Education:

University of Montana - BA in Theatre

### Occupation:

Cannabis Retailer

### Relevant

**experience:** I

have worked on many issue based campaigns in the past and will use that experience to guide me through this campaign. Being a grass roots politician means talking to people and listening without judgement with the goal of offering a solution. I know how to be a leader.

### Why are you running for this office?

To give Montana voters a viable alternative to Matt Rosendale, whose views and votes in congress do not represent Montana values. I’m running because our country is in trouble. We have extremist politicians like Rosendale who voted no on the critically

important infrastructure package that provided historic investment in Montana highways, roads, bridges, broadband expansion, and water projects, including the restoration of the Milk River Project that provides drinking water and irrigation water from Havre across Montana’s Hi-Line. Instead, he put politics over people and voted no. As the Libertarian alternative I will never vote against my constituents benefits. Getting elected to an office means becoming a humble public servant to the people who elected you. That is what I want to provide to Montana voters.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I want to return this seat to a sound mind that will actively reach across the aisle and work to get things done. When Rosendale voted against the awarding of the Congressional Medal to the Capitol Police who battled to protect the Members of Congress, the Congressional staff and the very Capitol itself from the insurrectionist assault on January 6 2021, who was he representing? Clearly not Montanans. Montanans would clearly want the valiant efforts of the capitol police recognized as so many were injured by that assault, the worst assault on the Capitol since the War of 1812. Whose “Drum beat” was Rosendale listening to when he was one of only 21 votes out of 435 House Members? Votes like these are a no brainer for me because its

common sense to honor people who suffered and put their lives on the line to protect the capitol and the politicians that were serving inside that day.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I want to bring people together to accomplish legislation that will benefit Montana, and the country. The main point is to elect someone with integrity and independence to truly be a representative of the people. Because as someone once said “We all do better when we all do better”. We can begin to mend bridges that were previously burnt. Rosendale burned his bridge with me right from the start when he refused to validate the 2020 Presidential Election because of bogus charges of election fraud. That vote was an active effort to stop the peaceful transition of power, a constitutional duty that has governed our Democracy for 240 years. President Trump may have won overwhelmingly in Montana, but he legitimately lost the national election. Rosendale’s vote, about which he said, “I will not be intimidated by mob violence...” was dancing to the tune of the January 6 mob, not to the wishes of Montanans. I believe that most of our state supported the peaceful transfer of power even though the Republican won here in Montana. I am sick of tired of Matt Rosendale’s voting record, so I am making an effort to do something about it.

I appreciate your vote this June.

## PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION #5

### Ann Bukacek, Republican

**Age:** 64

**Address:** 1 Sunset Plaza

**Contact info:** (406) 270-6320; <http://bukacek4psc.com/>

**Education:** Medical Degree from University of Illinois in Chicago; Internship and Residency

**Occupation:** medical doctor

**Relevant experience:**

1. I’ve been involved in Helena every legislative session since 2009. In that time, I developed mutually respectful relationships



Ann Bukacek

with legislators and other government officials. I’ve listened to legislators’ and PSC members’ deliberations, have helped to draft bills, and gather support for those bills from legislators and citizens.

2. Being a business owner, I must balance a ledger and develop creative solutions to solve prob-

lems.

3. As a medical doctor for 35+ years, I listen to and examine patients, study medical literature, and use related information to make decisions and solve problems to help my patients.

4. As a grassroots leader, I’m in close touch with Montana residents to assess their wants, needs and concerns.

5. I know how to make decisions and innovatively solve problems.

**Why are you running for this**

**office?**

The Public Service Commission’s bottom-line purpose is to maintain a good quality of life for Montanans. I’m dedicated to that goal, as demonstrated by my long career as a doctor and grassroots leader.

Montana’s harsh weather conditions and sparse population cause the state to rank second in the nation in residential per capita energy consumption, exceeded only by North Dakota. Montanans

need access to reliable power. I will work to balance the supply-demand equation to the benefit of all Montanans.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

My goal is to keep energy affordable for all Montanans while balancing increasing demands and supply costs.

As a Public Service Commission member, I will see to it that I am in communication with the public so that I can bring citizens wants and

## PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION #5

wishes to the commission and to the legislators.

The PSC has authority to regulate as defined by the laws of the state, as determined by the legislators. I will be closely involved with legislators and testify about legislation within the PSC's focus.

As a PSC member, it's up to me to do the heavy lifting I will be the one to do the research and consult with the energy management experts and legislators, making sure the people get the benefit. That's my job.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

Three things make me stand out:

1. Much of the work of the Public Service Commission is research. After studying medical literature for 35+ years. I can analyze statistics and the quality of a study. I know how to apply that information to make wise decisions and solve problems to help my patients. As a PSC commissioner, I will use that ability to help all Montanans meet their energy needs.

2. Through my work as a doctor and in my grassroots advocacy, I am already in close touch with Montanans and their needs and wants. It will be easy to extend that to keep citizens informed about what is going on with the PSC.

3. My experience as a business owner, old fashioned doctor, and known advocate for the people puts me in a good position to be fair and judicious. I will strive to balance needs of both the consumer and the supplier. I will be an advocate for all Montanans.

### Dean Crabb, Republican

**Age:** 54

**Address:** P.O. Box 1417 Marion, MT. 59925

**Contact info:** crabb-4PSC@gmail.com

**Education:** AA Degree in Electrical Theory



**Crabb**

**Occupation:** Retired – Journeyman Lineman – Utility Worker

30+ years in the Utility Industry – Water, Gas and Journeyman Electrical Lineman. Worked up the ladder into management running District Area.

### Why are you running for this office?

There are no commissioners or candidates with utility experience. The PSC's main objective is to help the utilities offer all services to the consumer. Quality, reliable service at an affordable price. You have to balance the requirements of the consumers with the desire for the utility to make money.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

To insure the PSC understands what the Legislation meant when they created them. The PSC is there to help the utilities to supply quality services. The PSC is also to limit the rates the utilities can charge for those services. All entities must work together for the common goal.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I am the only one with experience in the industry. Utilities have been my whole life's work. I feel I am the best person to bring these entities together. The last 2 years consequences are damaging our utilities, if we don't work together with the supply chain issues the consumers WILL be losing reliability of services fairly soon.

### Joe Dooling, Republican

**Age:** 46

**Address:** 3855 Cedar Valley Road, Helena MT 59602, PO Box 1585, Helena 59624

**Contact info:** 406-431-3510 Joe.dooling@outlook.com

**Education:** BS Montana State University (Go Cats!) Agribusiness/Econ Minor



**Dooling**

**Occupation:** Small Business Owner – Farmer/Rancher

Experience comes in many forms for me. In 2017 President Trump appointed me to serve on the Farm Service Agency State Committee were we were tasked with reviewing Federal cases. I spent 14 years at an Engineering firm where I worked on municipal projects, calculated water rates, and worked on long term strategies for clients. I also worked on the Montana Alberta Tie Transmission Line – building a power line between Lethbridge and Great Falls. In addition, I bring small business/farming experience to the Committee. My wife and I run a farm/ranch, rentals, and trucking business. As a small business owner, former Farm Service Agency member, and as a citizen, I understand how the rulings made at the PSC affect families and small businesses.

### Why are you running for this office?

Someone needs to put the ratepayers first – I will be that candidate. Our population boom and inflation is making Montana unaffordable. As farmer and rancher, I understand the impact

of electricity costs on the irrigator, the homeowner, and the small business. As a member of the PSC, I will make sure that the Commission exhausts all efforts to keep rates low because higher costs can devastate a family's financial stability.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I will bring both a small business and agricultural perspective to the Commission. My hope is to keep rates low while improving reliability and safety within all utility sectors.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

The PSC has become an embarrassment to Montana. Too many career politicians with special interest agendas have played legislative games with the PSC. I'm a plain spoken, common sense driven, Montanan

that doesn't play games with the family budget. I will be a strong leader on the PSC and won't be pushed around by special interests.

### Derek Skees, Republican

**Age:** 53

**Address:** PO Box 9134 Kalispell, MT. 59904

**Contact info:** derekskees@gmail.com, derekskees.com, 406-212-5493



**Skees**

tion Consultant

**Relevant experience:** 8 years on the FRET (Federal Relations, Energy and

Telecommunications) Committee in the Montana House. 3 sessions as vice-chair (including interim), 2 years as chair (including Interim). LEHI graduate (Legislative Energy Horizon Institute), and the PNWER Delegate for Montana for 4 years, including chair of their Energy Committee. I chaired (and asked for) the in-depth study the ETIC underwent to understand the history and function of the PSC, and we crafted a Legislative guide for future Legislators to learn best practices and procedures for better understanding of PSC oversight. (<https://leg.mt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2017-2018/Energy-and-Telecommunications/Understanding%20Energy%202018.pdf>)

Please see PSC #5, Page 8



# James BOYETTE

FOR CONGRESS

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**District 2: Central & Eastern Montana The Issues:**

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- Stop Illegal Immigration
- Address the Healthcare Worker Shortage
- Fight against Social Media & Fake News Overreach
- Election Integrity Preservation
- Find Real solutions to End the Homelessness Crisis
- End the Big Pharma Manipulation in Politics
- Pursue and expand American Oil Production
- Explore Gas Alternatives & Ethanol Production
- Putting an End to the Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Children

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## PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION #5

From 7

**Why are you running for this office?**

I ran for this seat in 2014, and have kept a keen interest in all things PSC ever since. Having been in the oversight committee for so long (ETIC and FRET), I understand the strengths and weaknesses in Montana's PSC. I want to help the current commissioners remove those failings, and help restore the Commission to excellence. I have also seen some rule making authority concerns while I was a Legislator, and would like to have a review of those internally, to make sure we are not overstepping our authority.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

I think the PSC has deviated somewhat from its primary unbiased role as a judicial determinant, and dabbled into policy over the last decade. We have seen a seesaw of the power struggle between the monopolies regulated and the desire of certain past commissioners to over regulate. We have seen Moody's downgrade North West Energy to an almost at risk investment for shareholders, all due to an unstable regulatory environment. I would like to champion a return to the fair balance in power between all three partners in this process, from PSC, to monopoly to the MCC (Montana Consumer Council). The Montana rate payer deserves a consistent, unbiased by power generation type preference, immune to partisan lobby manipulated politics and a return to a PSC that only enforces the policy determined by the Legislature.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

My skill set as a former legislator, my understanding of the energy policy sector for the last 8 years, my leadership in the past two sessions, my in depth understanding of the Montana Public Service Commission and my connections in both the Legislative branch, and the PSC today. I am endorsed by Commissioners Pinocci, Fielder and O'Donnell, and have a good working relationship with many of the current PSC

staff that I have worked with over the years. I will not suffer the steep learning curve every one of my opponents will be plagued with trying to figure out the difficult job, and can start making a difference on day one.

