

THE MSU

exponent

MONTANA STATE'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1895

OCTOBER 24, 2024

03 ★★

IT'S NOT TOO LATE
TO REGISTER TO
VOTE!

10 ★★

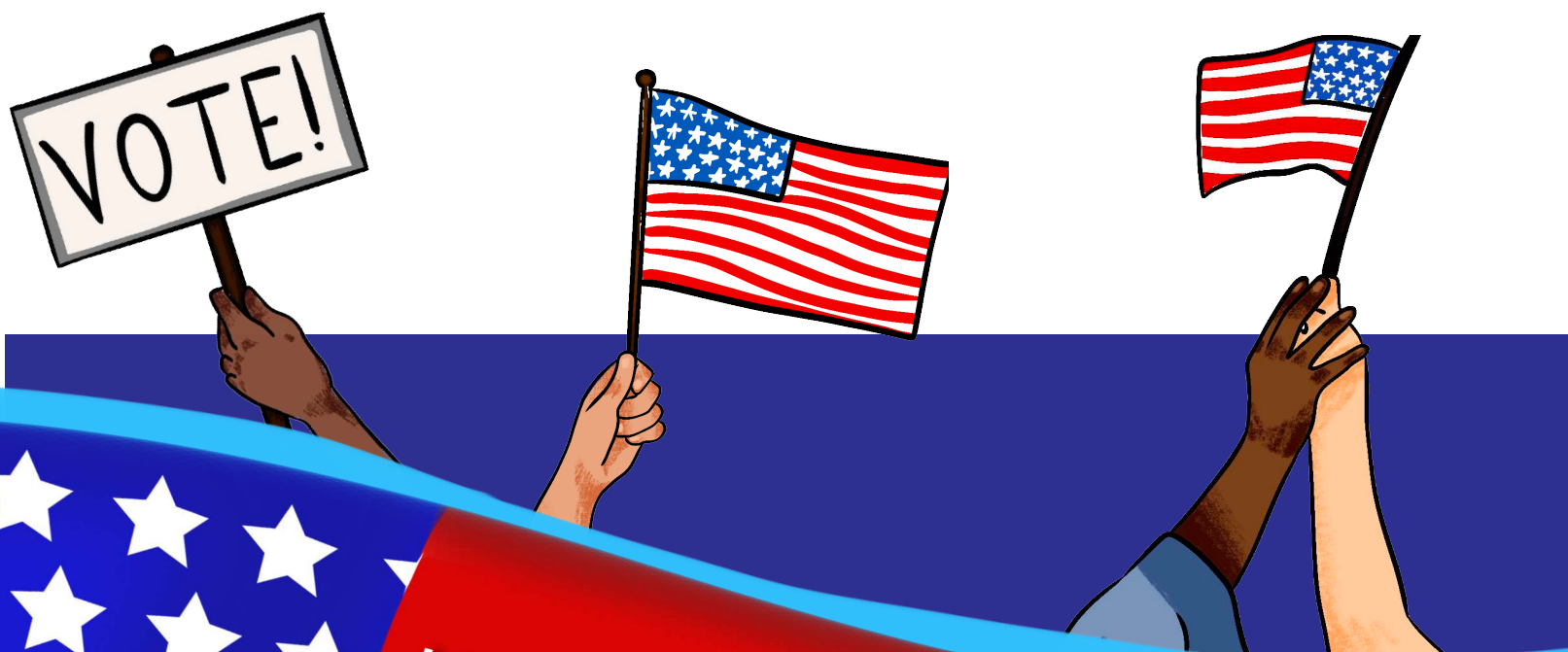
BREAKDOWN OF
CONSTITUTIONAL
INITIATIVE 128

16 ★★

EXPLAINING
THE BOZEMAN
PLASTIC
ORDINANCE

20 **OPINION**

CONSIDER
FORIEGN POLICY
IN THIS ELECTION



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Students jump in a pile of fallen leaves on Oct. 23.

PHOTO BY MADDI HOHNER
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TALK BACK!

Love us? Hate us? Tell us! Slide into our DMs or tag us on all your favorite social media platforms and let us know what you think. We want to hear all your gripes, rants and glowing reviews!



MEME OF THE WEEK

u/ @nerdsvote

Exercise



Exercising your right to vote



SIGNIFICANT FIGURES

COMPILED BY OLIVIA HAMILL
DESIGNED BY LELA HASLUP

BALD EAGLES

- ★ **1.** The bald eagle has been the national emblem of the U.S. since **1782**.
- ★ **2.** In **2007**, the bald eagle was removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species.
- ★ **3.** The wingspan of a bald eagle ranges from **5 1/2 to 8** feet.
- ★ **4.** Their eyesight is **8** times stronger than a human's.
- ★ **5.** Wild bald eagles may live as long as **30** years.



ELECTION EDITION 2024

BY AMANDA FULTON

Bobcats, an exciting time is upon us. On Nov. 5, all of us here at the Exponent will head to the polls to cast our votes in time for the 2024 election.

Voting is one of the most important parts of our democracy and a solemn responsibility we should all take seriously. It's a chance for citizens of the U.S. to have a voice in who represents us and influence decisions about important issues. Whether you're voting in person or by mail, your ballot must reach the Gallatin County Elections Office or a ballot drop-off location by 8 p.m. sharp on Nov. 5 — and you've got quite a few races to catch up on. Here's a short overview of what's goin' down on Capitol Hill (or Peets Hill, for our more local candidates...)

Four contenders for U.S. Senate — incumbent Jon Tester, Tim Sheehy, Robert Barb and Sid Daoud — are running for election. Simultaneously, for the U.S. House of Representatives, incumbent Ryan Zinke, Dennis Hayes and Monica Tranel are fighting to be elected to Montana's western congressional district while Troy Downing and John Driscoll are up to bat in the east.

Montanans will also elect a governor, secretary of state, attorney general and superintendent this November, as well as a state Supreme Court chief justice

and a new justice for an empty seat. Additionally, Gallatin County has a huge amount of candidates competing for seats in our Montana Legislature. Some want a seat in the Senate and some are fighting for a spot in the House of Representatives — two house districts make one senate district — and you'll see a couple of these races show up on your ballot this year depending on the district you live in.

And that's not all. This November, voters will also decide who will have the privilege to serve in various county governmental positions such as clerk for the district court, county commissioner and government study commissioners.

Now, that's a lot to digest all at once. But don't worry, the Exponent is here to help. In our 2024 Election Edition, you'll find many of these candidates speaking to you in the form of questionnaires. Candidates were given three weeks to respond to our questionnaire and were given word counts for each response. Grab a print copy on campus to see these responses and get the lowdown on this year's candidates and the measures on the ballot. The questionnaires and our stories are published in full on the "2024 Elections" tab on the Exponent website.

Not all of the candidates responded despite multiple emails and phone calls by Exponent staff, and by no means is this an exhaustive account of all of the policy positions and ideas supported by the candidates in a particular race. It's our hope, however, that this concise guide to candidates' ideas — in their own words — can serve as a useful resource for you to decide who you want to vote for. Questionnaires were only edited for misspellings and pre-existing punctuation errors to allow candidates to speak to you, the reader, candidly.

Inside this edition, you'll find tons of information about this year's election and how to cast your ballot. Don't forget that last step. To check whether you're registered to vote and to check the status of your ballot, visit the Montana Secretary of State's website at <https://prodvoterportal.mt.gov/WhereToVote.aspx>.

So, Bobcats, get to reading and remember to submit your ballots by 8 p.m. on Nov. 5. Your voice matters — let's make sure it's heard.

Questionnaires organized by Emma Forster, Gus Yeager, Will Malizia, Alexis Cardenas, Josh Ruiz, Luke Maxwell and Amanda Fulton.

It isn't too late to register to vote!

BY LUKE MAXWELL

BY LUKE MAXWELL

When election season comes around, some important questions often come to mind for first-time voters. Am I registered to vote in Montana? Can I vote in Montana as an out-of-state student? Can I still vote if the mail-in registration date has passed? Well, Bobcats, don't worry — the Exponent is here to help clear your path to the polls.

To vote in any U.S. election, you need to register first. Voter registration ensures that only people who meet certain requirements are allowed to vote. In Montana, you can vote as long as you are a U.S. citizen older than 18, have lived in Montana for at least 30 days before the election and are not currently serving time for a felony charge. When you register to vote, you provide your name, address and other identifying information like your Social Security Number (SSN) or driver's license number and date of birth. This data helps local election staff and government officials verify your eligibility and assign you to a voting district.

To be allowed to register and vote in Montana, you must have been living at a documented residential address for at least 30 days before the election. Living in a dorm counts as being a resident for the purpose of voting, so you can register and cast your ballot in Montana even if you're from another state, as long as you don't plan to

vote there as well. You can even be registered in another state and still register and vote in Montana. *Registering* to vote in two places isn't illegal, but actually *voting* in two places is.

At this point, the deadline for mail-in registration has passed. However, for those who aren't registered yet, fret not — Montana allows in-person voter registration up to and including Election Day, ensuring that nothing gets between you and the ballot box.

Voters can register in the days before Election Day at the Gallatin County Courthouse's Elections Office, located at 311 W Main Street in Room 210. You can even register to vote on Election Day at the same location. Voter registration will require either a Montana Driver's License or Montana state ID card number; the last 4 digits of your SSN or another form of ID entirely. Acceptable forms of ID include a photo ID that shows your name, or an ID that shows your name and current address. These can be documents like a Tribal ID, a recent paystub, a utility bill, a bank statement, your student ID or another government document issued in your name, according to Forward Montana.

Once registered, you can then vote immediately. Head to the Gallatin County Courthouse any time between now and 8 p.m. on Nov. 5 to register.

If you cannot provide the appropriate IDs to register, you can still cast what is known as a provisional ballot which will only count if you provide one of the aforementioned identifying items to the county courthouse before 5 p.m. on Nov. 6.

No matter what, all ballots must be received by the Elections Office no later than 8 p.m. on Nov. 5. The deadline has also passed to return absentee ballots by mail, so if you were issued an absentee ballot, you must return it to the courthouse in person. You can either drop it off at your designated polling location on Election Day between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. or give it to the Gallatin County Elections Department during their regular business hours from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or on Election Day from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

To check your registration status or to find out where your polling place is, visit the state's election website at <https://prodvoterportal.mt.gov/WhereToVote.aspx>.

To find out more about the specific measures and candidates on the ballot for the Nov. 5 general election, visit <https://votemt.gov/> and keep reading this edition to learn more.

★ ★ U.S. SENATE ★ ★

U.S. HOUSE WESTERN DISTRICT

Jon Tester (D)



(D) — U.S. SENATE

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Tester: I am a third-generation Montanan still working the farm outside of Big Sandy that my grandparents homesteaded over 100 years ago. I’ve lived in Montana my entire life: as a farmer, a former public school teacher and a former member of the Montana State Senate.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Tester: I will always fight tooth and nail to protect Montanans’ freedoms. Montanans of all stripes don’t want the federal government telling them what to do and especially not when it comes to personal health care decisions. I oppose politicians’ attempts to ban abortion and I support Montana’s constitutional initiative on the ballot this November to protect reproductive freedom.

Our public lands are foundational to our way of life and our state’s economy. As a lifelong Montanan, I believe you don’t need to be a millionaire to hunt, fish or hike in these treasured landscapes, because they belong to all of us. I’m going to continue to fight to protect public lands, and I will never let people like my opponent transfer them off so their rich out of state donors can buy them up.

And I’m fighting to make housing more affordable. I recently introduced the First-Time Homebuyer Tax Credit Act, to provide a tax credit to first time homebuyers for 10% of a home’s purchase price, up to \$15,000. And I am pushing for legislation to stop hedge funds and

Tim Sheehy (R)

(R) — U.S. SENATE

Robert Barb (G)

(G) — U.S. SENATE

Sid Daoud (L)

(L) — U.S. SENATE

As of press time, Sheehy, Barb and Daoud had not responded to the Exponent’s questionnaire. Responses submitted after press time will be published on msuexponent.com.

Wall Street investment companies from buying up single-family homes causing home prices in Montana to skyrocket.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Tester: The Montana we know and love is changing. Everything from housing to groceries is more expensive as multimillionaires move here and try to turn Montana into their personal playground, a place where only the wealthy few can afford to live.

Young Montanans are our future. As things get more expensive in Montana, it’s getting harder for young people to get good-paying jobs and start their lives here. With so much changing, we’ve got to have somebody in the Senate who’s willing to fight for our Montana way of life. Someone who fights for our freedoms and goes to bat for our working families.

I’m running to keep up the fight for those folks, and to make sure our kids and grandkids can grow up in the same Montana we know and love. Montana is the greatest state in the greatest country in the world and it’s damn sure not for sale.

Monica Tranel (D)



(D) — U.S. HOUSE WESTERN DISTRICT

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Tranel: I was raised on a ranch in Montana with my nine siblings and was a two-time rowing Olympian. I’ve spent my career working for Montana’s ranchers and families, going toe-to-toe and won against some of the most powerful corporations to lower costs for consumers and working families. I’m raising my daughters in Montana.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Tranel: My top priority is to get things done for the good of Montana. I plan on addressing the housing crisis on day one in office. I spoke to graduating MSU students who got great jobs but couldn’t afford to stay in Montana due to the cost of living. I’ve developed a housing plan based on conversations I’ve had with local officials, nonprofit leaders and community members in all 16 counties and both tribal nations here in western Montana. It involves building more housing, holding bad actors accountable and ensuring affordable places for all Montanans.

I will always stand for freedom and privacy. Every person should have the freedom to choose how they live their life and the privacy to decide whether they have children, and who they love. Ryan Zinke has voted repeatedly to restrict abortion access and supports letting states ban abortion without exceptions, taking away our freedom and privacy.

Public lands belong to all of us. I’ll fight to ensure they remain accessible and prevent wealthy, out-of-state corporate interests from shutting Montanans out or turning our lands into exclusive playgrounds for the rich.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Tranel: The future of Montana is on the ballot this November — everything from our freedom and privacy to being able to afford to live here. As I’ve traveled across the state, I’ve listened to your concerns and worked to bring real solutions to the table. I believe in protecting our rights, keeping Montana affordable and preserving the land we all love. I’m not afraid to stand up to anyone when it comes to defending our home and I will always put Montanans first. I ask for your vote on Nov. 5, a vote for freedom, opportunity and a stronger future.

Dennis Hayes (L)



(L) — U.S. HOUSE WESTERN DISTRICT

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Hayes: My name is Dennis Hayes I was born in Oklahoma. I came to Montana in 2004 like the state plenty of room I used to hunt and fish now I’m retired and living on Social security.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Hayes: My top priorities are the corruption that’s in this government from the Republicans and Democrat Party they are not in there for the people anymore they’re in there for their own back pockets and to put another page in their portfolio there’s too much communist and corruption it’s in our government along with the court system the forest service the BLM the DNRC DEQ there’s too many liberal communist bureaucrats better trying to run our country and take our freedom away you have lost so much of your freedom now that God gave you it’s pitiful this country is going down the toilet with the Democrat and Republican Party it’s time we get a third party in there so we can expose all the corruption from the Democrats and Republicans.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Hayes: Not for sure why the student should vote for me but if you would look at what the principals and the Deans and deacons how much money they are making it’s ridiculous I will go in there to get tuition costs down and start cutting salaries on people in the colleges and in schools that are getting paid too much money for what they’re doing. And a little bit of advice to the students you are going to college to get a degree to make a living a lot of the college students are going there and taking classes that will not support them when they graduate and you’re stuck with 100,000 to 200,000 loan payment that you took classes that will not pay for it the college kids needs to reevaluate why they’re going to school for a lot of students would be better off taking a vocational College instead of a major college you need to rethink your degrees that you’re taking.

U.S. HOUSE
WESTERN DISTRICT

★ U.S. HOUSE EASTERN DISTRICT ★

MT SUPREME
COURT SEAT #3

Ryan Zinke (R)

(R) — U.S. HOUSE WESTERN DISTRICT

As of press time, Zinke had not responded to the Exponent’s questionnaire. Responses submitted after press time will be published on msuexponent.com.

John Driscoll (D)



(D) — U.S. HOUSE EASTERN DISTRICT

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Driscoll: Raised in Montana, with degrees from Gonzaga, Columbia, Harvard and UM, I’ve been a Smokejumper, Army Officer Legislator and Regulator. The rest of my 78 years have been used to explore Montana, people’s stories and wilderness. I got my Montana Dinosaur Trail T-shirt, have six grandkids and live in Helena.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Driscoll: I want to get elected without raising or spending other people’s money on a campaign to prove it can be done so other members will stop spending their work time raising money. I want to codify into federal law the wisdom of Roe vs. Wade. I want to draft and get passed a Joint Resolution establishing no first use of nuclear weapons as our U.S. nuclear war-fighting policy.

The first priority relies completely on Montana’s voters. The second priority presumes a majority of House and Senate members agree with me that women’s rights are a priority. The third priority will be the first step toward building bipartisan support for a comprehensive nuclear arms reduction treaty.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Driscoll: Students, faculty and staff as our future problem solvers need to support an experienced candidate with a record of advancing legislative and regulatory policies based upon long-run economic benefits. Responding to climate change requires that approach. I have the benefit of 32 years of military experience and 18 years of political experience where the competent in both areas of public responsibility speak to each other respectfully and do not have time for disruptive tactics — they get the job done. I want to get Congress working smoothly and fully expect to connect with members of both political parties who feel as strongly about it as do I. I’ve told everyone in every way available to me what I intend to do. As with every other job I’ve been given, I’ll do it well.

Troy Downing (R)



(R) — U.S. HOUSE EASTERN DISTRICT

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Downing: Troy Downing began his career as a research scientist and educator at NYU. He founded a technology startup company that he merged with Yahoo! Inc. After 9/11, Downing joined the Air Force and completed two tours in Afghanistan. In 2020, Downing was elected to serve as Montana’s State Auditor.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Downing: If elected to represent Montana’s second congressional district, my top three priorities will be securing our southern border, reigning in federal spending and prioritizing national security.

First, securing the southern border is non-negotiable. I will work to ensure we have the resources to increase border patrol support and utilize advanced technology to combat illegal immigration, drug trafficking and human smuggling.

Second, addressing the national debt is critical for future generations. We need responsible leadership that will reduce wasteful spending, reform outdated programs and prioritize fiscal discipline to get our nation back on a sustainable path.

Lastly, national security is key to our economic and global security. We have abundant domestic resources in oil, gas, coal, beef and farmland. I will push to expand their development while also supporting market innovation. This will create jobs, lower costs and keep us from relying on foreign adversaries.

These priorities will strengthen our nation, protect our communities and secure a brighter future for the next generation.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Downing: MSU students, faculty and staff can count on me to champion the issues that impact their future. I’m focused on creating more economic opportunities, while supporting affordable education and well resourced classrooms. I’ll push for policies to assist students transitioning into the workforce and create pathways to high paying jobs. I will also ensure faculty have the tools they need to be effective educators.

By focusing on a strong economy, secure borders and a sustainable future, I am committed to making Montana a place where we all can thrive for generations to come.

Katherine Bidegaray



MONTANA SUPREME COURT SEAT #3

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Bidegaray: I was born in Sidney, Montana, and raised on a farm/ranch. After graduating from Culbertson High School, I earned undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Montana. I practiced law for 18 years and have been a District Court Judge for over 21 years in Montana’s 7th Judicial District.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Bidegaray: My top three priorities are to preserve the rule of law, ensure a fair and impartial judiciary and strengthen public confidence in the judiciary. First, I will safeguard the rule of law by consistently applying the Montana and U.S. Constitutions, along with established legal precedents, to the relevant facts of each case. This will ensure that decisions are made based on the law, not political pressures or external influences. Second, I am committed to keeping the judiciary impartial. Politics has no place in the courtroom, and I will continue to base my rulings solely on the law and facts, without bias or favoritism. Third, I aim to enhance public trust in the judiciary, particularly the Montana Supreme Court. Confidence in the judicial system is essential for maintaining the balance of power between the three branches of government. Without that trust, the integrity of our democracy is at risk. I will help maintain a judiciary that Montanans can rely on by upholding fairness, impartiality and transparency.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Bidegaray: MSU students, faculty and staff should vote for me because I have the experience, integrity and impartiality needed to protect the rights enshrined in Montana’s Constitution. With 18 years of legal practice and over 21 years as a District Court Judge, I am committed to upholding our state’s constitutional protections for privacy, education, public lands and a clean environment. I will always prioritize fairness and impartiality, keep politics out of the courtroom and ensure that every Montanan is treated equally under the law. As a proud mother of five MSU graduates, I understand the importance of education and the need to safeguard the unique rights and values that Montanans hold dear. Your vote for me is a vote for experience, integrity and a judiciary that works for all Montanans.

SUPREME COURT
SEAT #3

Dan Wilson



MONTANA SUPREME COURT SEAT #3

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Wilson: I live in Kalispell with my wife of 28 years, Tia, a manager employed at the Flathead Electric Cooperative. I have been a Montana attorney for more than 30 years and a judge for more than 13 years, with experience handling cases in all areas of the law.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Wilson: First, I would maintain and elevate the Supreme Court as the branch of government having the full and final responsibility for interpreting and enforcing the provisions of the Montana Constitution and all the individual rights it guarantees. I would accomplish this by interpreting and applying the Constitution and all its provisions and rights according to the plain meaning of the Constitution and according to the established precedents of the Supreme Court.

Second, I would join with my colleagues in opinions which establish legal precedents rooted firmly in the rule of law and based on the plain language of the Constitution and all relevant rights and laws. Specifically, I would author or join in opinions which are free from the influences of special interests and politics, however slight.

Third, I would increase the transparency of the workings of the Supreme Court by urging my colleagues to conduct more public hearings. The Montana Supreme Court should increase its standing and regard among Montanans by conducting more of its deliberations in public and fewer of its decision-making processes in secret.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Wilson: As a judge, I have a proven track record of making decisions based solely on the facts and the law according to the Constitution, free from the influences of special interests and politics. My experience as a lawyer ranged across the spectrum of legal practice from criminal cases to private disputes of nearly every type. As an attorney, I have a long history of representing clients regardless of their status in the community or their ability to pay. I am committed to the cause of justice, first and foremost, and I have learned through the ups and downs of a life spent in the law that, while the law always aspires to the highest principles of fairness and justice, the rule of law is truly about the lives of the people it affects.

SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE

Jerry Lynch



MONTANA SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Lynch: I was born in Butte. I have degrees in biology and zoology from Carroll and MSU, and a law degree from UofM. My legal career consisted of clerking for Judge Paul Hatfield, private practice representing civil litigants and two terms as a federal Magistrate Judge.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Lynch: A Justice on the Montana Supreme Court must reliably issue rulings based on the facts of a case and the existing law, insist that the third branch of government remain co-equal, nonpartisan and independent, and ensure every law that is enforced in Montana has its footing in our constitution. My top priorities are to maintain the independence of the Judiciary as a co-equal branch of our government, which is necessary to provide a check and balance on the Legislative and Executive branches and to protect Montana's remarkable Constitution. The system of checks and balances envisioned by the framers of our 1972 Constitution was designed to preserve the power of the people and to protect the individual rights guaranteed to them by that founding document. I also think it is imperative that we strive to realize the aspirational goal of equal access to the courts for all citizens, regardless of their social or economic standing. Realization of that goal will take two things always in short supply: time and money. I will do everything in my power to advocate for adequate resources for our third branch of government.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Lynch: I retired from the bench in 2019, but I could not stand by and watch the assaults on our courts by political extremists and out-of-state corporate interests. I am

Cory Swanson

MONTANA SUPREME COURT
CHIEF JUSTICE

As of press time, Swanson had not responded to the Exponent's questionnaire. Responses submitted after press time will be published on msuexponent.com.



GOVERNOR

Greg Gianforte (R)

(R) — GOVERNOR

Ryan Busse (D)

(D) — GOVERNOR

As of press time, Gianforte and Busse had not responded to the Exponent's questionnaire. Responses submitted after press time will be published on msuexponent.com.

★ GOVERNOR ★

Kaiser Leib (L)



(L) — GOVERNOR

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Leib: I was born in Kalispell, and I graduated high school in Thompson Falls, then I went to UM in Missoula for Math and Computer Science. I've been a dishwasher, a construction laborer and a software developer; lately I'm a comedian.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Leib: We should roll back SB458, the anti-trans bill that the legislature passed back in 2023 — that would rely on help from the legislature, but I'll push for it, even after I lose this election.

We should reduce the size of the executive branch in order to save taxpayer dollars. That's something the governor's office can do directly.

We should reduce the burdensome regulations which make it more expensive to construct new housing.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Leib: MSU students should vote for me if they care about their rights and freedoms. They should vote for the other candidates if they're more interested in telling other people what they can and can't do.

★ SECRETARY OF STATE ★

ATTORNEY GENERAL

SUPERINTENDENT

Christi Jacobsen (R)



(R) — SECRETARY OF STATE

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Jacobsen: Christi Jacobsen is Montana's Secretary of State, dedicated to protecting election integrity, ensuring transparency and supporting local businesses. With years of public service experience, she has championed voter ID laws and streamlined business registration processes to strengthen Montana's democracy and economy.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Jacobsen: If re-elected, my top three priorities will be:

Election Integrity: I will continue safeguarding Montana's elections by ensuring that voter ID laws are strictly enforced and that our voter rolls remain clean and accurate. I've worked tirelessly to protect our elections from outside influences and will keep fighting for fair processes.

Business Growth and Support: Small businesses are the backbone of Montana's economy. I will expand on my efforts to simplify business registration and reduce red tape, making it easier for entrepreneurs to start and grow their ventures. Cutting bureaucratic barriers will help keep Montana open for business.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Jacobsen: Protecting Public Lands: Montanans should always have access to our great public lands. I will work to protect these lands from federal overreach and ensure that they remain under state control for the benefit of all Montanans. Public lands are a shared resource, and I'll ensure they stay that way. I am committed to building a Montana where everyone, including MSU students, faculty and staff can thrive. By protecting election integrity, I ensure that every vote counts. My work to simplify business registration means that graduates will face fewer hurdles if they choose to start a business here in Montana. Additionally, I'm dedicated to keeping public lands accessible, providing future generations with the natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities Montana is known for. Voting for me means voting for a future that values your participation and opportunities.