**Kevin Hamm, Democrat****Age:** 49**Address:** PO Box 1538, Helena, MT 59624**Contact info:** campaign@kevinhamm.com 406-417-0070**Education:** Montana State

University, Portland State University

**Occupation:** CEO Treasure State Internet & Telegraph, CEO Auxilyum Technologies**Hamm**

**Relevant experience:** I have worked in a variety of industries that have given me a unique understanding of how regulation impacts all of us, from aviation to telecommunications. I am well-versed not only in the consequences of regulatory demands and the costs of implementing them, but in the ways in which those regulations can ripple between industries.

Also relevant for any candidate for the Public Service Commission is the ability to engage with the public in ways that are meaningful; I have served on the boards of Queen City Ballet and Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Montana, founded the Happiness & Joy Foundation, and donated time and services to various institutions throughout Helena as a dedicated patron of the arts and education.

**Why are you running for this office?**

The Public Service Commission has been an embarrassment to our state for too long, refusing to do right by the people of Montana and letting the will of utility companies dictate their decisions. From failed audits to unjustifiable rate hikes, this pattern of failure on behalf of the public they are charged to serve needs to change. I'm determined to advocate for that change as Public Service

Commissioner.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

Government should function for the people. The Public Service Commission is charged with protecting the public from the consequences of poor decisions made by utility companies who are obligated to their shareholders first and foremost, while advocating for utility workers and encouraging a healthy working relationship with utility companies so that doing the right thing is made a bit easier. Restoring those priorities so that there is some balance, order, and thoughtfulness on the commission is my ultimate goal.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

As an active member of my community who has spent my life and career developing relationships with people from all walks of life, I am uniquely positioned to understand the ways in which the Public Service Commission impacts the lives of the public. I am not a person who interacts with the community I intend to serve simply as a manager or as a donor, and I am not coming to this race boasting of relationships with the very corporations the PSC is tasked with regulating; I come instead as an active, involved, passionate member of the public, dedicated to the public and what is right for all of us.

My work experience, too, has given me the skill set that we need most on the PSC. I've managed teams in various private sector industries where I've been responsible for everything from employee training, health, and safety, to implementing all levels of regulations across several industries; I know firsthand how regulations can impact a business—and why they're important to the people who work for them. I've done the finance and accounting, the taxes and reporting, and have helped to shape policy to reduce the red-tape without refusing to understand why the regulation was put in place. I'm used to reading and understanding regulations, and I'm good at recognizing when a regulation is causing unintended

consequences that are negatively impacting the world around us.

Finally, the experiences I've gathered that aren't so easy to fit onto a resume have shaped my perspective in ways that, while not unique to me, are certainly unique among the pool of candidates the public has been given to choose from. Growing up as part of the fifth generation of telecommunications professionals in my family and now running an internet company has taught me that communication is the key to humanity, and growing up gay in Helena taught me an even more important lesson: That things can get better, but not without some hard work.

My life experiences have given me a range of perspectives on a host of issues that impact Montanan's lives, and while my interests have been varied over the years, I have maintained a passion for politics and policy throughout. I've been fighting for equity and equality for years, and I look forward to the opportunity to continue that work while serving on the Public Service Commission.

**John Repke, Democrat****Age:** 64**Address:** PO Box 1326, Whitefish, MT 59927**Contact info:** repke4psc5@gmail.com; 406-730-2419**Education:** BS Finance, Ohio State University; MBA Finance, University of Denver**Occupation:** Finance executive (currently retired)**Relevant experience:**

My advanced education and 40 years of experience in private sector finance, strategic planning, and management have given me substantial expertise in exactly the type of work done by

**Repke**

the PSC. Specifically: financial statement analysis, cost analysis and budgeting for operations and capital projects, risk adjusted rate of return calculations, hedging of exposure to energy price volatil-

ity, financial modeling, scenario testing, statistical analysis, policy development, policy enforcement, and management of large, diverse, multi-function organizations. I have worked in oil and gas production, pipeline inspection and maintenance and environmental services which includes collection and disposal of municipal, chemical, and nuclear waste; recycling; waste-to-energy; and landfill gas-to-electricity operations.

**Why are you running for this office?**

None of us should tolerate the way the PSC is currently run. I am running to give the voters of District 5 the opportunity to elect a candidate who will bring relevant experience, professionalism, and honesty to the PSC.

1) Ratepayers are effectively represented only if their representatives have the expertise and experience to understand and challenge how the rates are calculated. This is complicated work, and the PSC needs to have a commissioner who is up to the job. I have a passion for doing exactly this type of work and will do it well.

2) An organization is successful only if it adheres to high professional standards. This means having the discipline and character to show up, do the work, adhere to the policies, and treat all members with respect. This has not been the case with the current PSC—but absolutely will be with me. I have never worked any other way.

3) As a public entity accountable to all Montanans, the PSC must be held to the highest level of integrity. Again, this has not been the case. I pledge to be objective, open-minded, base decisions on facts, operate with full transparency and focus on the work without the distractions of unrelated issues.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

Regaining trust in the ability and credibility of the PSC to achieve its stated goal of "affordable, reliable, sustainable" energy for Montanans. Setting standards whereby all proposals, energy or otherwise, are evaluated comprehensively, objectively, and honestly. Establishing a positive

## PSC #5

working environment for the PSC staff based on respect for their abilities, their expertise, and their desire for professional fulfillment.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I have been endorsed by the six most recent Democratic PSC Commissioners who represent a combined 36 years of service. These Commissioners know, better than anyone, what it takes to do the job. Having their endorsement sets me apart from the field. My knowledge and experience in areas that are highly relevant to the work of the PSC puts me in a unique position to understand the issues and make well informed decisions. My levelheaded demeanor, objectivity, and integrity ensure that I will carry out the responsibilities professionally and honestly for the ratepayers and taxpayers of Montana. And finally, my commitment to doing the disciplined, serious work of the PSC and nothing else.

## SUPREME COURT JUSTICE #2

### James Brown

**AGE:** 51  
**Address:** 108 S. Pacific, Dillon, MT 59725

**Contact info:** Jim@jamesbrownformontana.com; www.jamesbrownformontana.com



**Brown**

**Education:** Beaverhead County High School Class of 1989; University of Montana Missoula class of 1994 double major in history and political science; Seattle University School of Law class of 2004 Juris Doctor (summa cum laude [highest honors] distinction); University of Washington School of Law class of 2005 Master's Degree in Tax Law; Montana Insurance Producer license.

**Occupation:** Private practice attorney and owner of the James Brown Law Office; President

of the Montana Public Service Commission representing District 3. Licensed to practice law in Montana state and federal district courts, as well as the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court.

**Relevant experience:** Small business owner; private practice attorney for over 17 years; former law clerk for the then Chief Justice of the Washington Supreme Court; current President of the Montana Public Service Commission, a quasi-judicial state agency.

### Why are you running for this office?

I am humbled by the number of Montanans from across the state who have reached out and asked me to run for this position. Montanans want a justice that defends our shared Montana values of hard work, common sense and good judgment.

For the last several years, there has been an unprecedented at-

tack on law enforcement and first responders, on parental rights, on individual liberty, on Second Amendments Rights, and on private businesses. Folks are greatly concerned about government overreach, unilateral mandates, and government transparency.

My years of legal work has been dedicated to limiting government and to ensuring the equal and impartial administration of justice. As such, I am running based on my philosophy as a constitutional conservative, to preserve faith in the rule of law, to interpret the Constitution and laws as written, to bring accountability back to the judicial branch, and to ensure that we protect the ability of Montanans to govern their own lives.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

As the only constitutional conservative in this race, I will work to bring consistency to

court rulings, to avoid the appearance of conflicts of interests, to be an impartial judge, and above all, to not legislate from the bench. As I have strived to do each day of my legal career and as President of the Montana Public Service Commission (PSC), I will protect and defend the freedoms, liberties, and livelihoods of every Montanan. At a time when there is talk of packing the United States Supreme Court in order to achieve political goals, my aim is to serve in a way that keeps faith in the fairness of the Montana court system. I will be a Justice that will always abide by the Constitution and apply the law as it is written and passed by democratically-elected bodies.

Further, Montana courts are suffering from a backlog of cases. Judges are taking longer and longer to make decisions

Please see JUSTICE, Page 10

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## SUPREME COURT JUSTICE #2

From 9

– with some cases presently lingering for five years. It is said that justice delayed is justice denied; and I am dedicated to improving the turnaround times for disposition of legal cases to provide Montanan citizens with timely resolution of legal disputes.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

As a fourth-generation Beaverhead County resident, small business owner, and private practice attorney, I have represented and defended the interests of my friends and neighbors—Montana’s farmers, ranchers, and small business owners.

Right now, the Montana Supreme Court currently lacks a judge that has recently owned their own business and/or that has primarily represented Montana’s agriculture producers – even though agriculture is Montana’s top economic driver. I’m running to bring that vital knowledge and those values to the Court.

I’ve been successful in working with a diverse group of interests in obtaining funding to build a new wool lab at Montana State University Bozeman, working with the U.S. Department of Interior in securing funding for two grizzly bear specialists to help management grizzly-bear livestock conflicts in Montana, and in protecting historical domestic sheep grazing practices within Montana’s national forests.

I will bring to the Court a much-needed diverse knowledge of the law, the experience gained from earning a living by operating a small business, and by growing up in rural Montana. I’m also proud to bring much-needed professional management experience having successfully managed a state agency with a roughly \$5 million budget and 31 employees.

### Ingrid Gustafson

Age: 60

**Address:** Helena, MT  
**Contact info:** ingrid@gustafsonformontana.com

**Education:** B.S. Bus., Montana State University; J.D. Law, University of Montana

**Occupation:** Justice, Montana Supreme Court (MTSC)

### Relevant experience:

After graduating from the University of Montana School of Law in 1988, I practiced law for 16 years representing hard-working Montana citizens who needed my help. This



Gustafson

work made me acutely aware how difficult it is for the average Montanan to cope with our legal system, whether facing the challenges experienced in one’s business or occupation, as a person injured through the fault of another, as a victim of crime, as one accused of crime, or as someone facing a divorce or challenging family issue. These are lessons I have never forgotten.

In 2004, Republican Governor Judy Martz appointed me district court judge in Yellowstone County, the largest and busiest district court in the State. Over a thousand cases came before me each year, deepening my perspective on how the judiciary can meet the needs of everyday Montanans who need the assistance of our courts. In 2011, I started the county’s first felony drug treatment court and also began operating a child abuse and neglect pilot court to successfully reunify families and when that was not possible, to secure permanency and security for affected children sooner.

In 2017, I was honored to be appointed to the Montana Supreme Court, after being selected as a finalist by an independent panel of Montana citizens, lawyers, and judges. Over the past five years, I have participated in over 1,000 Montana Supreme Court opinions.

During this same time, I have accepted many added responsibilities, serving as President of the Montana Judges Association; as a Commissioner on the Montana Commission on Sentencing, a legislatively created commission formed to conduct a comprehensive analysis of Montana’s criminal justice system; a member of the National Center for State Courts Evidence Based Sentencing Judicial Peer Group; Montana’s Pre-Trial Advisory Committee; the 21st Century Child and Family Well-Being Appellate Collaborative; the Judicial, Court, and Attorney Measures of Performance workgroup; the Court Assessment Program; and the State Bar’s Fee Arbitration and Bench-Bar Committees.