Jesse Mullen (D)



(D) — SECRETARY OF STATE

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Mullen: Jesse James Mullen, 40, is a former journalist and the founder of Mullen Newspaper Company, which operates community newspapers across the Mountain West. He lives in Deer Lodge, Montana and is a father of four daughters and a son.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Mullen: Ensure safe and secure elections by working to provide affordable and accessible ID for all eligible Montana voters. Begin working towards a reasonable alternative to physical ID that protects the digital footprint of Montana voters. Protect Montana owned businesses and prioritize spending Montana's resources in Montana. Return competency and customer service to the Secretary of State office.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Mullen: I value nonpartisanship and will work to remove the influence of political parties from Montana's executive offices. My office will prioritize working with Montanans, for Montanans and provide unprecedented levels of access and public accountability to our Capitol. For more information, please visit jessejamesmullen.com.

John Lamb (L)

(L) — SECRETARY OF STATE

As of press time, Lamb had not responded to the Exponent's questionnaire. Responses submitted after press time will be published on msuexponent.com.

Austin Knudsen (R)



(R) — ATTORNEY GENERAL

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Knudsen: Austin grew up on his family's farm near Bainville. He met his wife, Christie, while at MSU-Bozeman. They have two daughters and one son. He earned his law degree from the University of Montana. In 2010, he was elected as Representative for HD34. In 2020 he was elected Attorney General.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Knudsen: First, I will continue to defend Montana against violent crime. Under my watch, violent crime has decreased, but we remain focused on public safety. I am proud to have helped pass House Bill 112, which increases penalties for sex traffickers and their patrons, gives prosecutors more tools to combat trafficking, and expands the definition of human trafficking. This law has intensified our efforts against the sexual abuse of children and other victims. Second, we have all seen the impact of fentanyl on our communities, and we are committed to protecting our state from this scourge. We have increased penalties for fentanyl distribution and launched a life-saving program to improve access to naloxone kits in schools, aiming to prevent fentanyl-related deaths. Finally, I will also continue to protect Montanans from federal overreach and corporate threats that jeopardize our jobs, livelihoods and way of life.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Knudsen: Montana is a beautiful place. It is called the last best place for a reason. I want to keep it a safe and prosperous home for families to raise children, find good jobs, and live fulfilling lives. As your Attorney General, my top priority is to defend Montana against violent crime and ensure our communities are safe so that they can safely raise their families. We've seen a reduction in crime under my leadership, but our work isn't finished. I will continue to protect women's sports so we can keep our Montana values. I will continue to combat fentanyl so together we can save lives from the destruction that fentanyl is unleashing on so many of our children. Lastly I will continue to defend Montana from any threats to our way of life whether it is from a corporation or our federal government so Montanans can thrive.

Ben Alke (D)

(D) — ATTORNEY GENERAL

Before press time, Alke declined to participate in the Exponent's 2024 Election Edition.

Shannon O'Brien (D)



(D) — SUPERINTENDENT

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
O'Brien: My experience in public education as a teacher, administrator, working for college access programs, as Gov. Bullock's policy advisor and the Dean of Missoula College have all prepared me to provide competent leadership at OPI.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
O'Brien: The top three priorities in addressing the needs of our public schools include fixing the school funding formula by lifting the cap and increasing the state's responsibility to local school districts. Number two, work with school districts and the schools of education to recruit new and retain public school teachers to reverse the teacher shortage crisis. Third, make sure our students are safe. Our school buildings are out of date and mental health programs are sorely underfunded. It will take a competent leader to build the necessary coalition to meet these challenges. Seeking out best practices and listening to parents, teachers, administrators and school boards is essential in meeting the ever changing needs of all Montana students.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
O'Brien: Every student and faculty member knows the importance of a quality education when it comes to becoming a productive citizen. That quality education starts with kindergarten readiness. When students receive a high quality education their chance of landing a good paying job, attending a community college or pursuing a degree at the university level all depends on that foundation.

I have the experience as a teacher, administrator, policy advisor and legislator to ensure collaborative partnership and seamless transition between our K-12 and college/university systems. Our schools of education will play a critical role in helping solve the teacher shortage crisis here in MT and I look forward to working with all of you.



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Breakdown of state initiatives on the ballot

BY CONNOR MCLEAN

There are three constitutional initiatives on the ballot for Montana voters this election.

Constitutional Initiative No. 126 (CI-126)

CI-126 proposes a change to the Montana Constitution that would require a top-four primary election before the general election. All candidates who wish to run in the general election would appear on the primary ballot and the top four candidates would go on to the general election. This change would apply to elections for governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction, state representative, state senator, U.S. House representative and U.S. senator.

This means that all candidates vying for a certain position would appear on the primary ballot, regardless of their political affiliation or party endorsement. Furthermore, CI-126 would prohibit the ballot from indicating any endorsement by any political party. The candidates on the ballot would be able to list a political preference, but that preference would not indicate endorsement by the party. The legislature also has the option to require candidates to collect signatures of support before their name can appear on the ballot. In that case, they would need signatures equal to five percent of the amount of votes the winning candidate won in the last election. CI-126 would allow all voters to vote for one candidate, regardless of political party, for each office.

Constitutional Initiative No. 127 (CI-127)

CI-127 would change how elections for certain offices are decided. Currently, elections in Montana are decided by plurality, or who gets the most votes. CI-127 would change this so that elections are decided by majority vote. To win a majority vote, one must receive 50 percent or more of the votes available, as opposed to just getting more votes than the other candidates. If two or more candidates are tied, the election is determined as provided by law. In the case of a tie, there is an initial recount, and if the recount still results in a tie, the vote will be decided by drawing lots. This applies to positions for governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction, state representative, state senator, U.S. House representative and U.S. senator.

Constitutional Initiative No. 128 (CI-128)

CI-128 will have Montana voters decide the future of abortion and reproductive rights in the state. This initiative would establish reproductive care and access to abortion as a fundamental right. If passed, it would prohibit the government from interfering with the ability to have an abortion before fetal viability, which refers to the fetus' ability to survive outside of the womb. The bill would also not allow the government to interfere with the ability to get an abortion when a medical professional has determined the abortion will protect the pregnant person's life or health. This initiative prohibits the government from penalizing anyone who assists with another person's ability to make decisions about their own pregnancy. This would protect medical providers, the patient and anyone else involved in the process of carrying out decisions regarding pregnancy.



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Montana's CI-128: A pivotal vote on reproductive rights this election season

BY ALEXIS CARDENAS

In Montana — and in the U.S. at large — one of the most pressing issues on the ballot this election is reproductive rights.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 — which ended the federal right to abortion — ignited much of the current discourse. This election season, Montana's Constitutional Initiative No. 128 (CI-128) aims to amend reproductive rights within Montana's constitution, ensuring the right for individuals to “make and carry out decisions about one's own pregnancy, including the right to abortion,” as per the ballot's language.

Montanans Securing Reproductive Rights (MSRR) is one of the local, citizen-led organizations encouraging Montanans to vote yes on the initiative. It is composed of over 500 volunteers who have banded together to ensure the passing of CI-128, according to its website.

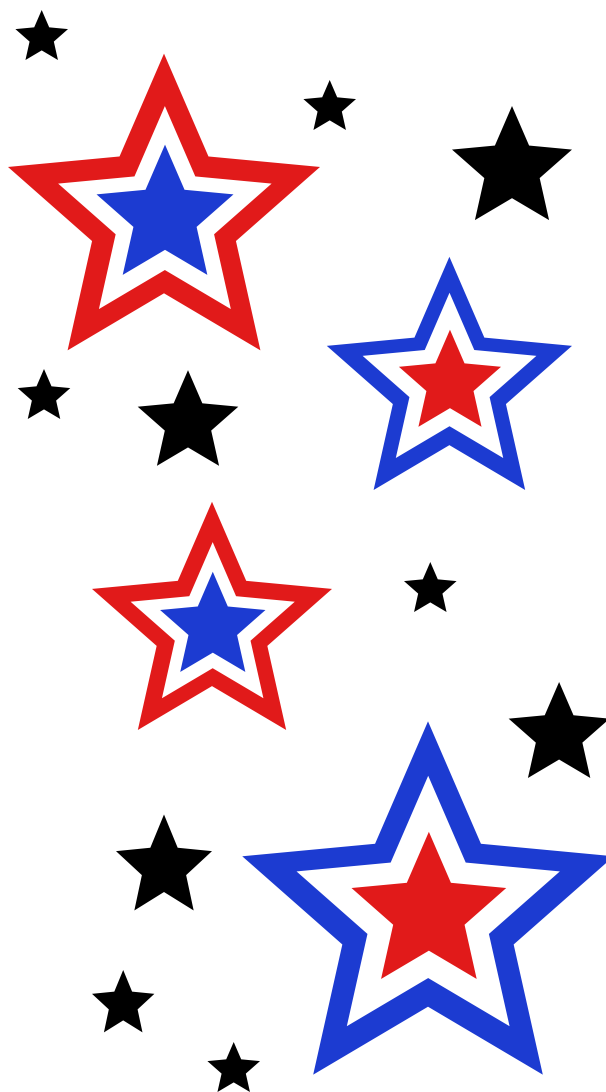
“Voting yes on [CI-128] protects our rights and keeps Montanans — not the government — in charge of private medical decisions about pregnancy and abortion,” MSRR Spokesperson Ashley All said.

All stated that in certain situations — pregnancies resulting from rape, incest, or birth control failure — or if a pregnant person's life is at risk, abortion should be an option. “If [CI-128] fails, Montanans could lose the right to make our own private decisions about pregnancy and abortion,” she said. “No matter how you feel about abortion, women deserve to make these decisions without judgment.”

“CI-128 is the constitutional initiative for, technically, the right to privacy,” said Jen Anderson, a leadership member of Montana College Democrats. “Many of our other protections, such as IVF and similar healthcare procedures, are protected under the right to privacy. If [CI-128] gets passed, it then gets enshrined in our state's constitution. That's the coolest part about this initiative — it isn't just a bill, it isn't just a law, it's not something that can then go get overturned in the courts.”

Anderson then explained the potential

Ultimately, every speaker from each side could agree on one thing: Making an informed vote is paramount this election season.



consequences of criminalizing abortion. “When you make abortion illegal, clinics have to shut down, and these clinics provide so, so, so much more than just abortion. Here in Bozeman, we are lucky to have BridgerCare. If you don't have health insurance, that is the only place most people can go for things like [sexually transmitted disease] testing, or birth control, or all of those adjacent medical procedures. When those clinics get shut down, you're removing access and therefore increasing the risk that someone does have to have an abortion. It's counterintuitive,” she said.

At the opposite end of the issue, the organization Montanans For Life (MFL) aims to “engage in educational, charitable and legislative action that affirms the inherent dignity and right to life of every human being from the moment of conception to natural death,” said MFL Chair Robin Sertell.

“CI-128 is a proposed amendment to the Montana state constitution that would, if passed, allow for abortion through all nine months of pregnancy at taxpayer expense,” Sertell said. “The health and safety of both patients — the mother and baby — are of utmost concern to us at MFL.”

Additionally, Sertell mentioned various emotional risks of abortion, stating that people who have had abortions, on average, experience higher rates of depression and anxiety and may struggle with feelings of shame and guilt post-procedure. She then explained the physical risks of abortion. “It's not uncommon for women to hemorrhage during the abortion, or have their uterus or bowel perforated during a surgical abortion,” she said.

Ultimately, every speaker from each side could agree on one thing: Making an informed vote is paramount this election season.

Visit <https://votemt.gov/> to learn about ballot measures and make your voice heard in this election.

SUPERINTENDENT

★ SENATE DISTRICT #30 ★

SENATE DISTRICT #33

Susie Hedalen (R)



(R) — SUPERINTENDENT

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Hedalen: I'm the District Superintendent in Townsend, and have worked as an educator and administrator in class C to AA schools across Montana. I'm the Vice-Chair of the Montana Board of Public Education. I have a Bachelor's in Elementary Education, Master's in Educational Leadership and Certificate in Native American Studies from MSU!

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Hedalen: Get education back to basics. I will restore a commitment to providing children a strong well-rounded foundation in reading, writing, math and science to prepare them for a successful future. To translate those skills into livelihoods, I plan to partner with various stakeholders to enact legislation that provides more career and technical education opportunities for our students in the trades, as well as dual credit pathways.

Listen to students and parents. Parents and teachers working together for student success is paramount. I will work to ensure that curriculum decisions are based on educational merit, not political ideologies. Parents deserve to know what their children are learning, and be aware of the educational opportunities available in their community. We must listen to the concerns and aspirations of parents and ensure our education system in Montana meets the needs of all students.

Keep our schools safe. This means providing essential mental health support for students, and implementing physical safety measures that protect our kids, such as working with local law enforcement and first responders on updated local emergency plans. The OPI can and should lead in this area, and provide exceptional support and best practices to schools across the state.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Hedalen: I have the breadth and depth of experience inside Montana's K-20 education system to hit the ground running at the OPI, including through my time at MSU in the Rural Schools Leaders and Indian Leadership Education and Development (I LEAD) programs. I have built relationships with education leaders and industry partners across Montana, which will be immensely valuable when collaborating on opportunities to improve our education system. There is so much work to do, including recruiting, retaining and improving pay for hardworking Montana teachers; making the OPI more responsive and accountable to students, parents, teachers and school districts; and working with our Tribal Nations to use the strengths from each tribe to increase American Indian Student Achievement. I'm already tackling some of these current issues on the Board of Public Education and I look forward to accomplishing great things for Montana students as your next Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Tyler Rogers (R)



(R) — MONTANA SENATE DISTRICT #30

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Rogers: My name is Tyler Rogers, I'm 29 years old, running for SD 30 in SW Montana. I have been a visitor since 2007 and a resident since 2020. I am a conservative looking to preserve our rights, our way of life and our public lands.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Rogers: I moved to Montana because of what it was and what it offered. I didn't move here to be a Pennsylvanian in Montana, I moved here to be a Montanan. My three biggest priorities are preserving the character of Montana, making it affordable for families to stay here and serving the communities that made me want to move here. Out-of-state investors with no ties to the state see Montana as an opportunity to make money and do not care about the effects on the local population. The people of Montana play an integral role in making Montana so welcoming and beautiful, it is them that I ultimately look to represent. I will seek to prioritize locals in business, the job market and the housing market. There are legislative avenues available to incentivize resident entrepreneurship, require certain jobs to go to local businesses and reduce property taxes on Montana residents. At the end of the day Montana must look inward and decide for itself, does it want growth and profit or does it want community and freedom?

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Rogers: If you made the decision to come to MSU you understand just how special of a place Montana is. I intend on doing everything in my power to preserve that character by fighting for public lands and making life affordable. MSU's students and staff are a big part of the Montana community and I would be honored to represent them.

Cora Neumann (D)



(D) — MONTANA SENATE DISTRICT #30

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Neumann: 49 and mother of two college students, is running for State Senate. Raised in Bozeman, she's Chief Health Officer for a Native-led organization with 25 years of experience leading nonprofits that expand healthcare, create jobs and protect public lands. She's committed to good jobs, public access and affordability for Montana's future.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Neumann: Housing: Many Montanans are being priced out of their hometowns, affecting renters and those trying to buy their first home — which is top of mind for parents like me who want our kids to be able to move home someday! I'll tackle this crisis by expanding LIHTC tax credits, offering tax incentives for affordable unit construction and mandating 15% of new developments be affordable for working families, seniors and veterans.

Healthcare: My commitment to rural health stems from losing my father to a lumber mill accident. If we had been closer to good care, he might have survived. As a health professional working with remote and high-needs communities, I see how crucial affordable, accessible care — including abortion care — is to keeping Montana healthy, safe and strong. I am committed to protecting Medicaid so our rural hospitals can stay open and to keeping abortion legal in Montana.

Climate and Public Lands: Our public lands not only provide recreation, hunting and fishing but also absorb nearly 20% of U.S. carbon emissions. I'll work with state and federal partners to safeguard public access, prevent privatization and support conservation efforts to protect Montana's natural resources for future generations.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Neumann: MSU students, faculty, and staff should vote for me because I am deeply committed to ensuring that Montana remains a place where young people can thrive. I'll fight to make higher education more affordable, support housing policies that enable students and faculty to live and work in Bozeman and protect access to healthcare, including mental health services. Additionally, my work in public lands ensures future generations can enjoy Montana's natural beauty. With a focus on jobs, affordable housing and access to healthcare, I will prioritize the needs of MSU's community and the next generation.

Neal Ganser (R)



(R) — MONTANA SENATE DISTRICT #33

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Ganser: There are three generations of Montanans from my family in Bozeman. From an MSU Architecture student to building contractor to wholesale building materials to materials manufacturer, I have extensive business experience, contracts, negotiation and skills useful to a legislator. I believe I would be a market conservative noting that every problem cannot be effectively solved by government.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Ganser: Property taxes are confiscatory. Montana needs a "grandfathered value system" on residential property values.

K-12 Education in Montana requires vouchers to develop all the skills of our young people. Trades and occupational education must be expanded and may even be moved to the high school level as in the Germany model.

Protecting all school sports (grade school through college) from cross gender intrusion which has compromised scholarships, robbing would be champions of their opportunity.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Ganser: Montana can use some real business experience in the legislature. There are plenty of lawyers, realtors and others who get paid from the prosperity created by folks in the free enterprise economy. Ganser has the experience to see the potentially far-reaching implications of legislation, experience broadened by raising and providing for a family in Montana. From tradesman to international business and a belief in life, liberty, opportunity and responsibility, he has an outlook on life and government that is constructive while being protective of the individual.

SENATE DISTRICT #33

Christopher Pope (D)



(D) — MONTANA SENATE DISTRICT #33

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Pope: I am a long-standing Bozeman business/ community leader, a former business owner who has helped redevelop historic downtown while serving as a board member of Eagle Mount and Montana Conservation Corps. My wife Maddy and I have two wonderful kids who are now working hard to build their lives in Gallatin County.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Pope: Re-authorize Medicaid Expansion, which is scheduled to sunset without legislative action and which provides affordable healthcare to 85,000 of the state's most vulnerable low-income working adults and citizens with disabilities. Medicaid Expansion contributes significantly to the state's economy, providing 7,500 quality jobs, essential healthcare services and economic vitality to critical care facilities across the state, especially in rural communities.

I will pursue a three-pronged legislative initiative to make our communities more livable: A) passage of comprehensive tax reform to reduce the state's onerous residential tax burden, and make them more fair and inclusive; B) pursuing all avenues to immediately address the crisis in affordable housing — for renters and for first home buyers; and C) putting the state to work to attract higher-quality, well-paying jobs and training programs to qualify for those jobs, in order to bring future wages more in line with the rapidly increasing prices of everyday goods and services necessary for a high quality of life.

And, last but certainly not least, I will fight tirelessly for our constitutionally-guaranteed personal liberties, in particular a woman's right to bodily autonomy, medical privacy and reproductive freedom; and for our rights to a clean and healthful environment.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Pope: I have eight years of service in state legislature, and am recognized as a lead Senate voice in healthcare, Montana's new energy economy and state budget management and oversight;

I have a broad business background, a degree in business management and finance and a long and respected history of public service, including a central role in the redevelopment of historic downtown Bozeman;

I am a legislator who believes that good government matters. I am committed to a less partisan, more civil and more purposeful approach to governance deserving of the voters who have real issues needing practical, timely solutions from their state government. I believe we can and must do better to position Montana and its citizens in the 21st Century Economy.

★ HOUSE DISTRICT #59 ★

Ed Stafman (D)



(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #59

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Stafman: I spent 25 years as a civil rights lawyer, before pursuing a Ph.D. and rabbinic ordination. I served as rabbi in Bozeman for ten years, heavily engaged in interfaith and justice work. I've served in the Montana House for two terms. I'm married with two grown kids and two dogs.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Stafman: My top three priorities are affordability, protecting freedom to make personal health care choices, and protecting our right to a clean and healthy environment and public lands. I've filed and/ or supported legislation in all of these areas last session which I would pursue again. On affordability, I filed bills to expand access to quality healthcare, especially mental healthcare and children's healthcare; to prevent the recent property tax increases (killed on party line vote); to support affordable housing and more childcare. On personal freedom, I've introduced legislation to protect private healthcare decisions (earning an endorsement from Planned Parenthood), to protect doctors who are under attack for providing care and to protect LGBTQ+ rights. On the environment, I've filed legislation to require power plants to reduce carbon emissions and have consistently voted to protect our climate, our environment, and public lands, earning me endorsements from the Montana Conservation Voters and the Montana Sportsman's Alliance. I am also a strong supporter of public education (earning the endorsement of MFPE), and have opposed the siphoning off of taxpayer dollars to pay for private religious schools. I have also been active in protecting voting rights and democracy against attempts to make it harder to vote.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Stafman: I live just one block from campus and many of my friends and neighbors work at MSU. Keeping MSU tuition affordable for Montana students is important. So too are resources to help us attract the best faculty and ensuring a strong pension system for MSU employees. Campus safety is important and I opposed efforts to increase unregulated firearms on campus. MSU students, faculty and staff should vote for me if they believe we need to make Montana more affordable for ordinary Montanans in housing, healthcare and childcare, and that we must stop catering to wealthy out of state interests. They should vote for me if they believe we should be protecting freedom to make personal health care decisions. They should vote for me if they believe that we must protect our constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment and if they believe we must strengthen public schools.

Marc Greendorfer (R)



(R) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #59

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Greendorfer: I founded and run a non-profit civil rights advocacy practice that focuses on combating discrimination. As a first generation American who is the son of a Holocaust survivor, I know America and our systems are a force for good in the world and we should celebrate and build the institutions that have spread liberty here and abroad.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Greendorfer: My first priority is to reform the property tax system, which no longer works given the massive influx of new residents and the corresponding pressure on housing prices. My second priority is to provide balance in Helena. I reject extremism from both sides of the political divide and believe that the government must limit itself to protecting and providing for vulnerable individuals while avoiding entangling itself in personal decisions or societal issues. My third priority is to protect Montana's traditions and environment while implementing responsible government programs in line with my second priority.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Greendorfer: I am the only moderate choice for HD 59. I am a constitutional conservative and believe that government works best when it is limited, allowing each individual to pursue his or her interests. It's not government's place to regulate personal decisions, whether it is who to love, who to marry or how to raise your children. Likewise, censorship and bans in the name of public safety are incompatible with the proper role of government. Instead, government must return to its role as a means for protecting those in need, providing order and security and being a steward for, rather than a participant in, outcomes.

I live next door to a fraternity and have been very impressed with the sophistication and hard work of MSU students. I know the challenges that face young people moving from education into their future careers. Extremism on campus is something I fight every day in my work.

The reality is that the Montana Legislature is controlled by Republicans and I am the only choice for providing a voice in Helena that will have the ability to effect change that benefits everyone. The idea that only Democrats can protect rights is outdated and at odds with current events. Indeed, extremism from both sides must be rejected.

HOUSE DISTRICT #60

Alanah Griffith (D)



(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #60

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Griffith: I am a native Bozemanite. I came back to Gallatin County after law school. I have specialized in contract law, which means I have two decades of experience doing the job of a legislator for my community. I have a fifteen-year-old son. I'm running to ensure he can live and raise a family in Montana.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Griffith: Three of my priorities are affordable housing, women's reproductive health and public access. I have worked on affordable housing for Big Sky and beyond. The Governor's task force's Phase II report came out 6/11/2024. It identifies a number of ways we can address this issue, some not supported by our Governor, but that make common sense. I will use this as a roadmap to educate, build alliances and then introduce and pass legislation that will support on the ground efforts to build housing.

As someone who has had four miscarriages, one late in my pregnancy, I know first-hand the importance of keeping the government out of the doctor's office and will work to ensure that all women have this right. I am eternally grateful that my doctor could give me the health care advice that I needed during this very difficult time without fear of going to jail.

I fish, hunt, kayak, backcountry ski and hike on our Montana lands and waters. As I have done in the courtroom, I will fight to keep our public lands public and ensure that we have access to those public lands.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Griffith: I want to take my decades of experience giving my clients a strong voice in their communities and in court and put it to good use representing us in Helena. I believe together, we can find the common-sense solutions to the real challenges facing our state today. I want to put my years of mediation, advocacy and drafting good legislation to work for you. Feel free to contact me with any thoughts, needs and concerns. My email is griffithformt@gmail.com and my website is griffithformt.com. I look forward to serving you in Helena.

HOUSE DISTRICT #60

Jerry Johnson (R)

(R) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #60

As of press time, Johnson had not responded to the Exponent’s questionnaire. Responses submitted after press time will be published on msuexponent.com.

★ HOUSE DISTRICT #61 ★

Thomas Carlson (R)



(R) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #61

Becky Edwards (D)



(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #61

HOUSE DISTRICT #62

Joshua Seckinger (D)



(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #62

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Carlson: I grew up in Churchill (~20 miles from Bozeman) and have lived in the Gallatin Valley almost all my life. I am an OU and MSU alum, mathematician, teacher and am involved in youth baseball. Since 2021, I have been studying and teaching math at MSU, working towards a Ph.D.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Carlson: Get state agencies back under the control of the people and remove power from unelected bureaucrats. There is far too much regulation being done by unelected, unaccountable state employees, who in no way represent the people of Montana. These powers need to be returned to the people and their elected representatives in government.