I have handled nearly 20,000 cases during my judicial career. During my time on the Montana Supreme Court, satisfaction surveys have shown the Court to have a 90% overall confidence rating.

### Why are you running for this office?

Montanans learned long ago during the time of the Copper Kings what it meant to have a judiciary bought and controlled by partisan politicians. Montanans know they deserve an impartial, independent, non-partisan judiciary. A fair and independent judiciary is a cornerstone to preserving our democracy. To provide justice for everyone, maintain our rule of law, and assure our three branches of government work as our Constitution provides, judges must be able to act free of the pressures of partisan politics, special-interest groups, and the other branches of government. I understand the gravity of judicial decisions, the significant impact those decisions have on the individuals involved, and the necessity of the courts operating independent of our partisan politics.

I take very seriously the responsibility and trust voters placed in me and fully understand the Montana Supreme

Court’s responsibility to provide clear, consistent guidance to trial courts, attorneys, and Montanans. I will continue to work hard, study the law, and strive to make impartial, well-reasoned decisions, and maintain the high professional standards of the MTSC.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I intend to continue to engage in the hard work and thoughtful consideration required of each case that comes before the Court. I intend to remain consistent in upholding Montana’s Constitution and impartially applying the facts of each case to the law. I also intend to continue to engage in the work I have done over the past two decades to improve the lives of children and families.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

Over the course of my career, I have demonstrated a commitment to the judiciary and the role of the judiciary in our communities. I have evenly applied the law to the facts of each case for nearly 20 years, and devoted substantial time to other efforts to improve the operations of the courts to better meet the needs of our citizens. Of course, I am the only candidate to have actually done the job.

### Michael F. McMahon

Age: 57

**Contact info:** mcmahonformtsupremecourt@gmail.com

**Education:** 1983 Capital High School, Helena, MT; 1988 National College, Rapid City, SD; and 1991 Gonzaga University Law School, Spokane, WA



McMahon

**Occupation:** District Court Judge, Montana First Judicial District (Lewis and Clark and Broadwater Counties)

**Relevant experience:** Montana District Court Judge since

January 2017; prior to assuming the bench, Judge McMahon was a private law practice attorney licensed in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota for 26 years where he attained, among other distinguished awards, an AV Martindale Hubbell Peer Review Rating (recognized for having high levels of ethical integrity and legal skill).

### Why are you running for this office?

Judge McMahon believes his conservative and commonsense judicial philosophy will assist in protecting and preserving the Montana judiciary’s nonpartisan independence.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

Judge McMahon will continue to follow controlling Montana law and not public, political, partisan, or personal agendas. His judicial philosophy differs from those who believe Montana judges should enact legislation and policy through court decisions. If elected, Judge McMahon will persist in exercising rational judicial restraint and consistently conform his decisions to Montana’s constitutional, statutory, and common law precedent.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

Judge McMahon highly values the Montana judiciary’s nonpartisan independence. His decision to run for the Montana Supreme Court is founded on his unyielding principle to try to do the “right thing” in preserving the judiciary’s independence from those who are committed to issue decisions based on public, political, partisan, or personal agendas and not legal precedent. Otherwise, in his view, Montana citizens and their independent judiciary will be harmed by judicial rulings made for reasons other than the consistent application of controlling law. As a District Court Judge, he has, in the face of public, political, and partisan discontent, consistently followed and applied controlling Montana law in his rulings.

## HOUSE DISTRICT 70

**Jeremiah Dawson,  
Democrat****Age:** 32**Address:** 6 Snow Goose Court, Three Forks MT 59752**Contact info:** dawsonformontana@gmail.com**Education:** Johnson & Wales University, Denver; A.S. Culinary Arts, B.S. Culinary Arts and Food Service Management**Dawson****Occupation:** Small Business Owner**Relevant experience:** My experience working in hospitality and food service, as a small business owner, as a volunteer with the Civil Air Patrol, and on community boards and committees have honed skills in operations, budgeting, team management, training, government compliance, and other vital skills that set me up to successfully, dutifully, and compassionately serve

the citizens of HD 70 and the state of Montana.

**Why are you running for this office?**

To bring compassion and common sense to my service of the citizens of HD 70; to participate in the effective and responsible management of the state; and to fight for and protect the rights and freedoms given to us in our state constitution.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

To effectively, efficiently, and dutifully serve the citizens of the district and the state through common sense management of state business and to work towards ensuring the people of the state, and the small businesses that make up the backbone of our economy are able to thrive.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

My experience as a Montanan with a background in the hospital-ity industry bring a different view to the table, a willingness to do the jobs that aren't glamorous, and

don't lead to great personal profit, but are of service to the community around me; my love for the outdoors and experiences hunting, fishing, hiking, and enjoying the bounty of this great state's natural resources give me a shared passion and commonality that spreads across the whole state.

**Jonathan (Jon) R. Jackson,  
Democrat****Age:** 68**Address:** PO Box 1823, 1990 Harvest Loop, East Helena, MT 59635**Jackson****Contact info:** Jon3@mt.net**Education:** Graduate of Harrison High School, Harrison, Montana; Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education

from Montana State University; Master of Science in Agricultural Education with minor in Counseling from Montana State University;

Master of Strategic Studies from United States Army War College  
**Occupation:** Member Relations Specialist for Capital City Health Club in Helena, Montana**Relevant experience:** As a retired member of the United States Army and the Montana Army National Guard with over 39 years of military service, and as an experienced classroom teacher, I have the education, training and experience needed to perform the duties of a Representative. My experience being raised on a ranch, and my current involvement, provides me with insight into the challenges faced by those in production agriculture.**Why are you running for this office?**

I want to ensure all residents of House District 70, and the State of Montana, are heard and that their concerns are understood, regardless of Political Party.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

My primary objective is to be the voice of those wanting to be

heard—those individuals, who for reasons beyond their control find themselves not being heard and their concerns not being understood. My primary legislative objectives are (1) education from Pre-K to Graduation, (2) agriculture—the life blood of Montana, and (3) sound fiscal responsibility.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

I am a fourth generation Montanan whose roots go deep into Montana's soil. I was raised on a ranch outside of Harrison, Montana, and my degree in Agricultural Education, means I know the importance of education and agriculture in Montana. I have leadership and communication skills that I developed as a member of both the United States Army and the Montana Army National Guard. My wife Pam and I have been married for 47 years and we have three children and 10 grandchildren. Our two sons are members of the Montana Army National Guard and are currently deployed to Kuwait.

## HOUSE DISTRICT 75

**Marta Bertoglio,  
Republican****Age:** 53**Address:** P.O. Box 294, Clancy, MT 59634**Contact info:** martaformontana@gmail.com**Education:** Graduated from Powell County High School, Deer Lodge, MT; Bachelor of Science, United States Air Force Academy; Air Force Space Operations, Project Management and Leadership Schools**Bertoglio****Occupation:**

Broker-Owner, Uncommon Ground, LLC Real Estate

**Relevant experience:** Wife, mother, first term legislator, small business owner, military officer, school board trustee, active Christian and avid outdoors-

woman

**Why are you running for this office?**

I was born and raised in the small community of Deer Lodge. Family values and creating opportunities for rural Montana are important to me. As an Air Force Academy graduate and military officer, I have defended and believe in our nation and the United States and Montana Constitutions.

I am a lifelong Republican, running as a principled, fiscal conservative with a focus on good paying jobs and opportunities for our district, removing unnecessary barriers to home ownership, and working to lower property taxes while still funding local government and schools. Having served one term in the House of Representatives I understand the importance of building strong relationships and of analyzing bills to determine the long-term impact on the state.

As a small business owner, I practice the daily challenges of providing a good service to our customers while encouraging success within a budget. I bring this perspective to my work in the Legislature, and I will be an advocate for the removal of unnecessary barriers to businesses and needless regulations.

As a native Montanan, I believe strongly in our Montana way of life and values. I am pro 2nd Amendment, pro-life and against exorbitant taxes. Government needs to be efficient and effective in providing opportunities for our citizens to thrive. In this climate of increasing federal overreach, I am a strong states' rights advocate especially when it comes to controlling our industry sectors that drive Montana's economy and to also ensure we protect our freedom and liberty.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

We need to maximize our economic development especially in rural communities. I will work on solutions to the housing shortage, childcare issues and increasing property taxes that affect the daily lives of Montanans.

Having served on the Local Government committee and hearing from Montanans, we need more affordable housing and less government interference. This adds to the time and expenses prior to building, and these added costs trickle down to the buyer. Montanans should be able to live affordably in their home state while enjoying the American dream of home ownership.

I support a strong education system as it is the great equalizer in our society giving every student the opportunity to grow and excel. I am a local control advocate because the best decisions are made by those who understand the needs of their local area. I want to

expand my work in House Bill 246 which gives school board trustees, staff and parents more control and flexibility to maximize a student's educational experience.

My husband and I are both veterans. I will continue my support for our military members, veterans, and their families. I will fight for them to have access to the tools they need to be successful in their lives.

I value Montana's vast public lands and access to enjoy a variety of recreational activities. I will support public access so long as it does not runover the top of landowners with whom we need to partner to provide additional, meaningful access opportunities.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

I will bring common sense, dignity, civility and respect to the public policy arena while repre-

## HOUSE DISTRICT 75

From 11

senting our District. I have developed good relationships across the board from fellow legislators, other elected officials, state run office employees and the executive branch. All nine bills that I sponsored and carried last session were passed and signed into law. I am a straightforward thinker with no hidden agendas. I am an engaged community leader trying to make our District a better place to live, work and raise families. I learned about hard work and duty watching my parents work and give back to their small commu-

nity, and I have carried that duty with me. Service before self has been a guiding principle in my life, and I want to continue to serve my friends and neighbors in the Montana Legislature.

### Timothy D. Mckenrick, Republican

**Age:** 56  
**Address:** PO Box 655 Boulder Mt. 59632  
**Contact info:** Timmckenrick@yahoo.com  
**Education:** High School Graduate, Berks County Fire Academy, Montgomery County Fire Acad-

emy, FEMA, AWANA.

**Occupation:** Disabled  
**Relevant experience:** Speaking to the Legislators about important issues. Working with them to get good legislation



Mckenrick

**Why are you running for this office?**

I am running for HD75 to help

passed, and stop bad legislation before it gets momentum. I have also worked with the FWP commissioners on behalf of sportsman's groups.

the ordinary people have a voice. I am working to educate myself and as many people as possible, to the process of having a voice in what the law makers do and why they do it.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

I want to work with other legislators to help make good decisions for the people of Montana. I cannot hope to find solutions without first identifying the problems.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

I am the one person who has no agenda. I am working for the people of Jefferson County to

help them. I will stand firmly against abortion. I will protect the First and Second Amendments of the Constitution of the United States. I will work to protect the family. I will work on finding ways to lower taxes so people can afford to keep their homes and land. I will work to get our forests open to better management ideas. Let it burn is NOT the answer. I am just an ordinary man who is tired of being told, you can't do anything about it. This government is your government, so let us work together to get our voices heard. God Bless, till next we meet. Tim

## HOUSE DISTRICT 81

### Charlie Hull, Republican

**Age:** 70  
**Address:** 617 E. Main Street, East Helena  
**Contact info:** 406-594-8321 ausstex@yahoo.com  
**Occupation:** Until Watkins Shepard Trucking shutdown, driver and shop parts man; Now I'm a happy face at McDonald's, and a driver of parts for Car Quest



Hull

Graduated High School—Spring Woods High in Houston Texas; Baptist Bible College—Springfield Missouri

**Experience:** I have no experience in this area

**Why are you running for this office?**

Tired of watching the left push programs that harm the young folks of Montana and raise taxes upon Montanans with results not promised. When programs fail it's as if 'Oh well, we will try another one' just leaving the first group on its own.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

Stronger DUI laws. Tired of reading of 3, 4, 5, or more arrests for DUI.

To strengthen laws against abortion—a blight upon our state

and country.

Try to educate the future adults of Montana in the basics first, not indoctrinate them in Wokeness, environment and the LGBT agenda, an agenda that in the long run will cause problems for these kids, and they certainly do not need it. These kids need to learn how to read and not just below their grade level—how to do math so they can figure out their life's budgets or if they can afford to go to college and not ask the taxpayer to pay it for them, how to write with paper and pencil, not just a computer, how to spell. The state is not the father and mother of these children, and the state needs to quit acting like it and return the responsibility back to the parents.

Montana needs to fight harder to have more control over the forest within its borders, more say so in how they are managed. So far the Federals have not done so well, except in closing more roads off.

The state budget needs to be cut in all areas. Yes, there will be cries, but at this time the taxpayer is being squeezed by the President inflation tax.

When permits are requested and need environmental approval, they should have a shorter deadline to meet with their finding and stop dragging their feet.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

Well, most likely nothing. I am just a citizen of Montana who is tired of the way things are going and would like to see some changes—changes made with a different outlook. I was not outstanding in school and my only leadership has been the head of maintenance, which means I cleaned up after others, for the most part taking the hard jobs for myself, and this seems to be a hard job. Folks complain but do not step forward. Well I now find myself stepping forward.

### Jill Sark, Republican

**Age:** 59  
**Address:** 6475 Foxwood Court—Helena, MT 59602  
**Contact info:** JillSarkHD81@gmail.com; (406) 202-2476

**Education:** Graduated from Lincoln County High School in Eureka, MT—May 25, 1980

**Occupation:** Bureau Chief, Department of Public Health and Human Services, Senior and Long Term Care Division

**Relevant experience:** I have worked for the State of Montana for 38.5 years with most of the years involving the administration of public assistance programs. My responsibilities have included applying federal and state regulations in policy development and eligibility determinations. I also managed a health insurance sub-

sidy and tax credit program for small businesses with the State Auditors Office. During that time, I gained experience participating in the legislative process testifying at hearings in support of



Sark

programs. I have been responsible for the administration of several Medicaid programs designed to benefit persons with disabilities and elderly individuals. The overall budget for the bureau I oversee exceeds \$120,000,000. Through my experiences I have gained an understanding of state policy development and budget management and oversight.

**Why are you running for this office?**

I will be retiring in June and would like to take the next step in state government to be part of the legislative process of passing bills that are beneficial to Montanans and to shape the policies that will be implemented by state departments. I am interested in bringing forward conservative ideas that trim the state budget in areas where funds are expended for the purpose of "not turning back money" rather than for the purpose of meeting a need of the

citizens of the state. I will stand firmly against abortion. I will protect the First and Second Amendments of the Constitution of the United States. I will work to protect the family. I will work on finding ways to lower taxes so people can afford to keep their homes and land. I will work to get our forests open to better management ideas. Let it burn is NOT the answer. I am just an ordinary man who is tired of being told, you can't do anything about it. This government is your government, so let us work together to get our voices heard. God Bless, till next we meet. Tim

citizens of the state.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

My plans include passing legislation that will benefit small businesses in Montana to prosper and be successful by removing unnecessary and overburdensome regulation and ensuring a fair and reasonable business tax obligation. Secondly, I plan to pass legislation, or amend current rules, which will increase the oversight of state government spending, with a focus of reducing fraud, waste and abuse. My third objective is to sponsor bills that will increase oil, gas and coal production in Montana. A review is necessary of state tax in this area compared to other states and then to adjust to a reasonable and fair amount. I will defend Second Amendment Rights, uphold election integrity and protect the rights and lives of unborn children.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

I understand the cause and effect of legislation at the ground level. I have many years of experience with the inner workings of state government. I do not have a conflict of interest—I am an independent citizen with only one personal agenda, which is to support the state of Montana to prosper and remain the last best place to live and raise your family.

## HOUSE DISTRICT 81

**Melissa Romano,  
Democrat****Age:** 46**Address:** 790 Wolf Road, Helena**Contact info:** Melissa-RomanoMT@gmail.com**Education:** Master of Science Degree, University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT; Bachelor of Science—University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT; Associate of Applied Sciences—Photography—Northwest College, Powell, WY**Romano****Occupation:** Educator with Helena School District**Relevant experience:** I began working for the Helena School District in 2004 and am currently employed as an instructional coach; working with administrators, teachers, and students to support teaching, learning, and professional development. I am a proud advocate for students, teachers, families, and quality education in Montana and have held leadership opportunities throughout my career. I have served as a facilitator of local, state, and national professional development groups focused on increasing students' critical thinking skills and advancing public education. My commitment to collaborating with educators to develop resilient learners led me to be selected as one of 130 teachers chosen nationwide to share lessons on an education website creating a year's worth of classroom-ready math lessons. I look forward to bringing my passion and dedication to leadership, education, and collaboration to the Montana legislature.**Why are you running****for this office?**

Helena has been my home for 46 years. This is where I grew up and was raised not only by my parents but by this community. I am running for HD 81 because I want to give back to my community. I have been a public servant my entire career and I know I am an effective problem solver and can find common ground for solutions to the challenges facing Helena and Montana.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

As a mom of four, I want Montana to be a place where our children can choose to stay and thrive. I will work with all legislators to build our economy, create good-paying jobs, and get Montanans the education and training they need to build our workforce and protect workers' rights. Montana is facing an affordable housing shortage and our young people need to be able to afford a home to stay in our state. I'm dedicated to taking strategic action to get our economy back on track. I will fight for affordable housing and to incentivize the development of affordable housing by implementing zoning reforms and making housing subsidies more accessible to Montanans who need them most.

Equal access to educational opportunities is enshrined in Montana's constitution, and our kids deserve to have the tools they need to succeed. Investing in our public schools at all levels is an investment in Montana's future. Research shows public preschool helps prepare our youngest learners for school and benefits children well into adulthood—helping ensure our children will graduate high school on time and get better jobs. Preschool also supports our working

families. As District 81's representative, I will support legislation that eases the cost of early childhood education for Montana families. I look forward to being a strong public school advocate for Montana's education system at every level.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

I am an award-winning public school teacher and a recognized leader, earning the distinction of the 2018 Montana Teacher of the Year and the 2012 Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching. In my 18-year education career, I have worked tirelessly to create a strong foundation of skills and love of learning in my students, and look forward to bringing this same passion for making Montana's future bright to the legislature. Although I will directly be representing Helena, I understand that I will serve all Montanans. As a spokesperson and advocate for public education, I've been fortunate to travel the state and visit with fellow Montanans from our small rural corners to our bigger urban areas. I understand people's concerns about jobs, the economy, and families' desires for their kids and grandkids to stay in Montana and thrive. Our legislature needs skilled leaders who can find common ground with diverse groups of people and know how to collaborate; that's what I've done as an educator for 18 years and that's what I will continue to do as Representative of House District 81.

**Jake C. Troyer,  
Democrat****Age:** 48**Address:** 1029 9th Avenue, Helena, MT,**Contact info:** Phone:

(406) 202-1062; Email: TroyerForMT@gmail.com; Website: TroyerForMontana.com

**Education:** Billings Skyview, 1992; University of Montana, B.A. Political Science, 1997**Occupation:** Owner, Sleeping Giant Communications, LLC; Guest Teacher, Helena Public School District**Relevant experience:**

With a combined 25 years in government relations, workforce development, and helping build Montana's conservation community, I am ready to represent the people of HD 81 on Day One. I am proud

**Troyer**

to be the only candidate in this race with experience directly engaging and working with the Legislature as a business owner, community organizer, and state employee.

Past Communications Director, Montana Department of Labor & Industry Former Community Organizer, Montana Wilderness Association

Former Board Member: Helena Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Council, Forward Montana, Montana Conservation Voters, Montana Wildlife Federation.

Democratic Campaign Consultant: Worked over 200 campaigns consulting, staffing, or volunteering nationwide

Endorsed by Montana Sportsmen Alliance

**What do you hope to****accomplish in this office?**

I'm running to bring back common sense, civility, kindness, and thoughtful government to a body that deserves that kind of effort from everyone who serves in the Legislature.

Our families and friends are facing unprecedented, real-world problems like affordable housing underfunded public education, assaults on our clean water and pure air, wildlife heritage and open spaces; and we see the same legislature that vowed to keep government small invade our daily lives more and more.

Cheap narratives designed to stoke fear and divide families and neighbors tend to soak up the headlines, but that's not my

Please see **DISTRICT 81**, Page 14

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## HOUSE DISTRICT 81

From 13

Montana. Rather than educate and inform, outrage and hollow hatred are the common traits among so many these days. It's time we stopped fighting with each other over made-up issues and start finding that old Montana path towards civil debate and honest policies where we all move forward—together.

Since I started my campaign knocking doors in September 2021, I've heard overwhelmingly from voters that these are the issues that matter most to them, and as such, these are the issues I'll be working on when elected:

Defending and upholding your rights enumerated in the United States and Montana Constitutions.

Helping ensure that our seniors, low-income and young families aren't priced out of the housing market.

Protecting body autonomy and reproductive rights to keep abortion safe, legal, and rare

Developing a well-trained, well-paid post-Covid workforce through increased education funding.

Passing science-based conservation policy.

#### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I'm the only candidate in this race who has first-hand experience working with the Montana Legislature. My track record of reaching across the aisle to find solutions to Montana's problems has prepared me to show up on

Day One and start representing the people of House District 81.

Experience matters, especially when dealing with the fast pace of the Legislature. Being able to start on day 1 with a solid footing in how the place works puts me at the head of the incredibly talented list of candidates for HD 81.

As a parent, I understand that quality public education is the single best investment we can make to assure a better and more prosperous future for our kids.

As a small business owner, I recognize the need for tax reform that benefits Montana homeowners and businesses, not huge corporations and absentee real estate speculators.

As a resident sportsman, I recognize our quality of life is largely determined by the quality of, and access to the public land, water, and wildlife we the citizens of Montana are the beneficiaries of to appreciate and enjoy.

Finally, as a human being and Christian, I am appalled by the bigoted, fear-driven legislative attempts to demonize our friends, neighbors and family members who have already been marginalized economically and politically—First Peoples, LG-BTQ+ community, the poor and those with mental health concerns. These are not the teachings of Jesus I learned at Church about caring for one another.