We need to return the state to just performing its necessary functions well (e.g. law enforcement; protecting the rights of vulnerable people including unborn babies, children, seniors and Montanans with disabilities; maintaining roads; protecting Montana’s beautiful outdoors; providing quality public education). We need to stop adding spending and programs every time someone has a “good idea.” Just because something is a good idea, that doesn’t make it a good law and it certainly doesn’t make it the government’s job.

Get the government out of people’s business and lives. Our state has made some great strides recently in preventing the government from interfering in Montanans’ decisions about medicine, childcare and business, but there is more to be done. We need to continue to recognize that the state has no business making these decisions for the people and continue to implement appropriate restrictions on government to ensure Montanans’ liberty.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Carlson: I am a member of the MSU community as both a student and as an instructor. Our university is a great place to study, work and live, but there are issues we deal with on a regular basis that are specific to MSU. As a state university, the continued success of MSU depends largely on the university system maintaining the trust and support of the people of Montana, and on the state continuing to properly manage and support its university system. Electing me to the legislature would ensure that MSU students, faculty and staff have a voice in Helena who is familiar with the issues we face right here on our campus and is committed to the success and continued excellence of MSU.

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Edwards: I am a proud 2002 graduate of Montana State University and Bozeman resident of 26 years. I am a working mom of three daughters (our eldest is a senior at MSU, majoring in biological engineering!) and run a national conservation and climate nonprofit, focused on ensuring women’s voices are at the table where decisions about our outdoor quality of life are being made. I am an avid gravel and mountain biker, backcountry skier and dog walker to our three adventure pups!

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Edwards: My top three priorities include protecting women’s reproductive freedom and LGBTQIA+ rights, protecting our public lands and climate, and attacking the affordability crisis hitting all Montanans. Passage of CI-128 that ensures reproductive freedom is paramount, and I will fight to ensure our state constitution — which ensures privacy for all — is protected. Additionally, the last legislative session was a bloodbath for members of the LGBTQIA+ community. These overtly discriminatory bills and attacks on Montanans are disgraceful. I will happily champion efforts to protect our reproductive freedom and rights for ALL Montanans. Additionally, ensuring the conservation financing is realized that was voted upon and passed by Montanans, and unfairly vetoed by Gov. Gianforte via SB 442, is at the top of my list. This is money that Montanans voted upon and are guaranteed that was earmarked for public lands protection. Additionally, investment in jobs for the future in the renewable energy sector, expanding our EV charging network across all of Montana and improving public transportation options to reduce greenhouse gases are all high priority for my campaign. Lastly, I’m watching my own 21-year-old daughter struggle to pay rent and sadly is completely priced out of home ownership in Bozeman. We must work towards tackling this affordability crisis through innovative solutions such as housing trusts, cutting Gov. Gianforte’s property tax increases, reviewing and revising development codes and capitalizing on federal grant dollars to tackle home affordability that Gov. Gianforte and the Republican supermajority have refused Montanans.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Edwards: I hope to earn the vote of MSU students, faculty and staff. I received a top-notch education from MSU and have enjoyed seeing the university grow both their academic programs but also lead many sectors in research. As the daughter of two educators, supporting and funding our public schools is a very high priority for me. Growing up on a corn and soybean farm in the Midwest and climbing mountains around the globe in my twenties taught me how to work hard and never, ever, ever give up. So many of our current elected officials don’t represent most Montanans. I’m a 45-year-old working mom at the midpoint of my career, still experiencing affordability crunches, worrying about my daughters’ public education and acutely aware they are now growing up in a world where they have fewer rights than I did. I’m not an out-of-touch retiree, I’m right in the trenches of life with most Montanans, and I would be incredibly proud to represent the residents of HD61 of Bozeman.

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Seckinger: I have lived in the Gallatin Valley for the last 15 years. I’ve always rented and after bouncing from job to job, I finally found my passion in guiding fly fishing. I love it here and hope to continue to live and work here for the rest of my life.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Seckinger: Women’s Reproductive Freedoms — CI-128 is on the ballot, and I hope that people turn out to vote for it, but even if it does pass, the attacks on women’s rights will not end. (TRAP — Targeted Restrictions on Abortion Providers like House Bill 937 are an example of how the state can curtail these rights without actually targeting abortion directly.) I will stand up to any effort to undermine a woman’s right to choose.

Rent Increases and Property Taxes — Make no mistake: When property taxes go up, rent goes up. We need to address the increase in residential property taxes with bipartisan efforts. Homestead exemptions, renters’ tax rebates, nothing is off the table to make this place a more affordable place to live. I will also support policy that incentivizes landlords to keep rents below market rate.

Retooling Public School Funding — It is a shame that we have the lowest-paid public school teachers in the country. This is particularly acute in the first three years of a teacher’s career. It is no wonder that we are experiencing a teacher shortage statewide. We must pay our teachers more and fund our schools better. Public education has rightly been called “the great equalizer,” and it’s the cornerstone of a functioning democracy.

Why should MSU students, faculty, and staff vote for you?

Seckinger: I can’t claim to be a MSU Alumni or an alumni of any university in Montana, but I did attend a fantastic, public, land-grant university in Madison, Wisconsin. Right after I moved to Montana, a new administration took over in the Governor’s office in Madison and set about gutting the public sector unions. My former professors fled the state, seeking other jobs at other schools. The UW system became a shell of its former self.

If you’ve read this far, you know that I believe education is the cornerstone of a functioning democracy and that does not stop at the high school level. As a future legislator, I vow to protect and fund all post-secondary public education in the state and fight against any political attacks on public sector unions.

HOUSE DISTRICT #62

Owen Lang (R)

(R)—MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #62

As of press time, Lang had not responded to the Exponent’s questionnaire. Responses submitted after press time will be published on msuexponent.com.

★ HOUSE DISTRICT #63 ★

Peter Strand (D)



(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #63

Mark Lewis (R)

As of press time, Lewis had not submitted a photo.

(R) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #63

HOUSE DISTRICT #64

Jolene Crum (R)



(R) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #64

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Strand: I moved to Bozeman with my wife and my then-two-week-old son in 1995. I’ve spent the better part of three decades raising my kids here and teaching in the Bozeman Public Schools. In short, I’ve dedicated my working life to public service.
What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Strand: Reigning in our property tax fiasco. It’s smashing homeowners, and it’s indirectly doing the same to renters. And this tax spike isn’t paying for improvements to our schools, our infrastructure or any other public services. Instead, it’s paying for a monumental tax break for corporate interests. But other rising costs are also in my sights, such as Northwestern Energy’s wild rate hike and exploding housing costs.
Freedom to do as we choose. Government shouldn’t be meddling in doctor’s offices and living rooms, telling us whether and when to have children let alone which books we should and shouldn’t read.
Robust public schools. Montana’s public schools and the opportunities they provide have been a stand-out feature of Montana life for generations. They’ve enabled all families to empower their children with access to the Montana dream. But recently, legislators have been working aggressively to move public funds to private schools. Great education should be available to all of us, not just to the wealthy.
Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Strand: Education is at the heart of everything I’ve worked on as an adult. Each of my gray hairs came to me while doing the work of guiding students and supporting young families in the community — for decades. I am all about supporting our educational system to maximize opportunity and success for Montanans. My priority is anything that supports our schools, their staff, their faculty and especially their students. I genuinely believe that Montana is at its best when our schools are at their strongest. That is why I’ve spent my working life in them.
More broadly, the kinds of objectives that drive people at MSU are very much the kind that drive me. I’m running for office because everything we do now defines what we will experience down the road. Teaching and learning are both about future horizons. Legislating, when done right, is the same.

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Lewis: My family and I live in Middle Creek, which in HD 63. We own a local business (Montana Spirits & Wine) and have two children at Gallatin High. I went to public school and graduated with an accounting and law degree, and spent most of my career in sports administration.
What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Lewis: Ensuring the rights and freedoms that my children have are as great or better than those enjoyed by me, my wife and generations before us. I support health care autonomy, including a woman’s right to choose. Those rights must be clearly established.
Reducing government spending and modernizing our tax system. Taxes are too high for Montanans. We need to bring a “family budget” approach to state government in order to avoid burdening future generations with debts they will have to repay. I believe we can achieve a 5% reduction in state employee headcount and also create incentive based compensation systems. My small business pays more taxes in this state than Amazon. We need to modernize our tax system to provide relief to most at risk parts of our society and find ways to allocate taxes more fairly.
Preserving our state’s natural resources. Montana is a special place, but as our population grows the strain on those resources becomes more acute. Making sure public lands remain public and accessible is critical to keeping one of our greatest assets for future generations, and also creating incentives to invest in new energy technologies.
Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Lewis: My decision to run for this house position came reluctantly; I never envisioned myself seeking political office. I worry about the future of our state and country, and I chose to run to try and help ensure that young people, including my children, are able to have opportunities like I did. My approach would be one of respect and collaboration to find bi-partisan solutions. Society is experiencing rapid change, which can create huge new opportunities. However, it also means our institutions need to evolve and adapt. I spent my career in those types of environments, and I want to invest my time and effort in helping make the future positive. Also, I’m the only candidate in this race who actually lives in the district. I think you should have to be able to vote in a race if you want to be a candidate. Why not run where you live?

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?
Crum:
Fifth Generation Montana Native
MSU graduate (Biotechnology)
Research Experience
Wife and Mother
Real Estate Saleswoman
Home Owner
Ag Producer
Leadership Team member of Montanans for Medical Freedom
Endorsed by the Montana Shooting Sports Association, and Montanans for Limited Government
What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?
Crum: Elections. No Tabulators and No Software. Hand count the ballots by paying people what we spend on software/tabulators, so we have locally run elections.
No property taxes on primary residences after 10 years of ownership.
Medial Freedom- Stop the World Health Organization/World Economic Forum/U.N- We will not comply with their global power structure/agenda regarding biosecurity/ pandemics (like Louisiana) We need the Nuremberg Code in our State Law, and Ivermectin (human formulation) sold over the counter.
Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?
Crum:
I am for the following
For Medical Freedom
For Private Property Rights
For Fossil Fuels
For Protecting Children
For Hand counting ballots
For the 2nd Amendment

County initiatives on the ballot

BY JOELLE SCARROW

Gallatin county voters will vote on four local issues on Nov. 5.

Gallatin County Local Option Motor Vehicle Tax

Voting yes on Gallatin County’s local option motor vehicle tax will increase the tax from 0.5 percent to 0.7 percent. This tax is collected upon vehicle registration and applied to the taxable vehicle value. Additional funds collected from this increase would be used to improve road infrastructure across the county. This increase could grant the county access to over four million additional dollars to dedicate to local improvements.

City of Bozeman, Montana General Obligation Bond Election Fire Station 4 Project

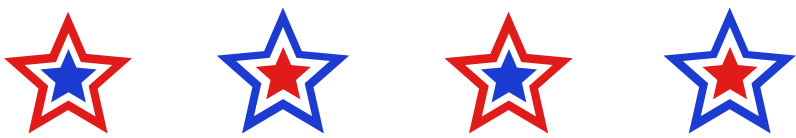
With this measure, voters will decide whether to allow the City of Bozeman to sell and issue general obligation bonds in order to fund the building and equipping of a fourth fire station. The sale and issue of general obligation bonds essentially grants the City a loan that it is able to pay back using tax dollars. Voting yes on this ballot allows the city to procure up to 18 million dollars through bonds, with interest rates determined post sale. Each series of bonds will be payable semi-annually for a time not exceeding 20 years. This will require an increase in property taxes in the coming fiscal year.

City of Bozeman, Montana Mill Levy Election First Responders

The City is proposing a mill levy that could raise over 11 million dollars annually in order to hire additional personnel and maintain the local police and fire departments. With the potential construction of a fourth fire station and growth of population, the city hopes to use funds to support the addition of six sworn Bozeman police officers per year over five years, for a total of 30, eight non-sworn support staff for the police department, 22 firefighters and three non-sworn support staff for the fire department. The ballot proposes that the City Commission be granted authority to permanently levy up to 48 mills by fiscal year 2030. A mill levy is a tax rate based upon property values. A single mill is equivalent to one dollar per 1,000 dollars of assessed property value. Through this process property taxes are raised annually. According to the City of Bozeman website, the Fire Station 4 project will be eliminated if this levy fails.

City of Bozeman Plastics Ordinance

Voting for the City of Bozeman Plastics Ordinance would alter the Bozeman Municipal Code to prohibit the sale or distribution of polystyrene foam, single-use plastic bags and plastic straws or stirrers, effective May 1, 2025. This would allow for plastic straws and stirrers to be provided upon request of customers. Beyond this, the ordinance would be strictly enforced. All affected establishments would be notified, as required by the initiative. Affected establishments would be charged 1,000 dollars upon first violation and 2,000 dollars for all successive violations.



WANTED

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE FREEDOM TO VOTE

FOR

MONTANA CANDIDATES WHO BEST REPRESENT US

As many as **40% of Montanans** identify as independents, but are forced to choose only one party's candidates in primary elections.

Vote YES on CI-126

FOR open primaries that give every Montanan

☆ of any party affiliation ☆

the freedom to vote for their choice of candidates.