When elected, I'll bring much needed experience, balance and commonsense to work for the people of Montana House District 81 each-and-every day at

the Legislature.

To learn more about my campaign visit TroyerForMontana.com or check out Jake Troyer for Legislature on Facebook or @Troyer4Montana on Twitter.

#### Jacob. B. Torgerson, Democrat

**Age:** 20 on May 17th

**Address:** 3790 Wylie Dr, Helena, MT

**Contact info:** Phone: (406)459-8756; Email: jacob-torgerson@torgersonformt.com

**Education:** Capital High School, Class of 2020; first generation college student at Helena College of Technology, University of Montana

**Occupation:** Barista at Starbucks Coffee Company; Community Organizer; Full-time big brother to 5.

**Relevant experience:** Tax Payer, Student, Renter, Community Organizer, Bookkeeper, Food Service industry employee, Life-long Montanan.

#### Why are you running for this office?

In 2021, the Montana State Legislature had one of the worst sessions to date for working families, small businesses, and Montanans in general. I watched our state legislature continue to pass unpopular policies after receiving vocal opposition from the people of Montana. Helena is

my home—I was born and raised here; this is where I graduated high school. I am running because of the fact that the Montana I know, love, and grew up in is slipping away. I believe Montana is a place where hard work means something, and that our government is one that should work for working people, not just the rich and powerful.

I am running because I have experienced the vulnerability that everyday Montanans face in our economy. I know what it is like to walk that tightrope—just one bobble away from losing it all. That perspective fuels me and it is why I will be the best advocate for Helena in the legislature.

#### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

As the oldest of six children, I acted as a built-in child care in my family. I understand quality, affordable child care is simply out of reach for too many of us. No credible politician can claim to be 'pro-family' and refuse to address this issue head-on. This is why I will fight hard to create tangible solutions that progress both families and child care centers. This issue is crushing working families, and it comes as a one-two punch right alongside our housing crisis. In Montana, rent has increased 62% faster than the national average and is becoming more and more out of reach for the average middle-income household. I care deeply about making housing more affordable and, if elected, will work

to repeal the state legislature's overreaching ban on inclusion-ary zoning and to implement a Workforce Housing Tax Credit in Montana.

#### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I am the son of a semi-trucker and a landscaper. I was born into a little trailer house in Helena's North Valley. I am Montanan to my core and I was raised with blue-collar, working-class values. At 19 years old, I would be the youngest legislator in the state and bring a unique perspective that is enhanced by my identity as a gay urban Native American. Support for this campaign crosses social circles, political boundaries and even party lines. That is because so many folks see that for too long, the same faces and representation have failed to win or achieve any tangible change for communities in need. The picture of an elected official in Montana has looked like an old, white, cis, heterosexual man for decades. Our communities need big, structural change if they're going to survive the onslaught of crises facing our state. My candidacy is living proof that there is hunger for that change and that it is feasible. I have been running this campaign since May 17th, 2021. Since then, I have knocked over 2,000 doors, raised tens of thousands of dollars, and heard from thousands of voters. I have a deep connection to this community, and I know I am the best champion out there to fight for it in the state legislature in 2023.



Torgerson

## HOUSE DISTRICT 82

#### Mary M. Caferro, Democrat

**Age:** 62

**Address:** PO Box 668 Helena, MT 59624

**Contact info:** marycaferro@gmail.com 406-461-2384

**Education:** Helena College Whitefish High School

**Occupation:** Direct Care Worker with people who have



Caferro

disabilities; Print media coordinator

#### Relevant experience:

Community organizer, advocate for children who have disabilities 2010-2020;

Community organizer, advocate for families who are low-income.

2000-2010; House 2005-2010, 2019-present, Senate 2011-2018; Committee Vice Chair: Senate Finance and Claims, House Appropriations, Legislative Finance, Children, Families, Health and Human Services, Senate Public Health, House Human Services; Member: Appropriations Health and Human Services sub-committee. ARPA Health Advisory Commission.

#### Why are you running for this office?

I am running for office because I care about people. I'm running to stand up for the everyday Montanan who is struggling to put food on the table, make their mortgage, and pay for braces for their kids; to protect Medicaid Expansion, health insurance for 100,000 Montanans who work but still can't afford health in-

urance; to fight for the services needed by people who have disabilities and fair wages for the workers who care for them. I'm running for office to make our outdoor heritage accessible to all Montanans rich and poor; to develop job training programs so that all Montanans can afford a home and a better future for their children; to shape a state budget that reflects our values and in-

## HOUSE DISTRICT 82

vests in education, a clean environment, healthcare, good paying jobs, and puts Montanans first. I am grateful to live in a country where a single mother who struggles to make ends meet can run for office thanks to the sacrifice of veterans and their families. I am humbled to have the trust of the people of Helena since I was first elected in 2004. I have been fortunate to do what I love, advocating for people, but there is still work to be done, and that is why I am running for office. The people of Montana deserve better.

#### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

Corporations are making record profits, using the pandemic as an excuse to profiteer off of us, raise prices more than they have to, and keep them artificially high to line their own pockets at our expense. Gas companies are making the highest profits in over 70 years. People need to be able to fill their tank with gas to get to

work. It is more important than ever to support locally-owned businesses. Oftentimes business-friendly legislation leaves out our Montana businesses. I will continue to advocate for the inclusion of Main Street businesses.

Montanans work hard and deserve a wage that pays the bills. I will continue to support Hero Bonuses for nurses, caregivers, and essential workers as well as training and education to get people higher paying jobs. I will oppose any "right to work" legislation that diminishes Montana's workers' collective bargaining rights. I will continue to support public education, as it is the great equalizer. Medicaid Expansion was a great step forward and I will work to preserve that and other essential services from unnecessary budget cuts.

I was raised hunting with my Dad and uncles in the mountains of Montana. I raised my children and my grandchildren to

enjoy the outdoors as well. I am committed to ensuring that our outdoor heritage is accessible to all of us, not just the wealthy and well-connected.

#### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

My life experience, my unwavering support for the little guy, and my ability to bridge political divides. It's not only the work, but "how" the work gets done that creates long-term solutions and positive outcomes. I work by building relationships with other policy makers and constituents. The public is an essential partner in developing effective, meaningful legislation. I always say my best legislation is informed by the people I represent.

I respect policy makers of all stripes and have a history of putting political differences aside in order to do what our constituents sent us to do; work together to find solutions to Montana's gravest problems, like lack of

affordable, accessible health-care. For example, through bipartisan collaborations we negotiated healthcare for 100,000 uninsured Montanans through Medicaid expansion. We developed the first-in-the-nation workforce training and education program targeting Medicaid Expansion members with opportunities for higher paying jobs that create generational change and upward mobility for their families. Medicaid expansion created 5,000 jobs, supported businesses by lifting the burden of employer-sponsored health insurance, stabilized the workforce, and provided access to affordable health insurance for Montanans.

#### Craig Sundberg, Democrat

Age: 50

Address: P.O. Box PO Box 7552, Helena, MT 59604

Contact info: CraigforMontana@gmail.com

**Education:** Some College  
**Occupation:** Maintenance  
**Relevant experience:** Former Business Owner. Former Casino

Manager, Currently working Maintenance



#### Why are you running for this office?

I want to make a difference in our children's future

#### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

Making people look farther into the future

#### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I grew up on a small farm in Opportunity, so I am familiar with agriculture, I am a world traveler, well read and always looking to learn. My business experience along with my background give me a unique way of looking at issues of the day.



**PSC5** Candidate **Dr. ANNIE Bukacek**

*I am committed to making the Montanan Citizens the #1 Most Important Special Interest Group*

- Proven Public Servant and Peoples Advocate
- Award Winner Who Produces Quality Research
- Devoted to Keeping MT Energy Independent
- Proven Leadership and Known Problem Solver
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Tuesday - June 7, 2022**

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## HOUSE DISTRICT 84

**Kurt J. Aughney, Republican****Age:** 39**Address:** PO Box 2025 East Helena, MT 59635**Contact info:** (406) 579-4128, aughney4montana@gmail.com; Facebook: @aughney4montana.com; aughney4montana.com.**Education:** Master's in Public Administration and Bachelor of Political Science**Aughney****Occupation:** Quality Assurance Director for the Department of Corrections**Relevant experience:** My career in state government has

spanned over a decade and my experience includes managing multiple government programs and working with the legislature. I also audit and oversee compliance with large government programs. I know the major issues that hamper our state government and will help solve those problems in the legislature. Beyond educational and professional experience, I am reminded every day the most important and relevant experience I have is being a father. I am raising my children right here in House District 84. I understand the difficulties we have working full-time and being full-time parents. I understand the worries we have when schools won't allow our children to attend in person. I understand our concerns regarding what our children are taught, and I will ensure we always have a say in what that is. I am personally and professionally invested in the well-being of HD84 and would be proud to represent this community.

**Why are you running for this office?**

I am running because I want so much more for this district and will be the strong, reasoned voice to achieve more this upcoming legislative session. This district is where most of the growth in the county is occurring. I want to help see this growth move forward, but also see small business

develop alongside. As we grow, so do unwanted consequences such as crime. We must fund and support law enforcement so they can keep our streets safe and clean. I am running because I want to help become the first generation that opens more private and public land access than was closed. I believe if we work with private landowners and not against them, we can achieve this goal. I am running because we must ensure parents are allowed to be a part of what their kids are being taught. We need to educate our kids, not indoctrinate our youth with the nonsense coming out of Washington DC and other national organizations. I am running for this office because I want to help do so much more this session.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

My priorities are summarized with five issues. First, we must ensure we are providing the necessary resources to educate our kids, while also ensuring parents are included in what kids are taught. Second, we must fund and support law enforcement and public safety officials. As we grow, and while the southern boarder remains wide-open, our law enforcement needs our support. With my experience in the criminal justice system, I will achieve that support. Third, we must incentivize landowners to open more access to Montana's pristine land and push back on federal regulations closing access to public lands. We can become the first generation to open more land than was closed. Fourth, we must focus on economic growth. This district, like much of Montana is growing, especially the housing sector. We need to ensure we are focused on small business growth right alongside. Federal inflation is rampant, and Washington DC is doing little to help. We must utilize Montana's vast resources of oil, natural gas, and coal and do what we can in Montana to lessen the impacts of Washington DC's inflation. I will support the responsible development of Montana's natural resources. Finally, we need to ensure we are holding

our government accountable, and that government understands they work for us. We can make our government work more efficiently and with my experience I will work every day in the legislative session to make that happen.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

I have the background, education, and experience needed to represent this district. I am an avid outdoorsman, hiker, hunter, and fisherman and understand our Montana way of life and the need to preserve it. I want to help be the catalyst to finally do more for HD 84. I believe my background makes me the most qualified candidate for this primary and the best opportunity to ultimately win in November.

**Keith Pigman, Republican****Age:** 37**Address:** 2236 Mccellen Creek**Contact info:** 406-274-7429**Education:** U-M Helena**Occupation:** Home Builder**Relevant experience:** USMC Infantry, Business owner**Pigman****Why are you running for this office?**

Increase our economy by opening up the zoning restrictions creating more lots that will bring down the price of land.

I will continue to vote no on any indoctrination for our kids and school, increase interest in middle and high school for trades. Most of all stop the federal government from being involved with our public lands. Montana can manage our own land.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

Move school board elections to primary. Only 4 weeks apart, puts less stress on our election administration and has a bigger voter turnout for June primary

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

As a SGT in the Marines Corps I trained and lead Marines into combat on 3 deployments, Running a business I'm responsible

for managing a clients budget on high end homes, material management, and timeframes for sub contractors. I will organize and rally the public, lead them to the capital to pass legislation that Montana needs, and block any restrictions that takes our freedoms.

**Kaitlyn Ruch, Republican****Age:** 18**Address:** PO Box 7446, Helena, MT 59601**Contact info:** kaitlynformontana@gmail.com**Ruch****Education:**

Valedictorian of Helena High School, Carroll College Class of 2026 (Communications &amp; Catholic Studies)

**Occupation:** Student

**Relevant experience:** I have previously served as the Office Manager for the Montana Republican Party, and I served as a House Page for the Montana Legislature in 2021. I am the Montana Public Policy Captain for Students for Life Action where I testified more than a dozen times during the 67th Legislative Session on behalf of Pro-Life Legislation, and I am the founder of Helena Students for Life and serve on the Executive Board of Pro-Life Helena.

**Why are you running for this office?**

My parents taught me that if I saw a problem, I could either sit and complain about it, or I could stand up and do something about it. That is why I am running for House District 84. My campaign slogan is "The Change We Need, The Voice You Deserve" because I believe that the people of East Helena and Helena deserve a Representative who is truly there to represent their interests, not those of a polarized political agenda or special interest groups.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

Some of the issues I am most passionate about as a young Montanan and those which I hope to address if I am elected include:

Providing excellent education in

our schools. As a current Student, it is important to me now more than ever to ensure that other students in our Helena and East Helena schools are provided with a top notch education. We need to return control of schools to the local level and let parents and local communities make the best decisions about what will be taught in the classroom.

Reducing the size and scope of government. It seems like the government continues to grow every single day. It's my belief that the best person to make decisions about their own life, is the individual, not the government. The vast majority of Americans just want to be left alone to raise their families, go to work, and live their life. As a state representative I will always vote to reduce the size of government and vote to get government out of the lives of the citizens of Montana.

Fighting for life. It's simple. Every human life is precious and deserving of protection in law. I am proud to have seen the progress made in the 2021 Legislative session with protecting Life, but there is still more work to be done. As a young female, I am the target market of the abortion industry. While anyone can do a great job at bringing Pro-Life legislation onto the floor of our state house, my unique perspective as a young, adopted, Montana woman, will help push this life-saving legislation above and beyond.

Combating the drug and crime epidemic: The drug and crime epidemic is unfortunately hitting too close to home. Since 2013, violent crime has increased 91% in Montana. We need to reach across the aisle to stop this trend by working to support our law enforcement; and giving them the resources they need to help them in their brave work of protecting our communities.

Ensuring a bright future for Montana. As a young person and recent graduate, it breaks my heart to see so many of my peers packing up to move out of state, with no plans of ever returning. Our biggest export should never be our children! More needs to be

## HOUSE DISTRICT 84

done to encourage young Montanans to live, work, and raise their families here for a prosperous and bright future.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

The Montana State Legislature is in need of young, new voices, and I am one. While I am only 18 years old and have never run for elected office before, I view that as a positive. Our political system isn't working for so many people, meanwhile the same politicians continue to get elected repeatedly while only serving their own interests. I am able to step into the job on day 1 and bring a fresh perspective to the Montana Legislature. The decisions being made in government every single day are falling on the shoulders of my generation. We deserve a seat at the table to have a voice on the important issues facing our state today.

### Jill Cohenour, Democrat

**Age:** 55

**Address:** 2610 Colt Dr, East Helena, MT, 59635

**Contact info:** 406-227-1144

**Education:** Bachelors degree in Chemistry, University of Montana  
**Occupation:** Chemist



Cohenour

**Relevant experience:**

Served in the Montana House of Representatives from 2002 to 2010, Montana Senate from 2014 to now. Serving as Minority Leader for Montana Senate 2020-2022. Served as Minority Vice Chair on several Legislative committees, including Fish and Game, Tax and Education committees.

Serving on my local Water and Sewer Board and as president of my local union. I volunteer on the Elkhorn chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

### Why are you running for this office?

I have been working hard to represent my friends and neighbors in House District 84 for 16 years, including my Senate time. I live and work in my district and I really care about our community, our families and our children. I will always take our hometown values to the legislature. I believe our schools are a source of community pride, our communities are resilient and supportive, our access to the ballot box is a right, conservation is not a dirty word, it's a way of life, and Montanans value our Constitution, and will fight to protect it. I will do what I can to protect what we have and to make our community even better. To help our communities to thrive we need to address childcare access and affordability, as well as housing affordability and availability. We need to work on fair taxation and to protect folks from being taxed out of their homes. We need to support our teachers and staff who provide a quality education and prepare our kids to accelerate our Montana economy. Small business is the backbone of our local economy. We need to support workers and entrepreneurs who see the bright future of Montana and want to invest their time and energy here. The legislature can make a difference in these things and I want to continue to fight for the needs of our community and helping to chart a future that works for all of us.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I want to continue the work I have done on Fish

and Wildlife issues. Our outdoor heritage should not be taken for granted and must be actively protected as evidenced by the last session. Last minute bills in the 2021 session changed the complexion of our state and treat out-of-state land owners and out-of-state hunters better than us. I also want to keep fighting to protect workers freedom to join together to have a voice in their workplaces. Workers deserve the ability to own a home, and raise a family right here in Montana. We can do so much at the state level to improve the lives of our Montana working families. Our economy depends on our workers and the ability for folks to enter and stay in the workforce. I want to continue to work on affordable housing, accessible childcare, and fair taxation. The reason we live here is because we love our state and our local communities. We have the responsibility to make it better for future generations, not worse.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I have the experience and relationships to get things done in the legislature. I have passed 68 bills in my time in the legislature. I have served in 2 tied houses but mostly in the minority. I have been able to pass bipartisan legislation because I am willing to work hard to find solutions we can all agree on. It's important to listen, and find the core value that we all hold, then work on how we make change together. Relationships matter in the legislature. My ability to work across the aisle on all the issues that come before the legislature is important to our local community having a strong voice. I have held many leadership positions in the legislature including vice chairing committees

and most recently being elected Senate Minority leader by my peers. That has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I work tirelessly on behalf of our community to make a better future for our kids and our state. I hope I get the chance to continue because I really love this work.

### Noah J. Horan, Democrat

**Age:** 30

**Contact info:** noahfor-montana@gmail.com

**Education:** Helena High, graduated 2009; Carroll College, graduated 2014, B.A. in Political Science

**Occupation:** Substitute Teacher

**Relevant experience:**

During my time at Carroll College, I majored in Political Science with a minor in

English Literature. I split the focus of my political science studies evenly between US politics and political theory.



Horan

the great privilege of being a Committee Secretary for the House during the 2015 session. I returned during the 2019 session as well, serving as a Committee Secretary on the Senate side. As such, I'm extremely familiar with the legislative process, and I gained valuable exposure to many of the policy areas that are critically important to Montana: transporta-

tion, the judiciary, local government, and health and human services.

Additionally, I've worked for the State of Montana in various positions with several different Departments following the end of the 2015 session. One of the most elucidating job experiences for me was working for the Commissioner of Political Practices as a Compliance Specialist, monitoring the campaign expenditures of every candidate and committee in Montana. As such, I feel like I know what it takes to run a race and win.

Also, while working for the COPP, I was in charge of completing the agency's budget request for the biennium. I'm not an accountant, but working on the

Please see **DISTRICT 84**, Page 18




## Elect Judge McMahon for Montana Supreme Court

**If you expect a Supreme Court Justice to follow the law and not public, political, partisan or personal agendas, vote for Judge McMahon.**

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Paid for by McMahon for Montana Supreme Court, PO Box 1478, Helena, MT 59624-1478

## DISTRICT 84

From 17

COPP budget provided me with valuable insight into just how tight Montana's budget really is.

### Why are you running for this office?

I love this state and I want to do what I can to serve the people of Montana. I think there is a serious shortage of young people involved in politics, and I hope to have the opportunity to be a part of the solution.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

If elected, I intend to work with anyone on either side of the aisle who shares my desire to find common-sense solutions to the problems we face as a state and a nation. Specifically, I'd like to be involved in resolving the major infrastructure problem our state is facing at the moment; our roads are crumbling, and it's inexcusable. I'll also fight to further expand access to affordable healthcare for all Montanans, and support any legislation that protects the working- and middle-class families in this state—the vast majority of Montanans—who are so often exploited for the benefit of out-of-state corporate interests. This includes through pursuing legislation to ensure our constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment is protected, as well as through preserving public access to public lands.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I think I stand out as a candidate because of my practical experience with the State, particularly in the area of agency budgeting. I also have a strong understanding of the intricacies of the legislative process, both from my education and from my experience working as support staff during two legislative sessions. I believe I have the passion needed to get things done for Montanans, and the willingness to work with anyone who shares in my desire for good governance, regardless of party. I won't cave under pressure from lobbyists and special interest groups, and I pledge to always put the best interests of my constituents first and foremost in my decision-making process.

## COUNTY COMMISSIONER #3

### Candace Payne

**Age:** 69 years

**Address:** 1160 Yuri Road, Helena, MT

**Contact info:** 406-431-4445  
paynecandace96@gmail.com

**Education:** Graduate of Billings Senior High, 1970; Bachelor of Science, Psychology from Eastern Montana College; Juris Doctorate from University of Montana School of Law, 1992.



Payne

**Occupation:**

Retired from private practice of law (2018).

**Relevant experience:** I have lived and worked in Lewis & Clark County for the last 30 years. During that time, I was a partner in a 10-person law firm. The partners met regularly to discuss finances, personnel issues, special projects, and ideas for improving the small business we were operating. We did not always agree, but we generally worked out our problems in a businesslike manner.

My law practice consisted generally of helping people with businesses to stay in business. I worked with small businesses, farmers and ranchers, homeowners, and developers. My practice involved water rights, contracts, easements, right-of-way and road issues, organization of small businesses, and transfers of property. In thirty years of general practice, I developed problem solving skills and an ability to help parties find consensus.

All of this has provided me with extensive familiarity with creative problem solving. Our county is like 100 small separate businesses, all put in place to serve the needs of the public. Real world experience is key to being an effective county commissioner.

### Why are you running for this office?

I am running for the office of Lewis & Clark County Commissioner because I see this as an opportunity to use my hard-earned problem-solving skills for the long-term benefit of our community.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

Should I be elected, I expect to help get Lewis & Clark County on course for a workable long-term plan for the future while maintaining a sound and realistic fiscal foundation.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I am not beholden to special interests, nor driven by partisan agenda. I have the experience, the education, and the problem-solving skills needed to keep Lewis & Clark County on course for efficient use of tax-payer money.