Paid for by Montanans for Election Reform Action Fund
Bruce Tutvedt, President • Doug Campbell, Treasurer
P.O. Box 315, Helena MT 59624

YesOn126MT.com

Grassroots organizations take on plastic and fire back at existing Montana legislation

BY MOLLY HOUSER

Local grassroots groups, MTPlastic Free and Gallatin Valley Beyond Plastic (GVBP), have introduced a citizen-led single-use plastic ban initiative that will appear on the ballots this upcoming election day.

According to MTPlastic Free, the Bozeman Plastic Ordinance would prohibit businesses from distributing single-use plastic bags and styrofoam containers, as well as limiting straws and beverage stirrers to upon-request items. If passed, this initiative will be set into motion May 1, 2025.

Terry Quatraro, project manager and spokesperson from MTPlastic Free, explained that getting the ordinance on the ballot has been a prolonged journey. In 2021, the Montana Legislature passed House Bill 407 (HB 407), which preempts local governments and citizens from enacting regulations on the use, disposal and sale of any auxiliary containers, as well as any restrictions or fees placed on containers. This law has been referred to as the “ban on bans,” as it has since prevented Montana cities and environmental groups from ratifying any plastic restrictions.

Montana House Representative (D-59) Ed Stafman attempted to introduce House Bill 413 in 2022, but it died in the Standing Committee in 2023. Shortly after, the Cottonwood Environmental Law Center — a local law firm dedicated to protecting the environment — filed a lawsuit against the state of Montana and argued that it is unconstitutional for the government to place a ban on citizen-led initiatives, according to Quatraro.

“Part of what that ban said was that individual communities could not by themselves put forth a referendum from the people,” Quatraro said. “So that’s what John Meyer [of] Cottonwood [argued against]. He went to a judge and he prevailed in getting that reversed. The judge was very adamant, saying that people have a right to put forth a referendum or an initiative.”

Following the partial reversal of HB 407, MTPlastic Free and GVBP got to work drafting the initiative and began gathering signatures. It was not long before



the organizations faced another form of pushback.

“The state charter, for some reason, says that any initiative that is proposed in an even-numbered year is considered a special election,” Quatraro said. “So, it has to be 25 percent of signatures of previous voters in the city, instead of 15 percent. Odd-numbered years are 15 percent. But even knowing that, we thought the time was ripe to go ahead, and we started collecting signatures. And it was quite a laborious process, because there was a small group of us.”

The groups received multiple extensions in an attempt to gather all the necessary signatures, but as Quatraro explained, many were found to be invalid for technical reasons.

“John Meyer came to our rescue again and he sued both the city and the county

elections office,” Quatraro said. “He said that there’s no way that this is considered a special election year because the definition in the state charter is that the special election stands alone. Well, this is [also] a federal election.”

Further, Quatraro explained that there was no precedent for this case because Bozeman hasn’t had a citizens initiative on the ballot in years. Again, the judge ruled in their favor. Following the second lawsuit, the group gathered the required amount of signatures. Now, the initiative is set to be on the ballot this Nov. 5.

“We are the last, the very last item on the election ballots,” Quatraro said. “So hopefully people don’t get what’s called ballot fatigue and get to a certain point and go, oh, to heck with it, I’m not going any further.”

Quatraro wants the Bozeman community to consider the positive environmental and health benefits that this initiative will offer. According to MTPlastic Free, 12 states and over 500 municipalities have already implemented similar bans and have seen a reduction in plastic bag litter by over one-third. They also write that this will have no cost to taxpayers and will save businesses a significant amount of money as they no longer will have to purchase single-use shopping bags.

Quatraro also urges voters to consider factors beyond the environmental impact, such as the growing research into the negative health impacts of microplastics.

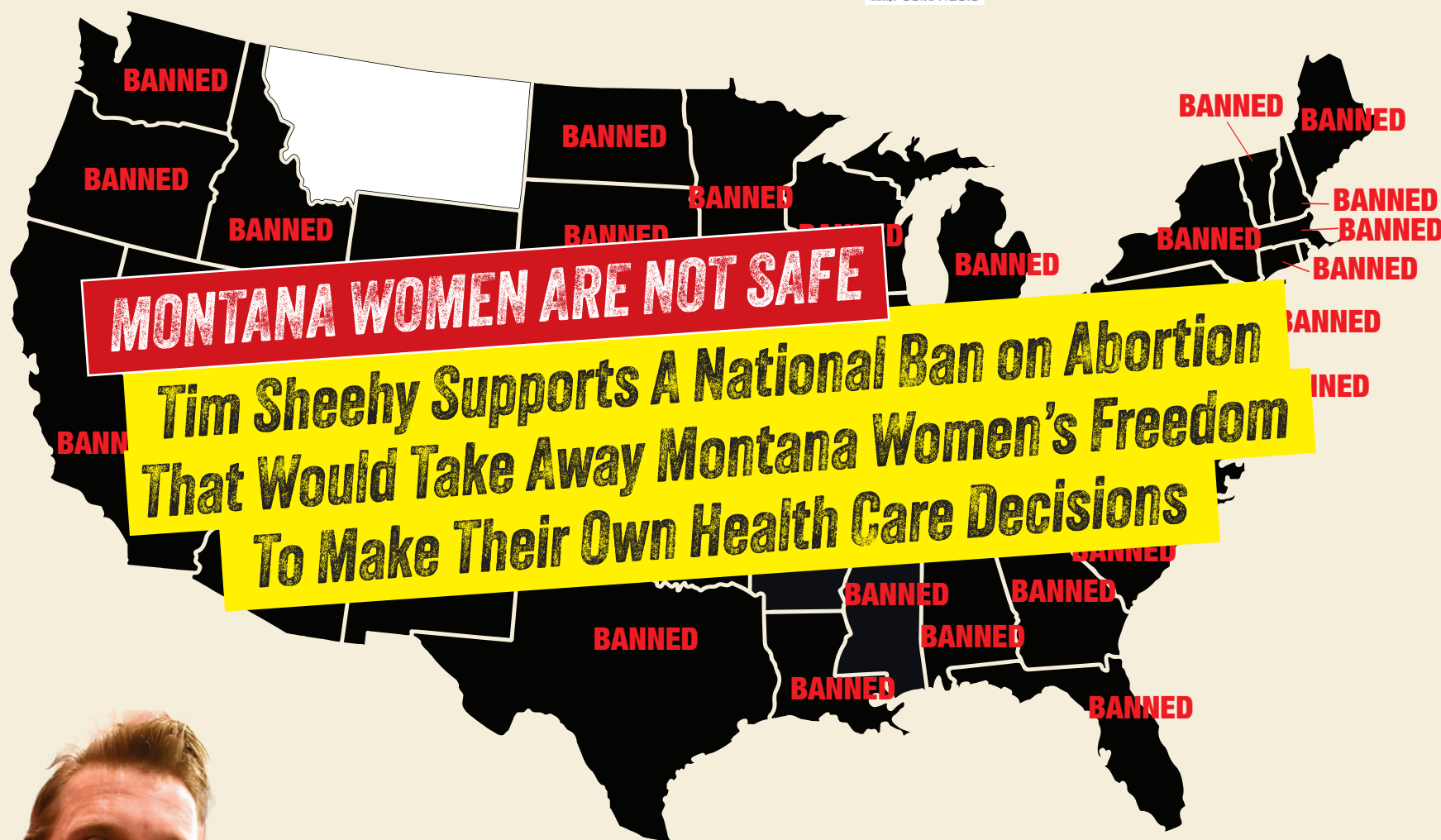
“It’s everywhere, and it is in our bodies. [Microplastics] are insidious,” Quatraro said. “You think they are just these small little particles — but they are everywhere.”

“What choice do we want to make? Do we want to lead healthier lives, have cleaner environments, have healthier bodies or do we want to have our habits continue?”

To find out more about the proposed initiative or to get involved with the groups, visit <https://www.mtplasticfree.com/> and <https://www.beyondplastics.org/from-the-grassroots/montana-ban-on-bans>.

Tim Sheehy Supports Letting Politicians Ban Abortion Here In Montana, Even In Cases Of Rape, Incest, Or When The Life Of The Mother Is At Risk

Montana Public Radio, March 15, 2024 



HOUSE DISTRICT #64

Kelly Kortum (D)



(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #64

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Kortum: Kelly Kortum grew up in Ekalaka (southeastern Montana). After high school, he moved to Bozeman seeking education and a career in technology. Kortum has worked at the Community Food Co-op as a Systems Administrator for 14 years.

Kortum was elected to represent Montana House District 65 in 2020. He specializes in voting rights and technology.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Kortum: I will continue to defend the right to vote for every Montanan citizen, regardless of age, sex, gender, race or party affiliation. We all have the right to vote and anyone interfering with that right is an enemy of democracy.

I will vote for economic policies that keep Montanans in Montana. This includes affordable and available housing, wage increases, fully funded community services and fair tax structures.

And I will oppose bills or motions that attack our civil and human rights, such as attacks on reproductive freedom, LGBTQIA+ discrimination and allowing corporations to spy on you.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Kortum: I will continue to vote for higher ed, for a livable community for all Montanans and for your constitutional right to privacy.

★ HOUSE DISTRICT #65 ★

Esther Fishbaugh (R)



(R) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #65

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Fishbaugh: I am a 4th generation Montanan from a farming community in north central Montana with 38 years of business experience running my own corporation in campground management. I have been married for 47 years and have two daughters and four grandchildren. I have a master of science in physiology from MSU. I enjoy outdoor sports and gardening.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Fishbaugh: 1. Property tax and all taxes generally have become burdensome to Montana families. I will work to make government more fiscally responsible and transparent to Montanans. We need to have government small and efficient with past expenditures posted online along with future budgets. We need to have quarterly reports on income from all tax categories with appropriate analysis to help all Montanans evaluate the fairness of the tax burden.

2. I will work to restore integrity in our judicial system to return to constitutional restraint and proper spheres of authority within the three branches of Montana government. When ideological issues pre-decide judicial rulings, the judiciary is outside the fair and unbiased application of the law. Currently, judicial review of ethics violations needs to be expanded to include members of the legislature and executive officers. Right now we have the fox guarding the henhouse with judicial members reviewing themselves.

3. My husband, Perry, has been in education for 34 years as a public, private and now homeschool teacher. Education needs a boost to more creatively include current technology in how instruction can be delivered. One-size-fits-all does not. Boys in particular are not well-served in the current classroom setting. I support parental choice in education with the education dollar following the child.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Fishbaugh: I have a strong background in education through my husband and a commitment to pragmatic and innovative problem solving through my business background. Problem-solving, balancing budgets and creative solutions has been my strong point in staying in business for 38 years. I will work to bring technology to educational settings to help contain costs and deliver a superior product to the student.

Brian Close (D)



(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #65

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Close: Since 1994, I have been involved in public policy. During my thirty years here I have successfully led efforts to improve public transportation, government and recreation. That included chairing GALAVAN and stabilizing it finances; co-authoring the city charter (including ethics reform); and leading the effort to establish a park district.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Close: Tenants' Rights: Abolish application fees. There is no reason why application cost can't be made part of general overhead. No one should be required to pay multiple application fees. We must pass legislation protecting tenants in trailer parks. Local government should be able to exercise eminent domain over trailer parks to preserve this important source of housing

Freedom: We need to keep government out of our medical decisions, especially for reproductive choice. Women are not property of the state. Government has no business policing thought through things like book bans. The legislature needs to get out of the business of "othering" people, particularly the LGBTQIA+ community. It is the worst kind of bigotry.

Seniors: We need to reform our antiquated guardianship system so that all guardians receive training, and that their accounts are audited. We need to clarify the laws pertaining to health care proxy, so that there are clear lines of authority even if someone does not have a health care proxy form on file We need to give additional tax relief to seniors and others on fixed income. As a tax attorney, I will be able to participate positively in reforming our antiquated property tax system.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Close: I appreciate that the University invests \$500 million in this community every year. I will fight to protect MSU from interference by the legislature. There are hundreds of students residing in House District 65. I have talked to them and I know that they are being squeezed by property management companies. We need to strengthen tenant rights Faculty and staff can't afford to live here. I will work for additional funding so that the University can provide additional housing to staff, faculty, and students. We need to be innovative here, including housing stipends. The University needs to become a player on this issue. Currently, unfortunately, it is a bystander. I have spent more than 15 years of my life in academia in various capacities, including as a professor. I appreciate the University and understand and support its values of intellectual freedom, inquiry and integrity.

HOUSE DISTRICT #66

Marla Davis (R)



(R) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #66

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Davis: I've lived in Gallatin County since 2005. My children are graduates from Manhattan schools and Montana State University. I have a degree in Physical Therapy from the University of Oklahoma. I have been a PT for 32 years, including ten years as a director. I'm actively involved in the community.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Davis: As I talk to voters, the most pressing issues heading into the 2025 session are property taxes, affordability of housing/economy, maintaining access to public lands, the medicare expansion package debate and healthcare accessibility and education choice, funding and quality of outcomes. We need to look at all options to best address these issues, ultimately reducing spending where appropriate to reduce the tax burden on Montanans. We need to reduce unnecessary fees and regulations that add costs to housing and reduce restrictions and bureaucratic processes placed on the healthcare and education sectors to make them more sustainable, efficient and desirable. We need to ensure control of public lands remains in public hands.