### Conrad Everts

**Age:** 49

**Address:** 2416 Wilder Ave.

**Contact info:** conrad@conrad4county.com

**Education:** BA University of Montana

**Occupation:** CEO

**Relevant experience:** Lewis and Clark County has a problem providing homes people can afford to buy. I own 40 lots in the county and a number of rentals. I also own a campground in the county. I'm not a big player but I've studied the issue and engaged with enough experts over the past year or so to know the path out of this mess. I stand to lose a fair amount of money if I win but principles matter more to me than money and I stand by the idea that working families should own homes.

Our county has a significant tourism sector, I'm an expert in the tourism industry with experience in marketing adventure tourism and ecotourism in 44 countries. I know what it takes to create sustainable and profitable tourism. My work over the past 20 years has been in executive and collaborative positions dealing with a wide spectrum of cultures primarily in rural areas and agricultural sectors of the economy.

Finally, as an entrepreneur, I know what scares off investment

in a community. Our young people deserve to be able to afford to stay in Lewis and Clark County if that's what they desire. My background growing businesses and mentoring young entrepreneurs will help move us toward conditions that create prosperity.

### Why are you running for this office?

I'm running to stop illegal, ideologically driven and discriminatory zoning that research shows could drive up the median home price by \$80,000. A study from the University of Montana shows that in areas where minimum lot sizes have been implemented, the home prices increased by 9% to 20%. The ideologically driven zoning and subdivision regulations being foisted on the county, in particular the 10-acre minimum lot size, needlessly raises the price of a home dramatically. With the median home price in the valley being \$400,000 that equals \$80,000. This sort of zoning is a proven failure elsewhere and trying it "harder" here won't make it work. In the meantime we're losing generations of young folks to places where the wages and the home prices are more aligned.

We're lowering the quality of life for many people barely hanging on in our economy. We're creating a generation of cynics by holding home ownership and prosperity out of their grasp. I believe our callousness toward young people's dream of home ownership is contributing to diseases of despair. People need to have access to the American Dream if they are going to believe in America.

Add to this the simple fact that according to Montana Code Annotated 76-1-601 proceeding with this zoning without an updated growth policy is simply illegal. The growth policy being used right now is based on 2010 census data. We have 2020 census data, this is what we need to use in an updated growth policy. The growth patterns changed dramatically in the past decade due to DNRC water rights limitations, rural zoning restrictions and in-

creased migration from California, Oregon and Washington due to COVID-19 mandates, lawlessness and taxes. Legally suspect subdivision and zoning regulations have nearly stopped all rural development in the county. This is basic supply and demand.

I'm also running because, as an entrepreneur, I've heard time and again from other entrepreneurs that dealing with the county is the biggest impediment to starting a business here. That's unacceptable and inhibits opportunities for working people. We need a partnership dynamic between those that regulate and license businesses and entrepreneurs to have a thriving economy. There simply is no good reason the economy here is sluggish and stratified.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I plan to eliminate barriers to home ownership and prosperity. I'll work with the Sheriff to pass practically enforceable ordinances. I'll reply to testimony, emails and phone calls! I'll engage with concerned citizens that come in and testify rather than running for the backdoor.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I'm not beholden. I'm direct. I'm committed to the rule of law and the values of America as founded.

### Curt Dallas

**Age:** 59

**Address:** 1212 Stetson Road, Helena MT 59602



Dallas

**Contact info:**  
curtdallas4lewisandclarkcc@gmail.com

**Education:**  
Capital High School, attended Montana State University

**Occupation:** Relocation Specialist, Montana Department of Transportation and Realtor, Dallas Land Company.

**Relevant experience:** As a 4th generation resident of Lewis & Clark County I have seen the drastic change to our area in the last 40+ years. I sat on the

## COUNTY COMMISSIONER #3

Citizens Advisory Committee the first time around when Lewis and Clark County tried to update the Growth plan. That experience made me realize that our County has very diverse needs. Through that process I found that the people in the outlying communities felt that everything was focused to the Helena Valley, and not their unique needs. The needs in the Helena area are very different than those in Canyon Creek, Lincoln, Augusta, and Wolf Creek.

I have spent 24 years with the Montana Department of Transportation in Right-of-Way, dealing with property issues. Often these issues are complex and involve people in a situation they do not want to be in. Finding equitable solutions that are fair to the Department and the public has

always been a priority for me. The highways and bridges in the state are in need of improvement, and plans are in progress to deal with those issues.

I have spent 30 years in Real Estate. I have never seen the housing situation what it is today. The current housing market is difficult at best, and for many people, young and old alike, the dream of owning a home is out of reach. We need to work together to address the housing inventory shortage and try to provide a pathway to home ownership.

### Why are you running for this office?

I talk to many people in the county and zoning is a hot topic. Folks do not believe that their voices are being heard. I will continue to talk with the people of

the county and possibly revisit the zoning document. The 10-acre minimum lot size seems to be arbitrary. When looking at the Helena Valley Zoning map, there is a lot of area suitable for higher density development. Growth is inevitable, and we need to plan for reasonable sustainable growth.

Our county roads and bridges are getting older and harder to maintain. I have had the opportunity to meet with the Public Works staff and it appears that our roads and bridges are being well taken care of. I would like to work on a plan to help our Public Works staff be better able to maintain this critical infrastructure. We need to ensure that the roads and infrastructure in Lewis & Clark County continue to remain safe and in good condition. Public Works

does a great job of this, and we need to ensure that they continue to have the resources they need.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I will work with county staff and the development community to streamline the process for property development. I will work towards solutions for affordable housing, starting with the size of the lot to build a house on. Growth is inevitable and I would hope that we can work together for reasonable, responsible, sustainable growth.

Lewis & Clark County has over 1,500 miles of road, and maintains over 500 miles. Our Public Works staff works hard to maintain these roads and bridges and I would like to continue to work with staff to see that this continues and look

for ways to make things better.

Relationships with all stakeholders in our County is very important. We must recognize the unique and different needs of our communities, from the Helena Valley to Augusta, from Lincoln to Craig.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

I am fourth generation in Lewis and Clark County. I was raised on my family's ranch in Canyon Creek and try to stay involved in the day-to-day operations there. I have many years of service to the community through 4-H and other youth activities, including over 25 years officiating High School and small college football. I feel a strong connection to the land and people of this County and State.

## COUNTY ATTORNEY

### Charles Lane

**Age:** 40

**Address:** PO Box 605, Helena, MT 59624

### Contact info:

charleslane4lcca@gmail.com;

charleslane-forlcca.com;  
Facebook.com/lane4lcca

### Education:

B.S. Physics, Montana State University 2006, Graduated with Honors; J.D.,

Santa Clara University School of Law 2014, Dean's Fellowship full scholarship recipient

**Occupation:** Civil Deputy County Attorney, Lewis and Clark County

**Relevant experience:** A fourth generation Montanan, I grew up in Lewis and Clark County and worked as a wildland firefighter to help put myself through college at MSU.

I briefly left Montana after college to work as a scientist in Silicon Valley on semiconductor and solar technologies. I started my legal career in 2014 with a private law firm and represented high-

tech clients in patent and trademark litigation. The attention to detail and legal skills developed during this work provided a solid foundation for my legal career, but my heart remained in Montana.

I returned to Lewis and Clark County in 2016 where I immediately started working as a Civil Deputy County Attorney representing the County in significant civil litigation protecting millions of dollars of taxpayer funds.

In this position I also provide legal guidance to the Board of County Commissioners, the Sheriff/Coroner, County districts such as fire and school districts, the Board of Health, and other elected and appointed positions within the County including the County's election's department. While performing these duties over the last five and a half years I have built and maintained relationships throughout Lewis and Clark County government offices, state government offices, County Attorney Offices across the state, and related non-profit and for-profit industries in this county.

I believe in proactive administration of local government and

understand what changes should be made to enable the County Attorney's office to better serve the public. To that end, under the direction of County Attorney Leo Gallagher, I recently led the procurement and launching of a case management system that documents and monitors criminal prosecutions. Numerous counties throughout Montana have adopted this system to provide transparency and inspire public confidence in our criminal justice system.

### Why are you running for this office?

I understand the full influence and potential of this elected position. On the criminal side I intend to continue the modernization of the office which will provide greater efficiency, transparency, and accountability to the citizens of this county. This office must prosecute violations of the laws set forth by the Legislature consistently. Victims of crime deserve diligent prosecution resulting in defendants entering the system where the system can provide supervision.

One such program which provides this supervision is the

County's pre-trial service program which I have been advising and assisting from the beginning of the State's pilot program. This program monitors those accused of a crime while released pending trial and directs them into services such as drug treatment programs. This program has proven to be a successful and useful tool which saves the taxpayers of this County hundreds of thousands of dollars to house these individuals in the jail.

On the business side of the office, the civil side, I intend to continue providing unbiased and trusted legal guidance to the entirety of Lewis and Clark County. I am proud and humbled to have support in this campaign from those I work with throughout County government, and believe it reflects the trusted and non-partisan legal guidance given over the last few years. The role of the County Attorney extends far beyond the prosecution of state crimes and requires an office holder who understands the significance of providing non-partisan legal guidance to benefit the taxpayers of this County.

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

### What do you hope to accomplish in this office?

I will continue the modernization of the office I've been fortunate to implement within the County Attorney's office. This office currently employs exceptionally competent and devoted attorneys on both the criminal and civil sides of the office. While the office has grown over the last couple of decades, the leadership and example of current County Attorney Leo Gallagher has created an atmosphere of work ethic and devotion which should be enhanced through smart, precise modernization and administrative changes to the office.

### What makes you stand out as a candidate?

Experience matters. I will institute precise and thoughtful improvements to the County Attorney's office which only someone who fully understands the breadth of the duties can accomplish. I am the only candidate in this race with this experience.

### Kevin Downs

**Age:** 42

**Address:** Box 801, Helena, MT

Please see ATTORNEY, Page 20

## COUNTY ATTORNEY

59624

**Contact info:** kevin@downs-forcountyattorney.com

**Education:** Capital High School, Carroll College, Gonzaga University School of Law



**Downs**

**Occupation:**

Deputy County Attorney

**Relevant experience:**

Deputy County Attorney, Lewis & Clark County; U.S. Department of

Homeland Security, New York (2018-2021); U.S. Department of Justice, New York (2015-2017); Montana Supreme Court (2014-2015); U.S. Department of Justice, Eastern District of Washington (2012-2014); Montana Attorney General's Office (2008-2011); Finca del Niño-Honduras (2005-2008); L'Arche-Belfast N. Ireland (2003-2005); Montana Department of Corrections (2003)

**Why are you running for this office?**

I'm running for County Attorney because I love this community, a place that has provided much to me and my family, and has shaped who I am both personally and professionally. My local roots and two decades of public service work give me the widest perspective and the best experience to lead this office's talented team of attorneys and staff.

As a kid who grew up near Van's Thriftway, graduated from Capital High School, and played power forward for Carroll College, I am proud to be back home serving this community as a Deputy County Attorney prosecuting felonies and keeping our neighborhoods safe.