Further on Property Taxes which affect rent - we need to lower tax rates and place caps for seniors and those on fixed incomes. I would return to a six-year appraisal cycle instead of a two-year cycle, with market price averages and specific restrictions on increases. I would increase Homestead Exemption protections that reflect current market rates. I do not believe we should be taxed on unrealized gains due to changes in property values and we need to delve deeper into how to capitalize on our tourism industry.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Davis: As a Physical Therapist for 32 years and an active entrepreneur, I understand the importance of hard work, compassion and common sense. My service and involvement in countless community activities demonstrate my deep connection to the people of Gallatin County. I believe in a bright future for Montana — one that values fiscal responsibility, limited government and the preservation of our freedoms and the natural beauty of our state. I wish to help create a prosperous and vibrant Montana for all, especially our youth. I will fight for our values and bring real solutions to the real challenges we face today.

HOUSE DISTRICT #66

Eric Matthews (D)



(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #66

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Matthews: I was born and raised in Bozeman, graduated Bozeman High and MSU. I taught for 25 years at Chief Joseph Middle School and I'm currently the President of the Bozeman Education Association. I was elected for my first term to the Montana State House in 2022.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Matthews: Having been a teacher and associated with public employee union work for most of my career, education has been one of my top three priorities and where I have built my expertise. Promoting policy that protects and defends our public school system is a priority for me. In addition to policy, understanding school funding is critical to make sure we are properly funding our constitutions requirement to develop the full educational potential of each person. I believe that a quality public school system is the great equalizer for every citizen. Another top priority is to work towards a tax system that fairly distributes the tax burden in Montana to citizens and where applicable to visitors to our state. Tourism and second homes for non-residents are a great place to start looking for revenue to reduce the burden on citizens of Montana. Finally, healthcare for Montanans needs to be addressed. It is critical that we continue Medicaid expansion this next session. Our rural communities as well as our largest communities rely on this program to stay open. Access is already slim in some parts of our state but eliminating Medicaid Expansion causes chaos for many communities.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Matthews: Bozeman is my home. I have spent my lifetime as a member of this community. As a teacher, a volunteer and as a friend to many I have prioritized people in my life, and that is why I am running. I feel like we all deserve to have representation that is thoughtful, open minded, fair and that keeps the welfare of all citizens at the center. Every Montanan deserves to have representation that keeps the human element at the heart. Montanans deserves to work a job and make a wage that allows them to live in their community, to have healthcare that isn't going to bankrupt a family, to be able to retire with dignity and to be able to have time for family, faith and recreation. I would be honored if MSU students, faculty and staff voted for me knowing I'm working towards a good life for everyone.

HOUSE DISTRICT #67

Jedediah Hinkle (R)

(R) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #67

Carl Anderson (D)

(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #67

As of press time, Hinkle and Anderson had not responded to the Exponent's questionnaire. Responses submitted after press time will be published on *msuexponent.com*.

HOUSE DISTRICT #68

Alexander Colafrancesco (D)

(D) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #68

Caleb Hinkle (R)

(R) — MONTANA HOUSE DISTRICT #68

As of press time, Colafrancesco and Hinkle had not responded to the Exponent's questionnaire. Responses submitted after press time will be published on *msuexponent.com*.

GALLATIN COUNTY COMISSIONER

David Dickey (R)



(R) — GALLATIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

Dickey: Small business owner since 2005, father of five, Master's degree from Florida State in M.I.S. My priorities are public safety, responsible growth and good stewardship of taxpayer resources.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

Dickey: a. My top priorities (briefly mentioned above,) are public safety, responsible growth and fiscal responsibility and accountability.

i. The current Gallatin County Commission has withheld necessary funding from Audrey Cromwell, the County Attorney, as part of what appears like petty gamesmanship. I've met with Attorney Cromwell, and her office is grossly understaffed compared to similar sized counties around Montana. We need to properly fund her office as well as the GSCO. It is 100% true that Mexican cartels have a presence in Gallatin County and we need to ramp up our law enforcement to ensure that our streets, neighborhoods and college campus are safe.

ii. I'd like to see Gallatin County start imposing impact fees on developers to help offset the costs associated with the growth in population. I'd also like to see the impact on public schools be incorporated into the planning process of new developments. Right now there is little to nothing being done to account for the rapid growth of our county in terms of the effect on our public schools.

iii. As a small business owner, and someone who has signed the fronts of paychecks for two decades, I feel that I have a better understanding on fiscal stewardship and accountability than the current commissioners and I believe I would provide a much needed perspective.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

Dickey: It wasn't initially my idea to run for office, rather I was asked to run by one of our state representatives. I'm not a politician, but rather just a guy who sees the problems that exist in our county and is willing to step up and apply some much-needed common sense. Go 'Cats!

Scott MacFarlane (D)



(D) — GALLATIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Would you be able to provide a brief biography of yourself?

MacFarlane: I grew up in Colstrip, Montana and attended MSU on an athletic scholarship for Track and Field. I was a Lifte at Bridger for five years, flew commercial helicopters for six years and have been a Gallatin County Commissioner for the last six years. My wife and I have three kids: one at MSU, one at UM and one in Gallatin high.

What are your top three priorities if elected, and how do you plan to address them?

MacFarlane: I believe our top service priorities fundamentally rely on our ability to collect sufficient revenue. The Montana legislature has recently been extremely antagonistic toward the ability of local governments to fund local priorities. The services we provide as your County are very diverse and many are not immediately obvious to the average county citizen, but I have learned that everyone has personal examples of services and policies they desire and feel strongly about. It is easy to find consensus around the need for attainable housing, mental health services and increased public safety.

Why should MSU students, faculty and staff vote for you?

MacFarlane: I attended MSU as a student, worked for MSU for six years and have had two kids attend MSU recently. Over the last six years as your County Commissioner, I have developed an increasingly close relationship with the University. This development has helped us invest in Gallatin College and coordinate much more closely on the University's ambitions for expanding their facilities and services to students. I recognize the University as our community's heart and soul and will always be considerate of the needs of this amazingly successful institution.

OPINION

Consider Foreign Policy in This Election: Victory is Not Assured

BY NATHAN MAYVILLE

In 2020, as a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), I attended the Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course in Yuma, Arizona. The Marine Aircraft and Weapons Training Squadron (MAWTS-1) describes the course as the most comprehensive graduate-level aviation course in the world today which serves “highly experienced and fully qualified officers from all [USMC] aviation communities.” This WTI course was unique as it was the first year a new course of instruction — designed specifically for a potential conflict with China — was implemented.

For the next two months, I sat through 12-hour days of PowerPoints, helped plan complex mission simulations and performed dozens of day-and-night training flights preparing for conflict with a powerful adversary. This experience was my first exposure to the reality that the U.S. was entering into a new global relationship. No longer were we the undisputed power of air, sea and land. Now, I knew it was possible that, in the future, I could find myself somewhere in the South Pacific — one tiny piece of a losing war against China.

These experiences and the rapidly destabilizing global situation we see today have led me to believe this: A strong military, defense industrial base and foreign policy are necessary if the U.S. is to avoid a future in which its battles are no longer domestic, but existential.

The best way to prevent war is deterrence. I urge you: before you go to the polls this election, make sure you are informed on matters of foreign policy.

For the past decade, domestic issues have been the primary political driver in the U.S.; questions around civil rights, economic inequality and immigration echo loudly in our national consciousness. As our country has grappled with these issues and sought to reconcile itself with a complicated and often destructive history, we have grown apathetic toward issues playing out on the global stage.

In recent years, while the U.S. has drawn progressively inward, nationalistic aggression worldwide has reached a level unseen since the 1930s. For example, the WSJ reported in September that the death toll in the Russo-Ukraine conflict recently surpassed one million — and the war continues to grind on bitterly. The Israel-Palestine conflict, which has burned steadily since the early 20th century, exploded to an unprecedented level of aggression in October of 2023. One year later, it continues to threaten to escalate into a broader regional and potentially international conflict. In South America, Venezuela openly considers annexing Guyana, and the

No longer were we the undisputed power of air, sea and land. Now, I knew it was possible that, in the future, I could find myself somewhere in the South Pacific — one tiny piece of a losing war against China.

U.S. military looks anxiously on as a Chinese invasion of Taiwan appears ever more imminent.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent fall of the Iron Curtain which separated East from West, the U.S. emerged as the world's economic, military and cultural superpower. In the same year, the U.S. invaded Iraq in response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. In a conflict now known as the Gulf War, U.S. and coalition forces utterly destroyed the entire Iraqi military apparatus in only 100 hours.

Besides cementing the U.S. as a hegemonic power in the Middle East, this war served as a chilling warning to China. Like Iraq, they'd equipped their military

with Soviet armaments — which wholly failed a trial by combat against American forces, according to the U.S. Naval Institute. Meanwhile, in the West, the U.S. celebrated “the end of history” and the period of Pax Americana — American peace — brought on by the unquestionable superiority of the American military and economy. Additionally, after the national horror of Sept. 11, the U.S. used attack helicopters, laser-guided bombs, night vision and drones to conduct a protracted air and ground war against an insurgent force — armed primarily with Soviet-era weapons.

While America spent hundreds of billions of dollars shaping its military to fight a war against a severely under-equipped foe, China raced to modernize its military, aggressively expanding industrial capacity and acquiring military technology.

Since 2016, both the Trump and Biden presidencies have emphasized the importance of the competition that has emerged between the U.S. and China in the 21st century — Trump in his 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) and Biden, more recently in his 2022 NSS.

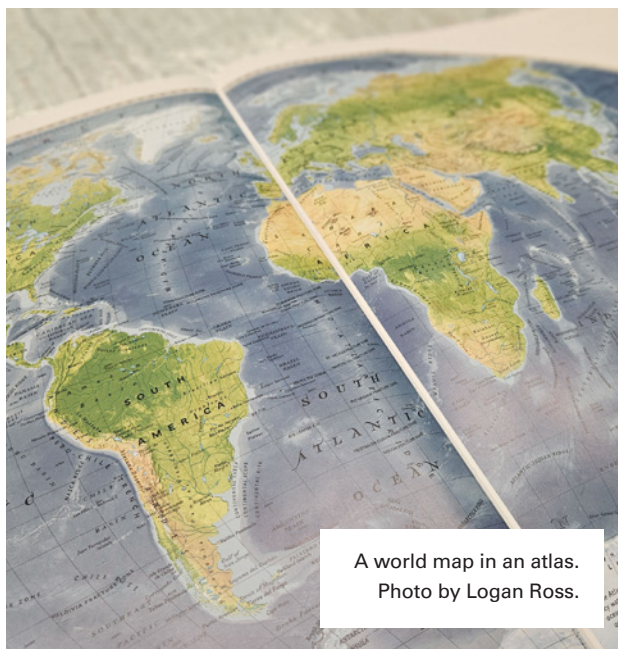
Indeed, the Department of Defense now considers China a near-peer adversary, meaning it can almost match U.S. military power in many respects — though whether China is a near-peer or peer adversary is up for debate.

In response, the USMC has radically reshaped its fighting capabilities, beginning a long transition from a counter-insurgency force to a lean, mobile, amphibious force that can fight effectively against Chinese naval assets in the Indo-Pacific. Despite this push, the U.S.'s military and defense industrial base as a whole remains woefully unprepared for a hot war with China.

This destabilizing and fragmenting global situation we are witnessing today demands that the U.S. places its attention outside its borders and onto the international stage. Before you cast your vote this election, make sure you are informed on foreign policy — because victory is not assured.

To learn about campaign promises — including matters of foreign policy — made by the Trump and Harris campaigns, visit <https://www.politifact.com/article/2024/sep/30/donald-trumps-2024-campaign-promises-heres-his-vis/> and <https://www.politifact.com/article/2024/sep/30/kamala-harris-2024-campaign-promises-here-are-her/>.

To learn more about the strategies that either presidential candidate is likely to adopt against China, visit <https://substack.com/home/post/p-150334575?source=queue>.



A world map in an atlas.
Photo by Logan Ross.

ADVERTISEMENT

The following is the complete text of Constitutional Initiatives No. 126, No. 127, and No. 128, which will be submitted to the voters of the state of Montana at the November 5, 2024, General Election. The text is being published per the requirement of 13-27-311, Montana Code Annotated.

THE COMPLETE TEXT OF CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE NO. 126 (CI-126)
BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Article IV of The Constitution of the State of Montana is amended by adding a new section 9 that reads:

Section 9. Top-four primary election for certain offices. (1) As used in this section, the term "covered office" means the office of governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction, state representative, state senator, United States representative, United States senator, and other offices as provided by law.

(2) The election for a covered office must consist of a primary election followed by a general election in which each of the four candidates for a covered office who receive the most votes in the primary election, and only those candidates, shall appear on the general election ballot.

(3) In an election for a covered office, the following conditions apply:

(a) All candidates, regardless of political party preference, affiliation, nomination or lack of political party preference, affiliation, or nomination shall appear on the same primary election ballot separated by office.

(b) Qualified electors, regardless of political party preference or affiliation or a lack thereof, may participate in the primary election for each covered office for which they are eligible to vote.

(c) Each qualified elector may vote for no more than one candidate for each office in the primary election.

(d) If it cannot be determined which four candidates received the most votes in the primary election because two or more candidates are tied, the tie shall be broken as provided by law.

(e) If four or fewer candidates for a covered office qualify for the primary election ballot, a primary election is not required and all candidates shall appear on the general election ballot.

(f) A space for write-in candidates may appear on the primary election ballot as provided by law.

(g) A candidate may not be required to obtain the endorsement or nomination of any political party or organization in order to qualify for the primary election ballot.

(h) If the legislature requires candidates to obtain signatures to qualify for the primary election ballot, the number of signatures required may not exceed 5% of the total votes cast for the candidate elected for the same office in the last general election for that office.

(i) A candidate may choose to have displayed next to the candidate's name on the ballot the candidate's preference for a political party or that the candidate prefers no political party. The format options must be as follows: "Party Preference _____" or "No Party Preference."

(j) The ballot may not indicate that a candidate has been endorsed by or nominated by any political party.

(k) Each ballot must include a clear and conspicuous statement informing voters that a candidate's indicated political party preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the political party or that the political party approves of or associates with the candidate.

(4) This section may not be construed to amend, repeal, or modify Article VI, section 2 of the Montana constitution.

(5) This section does not apply to special elections for covered offices.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Severability. If a part of [this act] is invalid, all valid parts that are severable from the invalid part remain in effect. If a part of [this act] is invalid in one or more of its applications, the part remains in effect in all valid applications that are severable from the invalid applications.

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date. [This act] is effective January 1, 2025.

NEW SECTION. Section 4. Applicability. [This act] applies to elections for covered offices as defined in [section 1] held on or after January 1, 2025.

THE COMPLETE TEXT OF CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE NO. 127 (CI-127)
BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Article IV, section 5 of The Constitution of the State of Montana is amended to read:

Section 5. Result of elections. (1) As used in this section, the term "covered office" means the office of governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction, state representative, state senator, United States representative, United States senator, and other offices as provided by law.

(2) In all elections held by the people for an office other than a covered office, the person or persons receiving the largest number of votes shall be declared elected.

(3) In all elections held by the people for a covered office, the person receiving a majority of votes as determined as provided by law shall be declared elected. If it cannot be determined which person received a majority of votes because two or more persons are tied, the elected person shall be determined as provided by law.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Severability. If part of [this act] is invalid, all valid parts that are severable from the invalid part remain in effect. If a part of [this act] is invalid in one or more of its applications, the part remains in effect in all valid applications that are severable from the invalid applications.

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date. [This act] is effective January 1, 2025.

NEW SECTION. Section 4. Applicability. [This act] applies to elections held on or after January 1, 2025.

THE COMPLETE TEXT OF CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE NO. 128 (CI-128)
Article II of The Constitution of The State of Montana is amended by adding a new section 36 that reads:

Section 36. Right to make decisions about pregnancy.

(1) There is a right to make and carry out decisions about one's own pregnancy, including the right to abortion. This right shall not be denied or burdened unless justified by a compelling government interest achieved by the least restrictive means.

(2) The government may regulate the provision of abortion care after fetal viability provided that in no circumstance shall the government deny or burden access to an abortion that, in the good faith judgment of a treating health care professional, is medically indicated to protect the life or health of the pregnant patient.

(3) The government shall not penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against a person based on the person's actual, potential, perceived, or alleged pregnancy outcomes. The government shall not penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against a person for aiding or assisting another person in exercising their right to make and carry out decisions about their pregnancy with their voluntary consent.

(4) For the purposes of this section:

(a) A government interest is "compelling" only if it clearly and convincingly addresses a medically acknowledged, bona fide health risk to a pregnant patient and does not infringe on the patient's autonomous decision making.

(b) "Fetal viability" means the point in pregnancy when, in the good faith judgment of a treating health care professional and based on the particular facts of the case, there is a significant likelihood of the fetus's sustained survival outside the uterus without the application of extraordinary medical measures.

Don't Let Advertising Dollars Change Your Vote

BY IZZY WATSON

Unless you've been living under a rock, you've likely seen or heard the names Jon Tester and Tim Sheehy at least once over the past year. Whether it be an advertisement before a YouTube video or one of the many letters overwhelming your mailbox every day, reminders of the race for Montana's western senate seat are incessant. It's a race that's shaping up to be one of the most contentious and closely-watched battles this election, catching the attention of political action committees (PACs), who are now spending more money than ever on this race.

The general sentiment that surrounds American elections seems to be one of pessimism. I often hear people say that their vote doesn't matter or that all candidates are equally bad. While it's easy to be cynical about the election, it is increasingly vital that we remain informed about races besides the presidential race — especially this year and especially in Montana.

Since the U.S. Senate confirms judicial nominees, ratifies treaties and influences

legislation, a single seat can shift the balance of power, making every vote crucial. This one seat could be the difference in which party holds a majority. The importance of this race is underscored by the fact that decisions made by key figures — such as Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia — have ripple effects that could guarantee shifts in political control. As noted in The Independent on Oct. 10, Manchin's choice not to seek re-election "[guaranteed] the seat would fall into Republican hands."

With the stakes high for this pivotal Senate seat, the battle for influence has led to an influx of money which is dramatically reshaping the advertising landscape. Most of this money is coming from a very specific kind of political action committee, known as a super PAC. According to the Federal Election Commission, super PACs are independently able to raise an unlimited sum of money for their cause, in contrast to regular PACs. In fact, super PACs aren't even allowed to coordinate directly with

candidates or campaigns.

An article from Montana Free Press published on Sept. 16 reported that "more than \$225 million has been spent in Montana's U.S. Senate race, with political action committees [PACs] accounting for more than half." In effect, much of the \$225 million being poured into Montana's Senate race is coming from outside groups, rather than the candidates' official campaigns.



**It's crucial
for voters to
recognize the
importance of
this race.**



The largest super PAC contributions in this race have come from two organizations: More Jobs Less Government, and Last Best Place. More Jobs Less Government has invested nearly \$6.5 million in pro-Sheehy efforts and \$15.6 million in anti-Tester campaigns. The Last Best Place super PAC has spent just over \$1 million supporting Tester and about \$25.6 million opposing Sheehy, according to the Montana Free Press. The amount being spent on anti-advertising as compared to advertising in favor of a certain candidate makes it feel like the only political ads you see are the negative ones. This leaves voters overwhelmed and disillusioned. However, it's important to remember that it's not the candidates flooding Montana with these ads, but rather external groups trying to sway voters through high-stakes investments.

It's crucial for voters to recognize the importance of this race. Every vote counts in shaping the Senate's — and the nation's — future. By staying informed and engaged, voters can ensure their voices are heard. Even in the face of overwhelming negativity, your participation truly matters.

MSU PD Unclaimed Property List



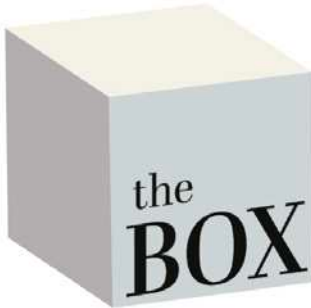
The Montana State University Police Department posts an ongoing list of unclaimed property that we have in our possession. The property is listed in the link below as "MSUPDUnclaimed Property." Per Montana State University Resolution Number 601, if the property remains unclaimed for a period of three (3) months from the date of initial posting, it will be destroyed, returned to the finder, donated, converted to law enforcement use, or sold at public auction, the property or the value of the property is not redeemable by the owner or another person entitled to possession. To check the MSU PD Unclaimed Property List, go to: <https://www.montana.edu/police/found-property.html>.



If you are missing property and you suspect any of the property on these lists may be yours, please get in touch with us at foundproperty@montana.edu or by calling (406) 994-2121.

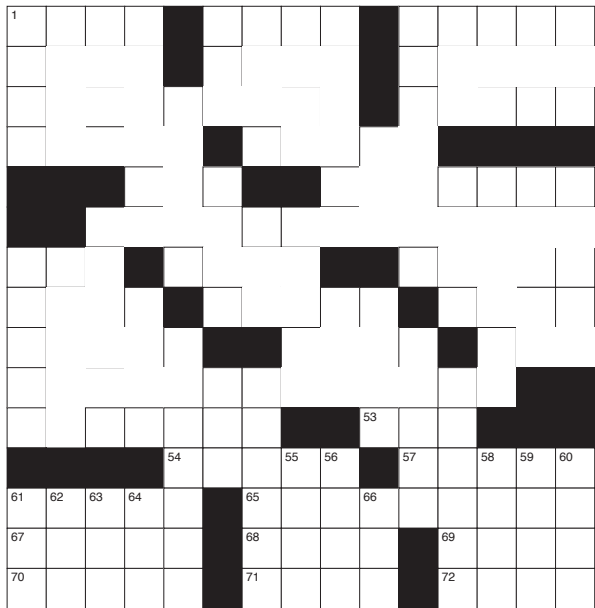
PUZZLES

Brought to you by the MSU
exponent



Love the Exponent? Follow us @MSUExponent!
For solutions, visit Printable-Puzzles.com and enter puzzle code.

CODE: #S4TZ4L35



Across

- 1. Profess
- 5. Nine ____ Nails
- 9. Hiroshima weapon, for short
- 14. Penn. neighbor
- 15. Lab rat's challenge
- 16. Lending at high interest
- 17. Broadway musical based on a 1988 John Waters film
- 19. Dogpatch's Hawkins
- 20. Italian cathedral
- 21. Mausoleum
- 23. "Star Trek" series, to fans
- 25. Like the sea in scope
- 30. Steakhouse order
- 33. Menu words
- 35. Rock partner
- 36. East or West follower
- 37. It's owed
- 39. Irving Berlin's "Blue ____"
- 42. Newbie
- 43. Met expectations

- 45. Egyptian god
- 47. Convenience store machine
- 48. Behemoths
- 52. Wimps
- 53. Mdse. identifier
- 54. Quick
- 57. Estrada and Kramer
- 61. Grain husks separated in threshing
- 65. Overjoyed
- 67. Bit of frivolity
- 68. Clapton or Stoltz
- 69. Mediterranean bread
- 70. Like taffy
- 71. Strong urges
- 72. Arabian gulf

Argue
Babyish
Banner
Barns
Braise
Cache
Cared
Cells
Chops
Dilution
Divorced
Drabs

Dying
Elicited
Endow
Ethic
Guile
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Holdup
Inkling
Laden
Locale
Lumps
Lunge

Marts
Minor
Nucleus
Ousted
Poets
Raincoat
Raven
Reverse
Ropes
Rounded
Seedier
Short

Teams
Tiaras
Touring
Typhus
Usher
Variable
Whistled
Wings

Down

- 1. Condition for which one may take Ritalin
- 2. Calf meat, in Paris
- 3. Miscellany
- 4. Cordiality
- 5. Little troublemaker
- 6. Cop at a drug bust
- 7. Peter the Great, for one
- 8. Verbal tap on the shoulder
- 9. Like Spartan living
- 10. Baden-Powell's org.
- 11. Pear-shaped lute-like instrument
- 12. Hosp. scan
- 13. "Farewell"
- 18. Detection device
- 22. Chemical contaminant, for short
- 24. Sporty 60's cars
- 26. "You ____ seen nothin' yet!"
- 27. "Octomom" Suleman, et al.
- 28. Like a bump on a log
- 29. Data storage medium
- 30. Mountain homes
- 31. Reindeer's kin
- 32. Fake name
- 33. Amy of "Julie & Julia"
- 34. The king, in Cannes
- 38. Soviet news service
- 40. Brit. record label
- 41. Winos
- 44. Cook in a wok
- 46. Popular footwear
- 49. "Michael Collins" actor Stephen
- 50. Coastal raptor
- 51. Mother of King Minos
- 55. Belonging to some Germans
- 56. Dwarf king, in Tolkien's history of Middle Earth
- 58. "____ it!" (cry of accomplishment)
- 59. Charlie Brown's is often eaten by a tree
- 60. Read a bar code
- 61. 300, to Cato
- 62. "Yeah, sure!"
- 63. Mighty Joe Young, e.g.
- 64. Small amount
- 66. Mac alternatives

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CODE: #K290MM

Where's your favorite
place to fill out your
ballot?

On the dark side of the
moon

In the shade of the she-
tree

At your mom's house

In the comfort of my
overpriced 1-bedroom
apartment

On top of the Montana
Hall bell tower

In the MSU Library
second-floor bathroom

On the pavement
outside of the county
courthouse

In line for Chick-fil-A

In the Exponent office

On the bridge of the
starship Enterprise

On top of Mount Baldy

The Cat's Paw

The McDonald's on the
other side of I-90

Town and Country

At a screening of
Megalopolis

During a Bobcat
football game (I wrote
in Tommy Mellott)

The fourth floor of Reid
Hall

Tall Tales
& TIDBITS

Vote Champ 2028!