I know the duties and demands of this position. I also recognize that this position requires not only prosecutorial experience in dealing with the worst offenders, but also broad-based experience in knowing how to work with our most vulnerable populations and collaborate with diverse groups of people. These areas have been the focus of my career for the last twenty years.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

I believe public safety is paramount. This office's effectiveness in ensuring public safety is determined in large part by our ability to function as a team. I am committed to building a team within this office that not merely processes cases in an efficient manner, but one that pursues responsible and just resolutions in holding offenders accountable, supporting victims, and advising on county-wide issues.

I will work with community leaders in addressing the crises surrounding mental and public health, and substance abuse. I work with those on the front lines and know these issues are real and have rippling effects across our county. I stand firm that our office and this community can continue to improve how we serve those who suffer from mental illness and grapple with substance abuse, while still holding offenders accountable.

We need to continue pursuing options for alternatives to incarceration. Some people need to stay in jail, while others do not. I work daily with District Court Judges, jail staff, the Department of Corrections, and Pretrial Services to help identify effective and resourceful community options when appropriate. I look forward to continued dialogue on these issues.

Our office is also at the forefront in advising our county officials in legal matters that affect our neighborhoods, businesses, and how we use land. I'm committed to our office's role in providing sound, thoughtful, and lawful guidance to serve our citizens.

I also want to inspire a new generation of public servants. Two career public servants—(Fmr. Atty. General) Joe Mazurek and (Chief Justice) Mike McGrath—coached me as a youth and many of my Downs and Harrington relatives emphasized the importance of serving your community and acting with integrity. I believe our office can have a lasting impact on how our young

people look toward their future.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

Over the past two decades, I've worked with every level of government, law enforcement agencies in jurisdictions across the country, and some of the most vulnerable populations in Montana and afar. Through my broad experience working for a number of agencies in very different environments, I've handled a wide range of cases and issues—many of them involving murderers, illegal drugs, gangs, and domestic and sexual abusers, as well as victims young and old, the impoverished, the orphaned and disabled.

With this unique blend of experience as a community member, lawyer and public servant, I bring a fresh perspective and the most well-rounded experience to handle the tough decisions and cases that come to this office. I'm proud of my work as an attorney with the U.S. Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, and to now be part of this fine County Attorney's office. I believe my experience inside courtrooms and beyond the walls of the typical office affords me a fuller view to better serve this office and our community.

**Dan Guzynski**

**Age:** 51

**Address:** 769 S. California, Helena, MT 59601

**Contact info:** 406-461-1431

**Education:** Jurist Doctorate of Law, University of Montana School of Law

**Occupation:** Assistant Attorney General & Chief Prosecutor, Montana Department of Justice



**Guzynski**

**Relevant experience:** I have been a criminal prosecutor for 22 years advocating on behalf of victims of violent crimes and sexual assaults throughout Montana. I have tried 15 homicide cases and numerous child sexual assault cases. In total I have tried 45 felony District Court jury trials.

I have obtained guilty verdicts in nearly all of these cases. Recently I was honored to serve as the lead prosecutor in the case of State v. Lloyd Barrus who was found guilty of deliberate homicide for the killing of Broadwater Sheriff Deputy Mason Moore.

I joined the Montana Department of Justice in 2007 under Attorney General Mike McGrath, and currently serve as the Chief Prosecutor for the Montana Department of Justice where I lead and manage a team of 13 criminal prosecutors and support staff.

Prior to moving to Helena 15 years ago, I also served as a Deputy County Attorney in both Cascade and Flathead counties.

**Why are you running for this office?**

I am running for this office because there are few places more special to live and raise children than Lewis and Clark County—and I want to do my part to ensure it stays that way through the effective management and leadership of our County Attorney's Office. For the past 15 years I have lived in Helena with my wife Erin, who is a pharmacist at PureView Health, and my daughters Madee and Mary. During this time, I have traveled the state assisting counties and communities with the prosecution of their most serious offenders. Although this experience has been rewarding, with violent crime on the rise in Lewis & Clark County, I feel it is time to add my experience and talent to the Lewis and Clark County Attorney's Office to help ensure the health and safety of our citizens through service as the county's chief prosecutor.

**What do you hope to accomplish in this office?**

As your County Attorney, I will prioritize public safety and ensure fair and equitable justice is carried out in an efficient manner. Our office will be passionate in our commitment to the safety and well-being of our community. We will actively pursue prosecution of serious violent offenders and child predators. We will also work diligently with our partners in the field of mental

health and chemical addiction to make certain that low-level offenders in crisis who are seeking help have the resources to be rehabilitated and become contributing members of our community.

In terms of management, the office has grown significantly over the last decade and is experiencing an increasing caseload. I believe it will be important to modernize and create efficiencies that will streamline our processes and help us to work more collaboratively with our law enforcement and city and county partners while saving taxpayer dollars. For example, I believe it will be essential for the office to take full advantage of the new case management system and move from physical paper files to electronic files.

**What makes you stand out as a candidate?**

I am the only candidate who has decades of experience successfully trying complex felony criminal cases and achieving justice for citizens across our state. This is an important distinction as the County Attorney serves as the chief prosecutor for crimes committed in Lewis & Clark County. My supervisory and management experience also sets me apart, as I currently serve as the leader of the Montana Department of Justice, criminal prosecution team where I manage numerous attorneys and support staff. I believe this experience is critical to ensuring that the office runs smoothly and makes efficient use of taxpayer dollars—and provides the mentoring and training to ensure that the citizens of Lewis & Clark County are served with the best county attorney office in the state.

In short—the breadth of my experience successfully trying complex cases around the state, years of management experience and commitment to a county where my family and I have lived and worked for the past 15 years set me apart from the other candidates. I would be honored to have your vote on June 7th and November 8th.

# Public Service Commission races heat up early

**TOM LUTEY**  
tlutey@billingsgazette.com

A barnburner of a Republican primary took shape in the few days that Montana's secretary of state was able to certify candidates for the Montana Public Service Commission.

Flathead legislator Derek Skees, Montana Pro-Life Coalition leader Ann Bukacek, and former U.S. House candidate Joe Dooling, have all filed for the PSC District 5, which includes Flathead, Lake, Lewis and Clark and Teton counties. The current commissioner for the district is Republican Brad Johnson, who is term-limited out.

District 5 and District 1, which include much of the Hi-Line and northeast Montana, were in limbo as a lawsuit over the unconstitutional population differences in the PSC districts played out. A federal court decided the matter with a new map that brought the districts into compliance with the one-person, one-vote rule of the 14th Amendment.

Before the candidate filing deadline closed, Dooling and Skees were already jousting over the open seat with Dooling telling his social media followers that Skees had threatened to find a primary opponent to challenge Dooling's wife, Rep. Julie Dooling for the Montana Legislature.

"Let the good times roll. My opponent has threatened both me and Julie multiple times, so far doing his best to keep me out," Dooling said on Facebook. "The same guy that called our constitution a rag. It's going to be a fun race."

Dooling later confirmed



**Skees**



**Dooling**



**Bukacek**



**Crabb**



**Repke**



**Hamm**

the threat was a primary opponent for his wife, not a physical threat.

Meanwhile, Skees was telling his Republican rival to quit the PSC race, suggesting that Bukacek entering the race wasn't good for Dooling.

"Are you sure you want to waste more of your wife's money to fail for the 5th time," Skees texted Dooling. "That may become the record for the most primaries lost without a single victory by a Republican in Montana history. Quite a legacy my friend."

Skees is the past chairman of the Montana House Federal Relations, Energy and Technology Committee, which he served on for eight years. He announced his candidacy at the end of the 2021 Montana Legislature.

Dooling farms near Helena. In the early 2000s, he worked for KLJ Engineering developing infrastructure projects, including the Montana Alberta Tie Line, which transmits power between Great Falls and Leithbridge.

Bukacek might be the better known candidate in the Republican race, having been at the forefront of the anti-abortion movement in Montana for years. A doctor, Bukacek has more recently received national attention for suggesting that COVID-19 deaths have been inflated by the Centers for Disease Control when preexisting

conditions were the cause. She became a cause célèbre in national news for spreading COVID misinformation.

In Montana Republican circles, where the politics of COVID and abortion are highly charged and at the forefront of political messaging, Bukacek fits. She also wouldn't be the first candidate for PSC to be an outspoken opponent of abortion. The PSC is a five-member quasi-judicial commission that regulates monopoly utilities, and other service providers like garbage haulers, taxi services and pipelines.

"Concern about our future quality and standard of living motivated me to serve on the PSC," Bukacek said in an email. "I have proven passion for helping people optimize their quality of life."

Flathead County voters will have a big impact on the race. The county makes up 49% of the district population. It also punches above its weight in elections with the second-most Republican voters among Montana counties. Yellowstone County has the most Republican voters but is also the most populated, while Flathead County ranks fourth for population.

"A Public Service Commissioner should give sane, fair, and balanced protection to Montana's energy needs for its citizens' well-being. I will,"

she said.

This is the first time Bukacek has run for public office.

A fourth Republican, Dean Crabb, of Marion, filed in the District 5 race.

Also, a primary emerged in the Democratic race for District 5. John Repke, a retired finance executive joined the race. Repke lives in Whitefish, pushing the total number of Flathead County candidates in the race to four.

Repke said in a press release that he was running to bring "integrity, competency, and professionalism back to the PSC." He joins Kevin Hamm of Helena in the Democratic primary ballot.

Hamm, an internet service provider, announced his candidacy last summer. He's the chief operating officer at Treasure State Internet and Telegraph. He's very outspoken about the need to reset the way the Public Service Commission brings the needs of consumers and utilities into balance.

There are no Democratic candidates in District 1, where Republican Randy Pinocci is seeking a second, and final, term. That means the June 7 primary,

a three-way Republican affair between Pinocci, Arlo Christianson, of Great Falls, and K. Webb Galbreath, of Browning, will decide the election.

Christianson didn't answer his phone. His voice-mail wasn't taking messages.

Angered by the reporting of a PSC email scandal in which he was involved, Pinocci refused to participate in this story.

Galbreath, a member of the Blackfeet Tribe, and past Republican legislative candidate, said he decided to run for the PSC because the commission needs new leadership. Rising energy prices are hurting his neighbors, including ranchers.

Please see **COMMISSION**, Page 22



**JACOB TORGERSON**  
DEMOCRAT FOR HOUSE DISTRICT 81



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## Commission

From 21

“I’m a firm believer in reliable, responsible energy. And what I

mean by reliable is we don’t need to have a thing that went on in Texas happen here in Montana,” Galbreath said, referring to the fatal Texas power outage resulting from freezing temperatures

in early 2021. “I think Montana needs to explore other options of energy. We have great wind here. That could be an option. Hydro can be an option. And I think solar is a great way. But you know,

something that’s never discussed is nuclear energy. And I think that has to be on the table.”

Galbreath is also a former Marine sergeant, who served his country for a decade. He was a po-

lice officer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He is currently operations manager for the Blackfeet Tribe.

One person who is a big proponent for nuclear power in Montana is Skees.



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

In this file photo, members of the 2019 Public Service Commission listen to testimony during a public hearing in Helena.