

MONTANA KAIMIN

THE 2020 KAIMIN VOTER'S GUIDE



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Cover Photo
Sara Diggins



The Montana Kaimin is a weekly independent student newspaper at the University of Montana. The Kaimin office and the University of Montana are located on land originally inhabited by the Salish People. Kaimin is a derivative of a Salish language word, "Qe'ymin," that is pronounced kay-MEEN and means "book," "message," or "paper that brings news."

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EDITORIAL

Let's do our dang civic duty with the 2020 election

Here's your friendly reminder that if you are voting absentee or by mail this election, you need to mail that bad boy out a week before Election Day. That's next Tuesday, Oct. 27, for anyone keeping track. And if you are voting in Missoula, you can also vote in person at the election office, if voting in-person is more your speed.

The big federal and statewide elections have been unavoidable. You've likely been subjected to a barrage of campaign ads already this season. We're sure you've had AT LEAST one pop up while catching up with The Bachelorette on Hulu.

You probably know which presidential candidate you're voting for this year. You've probably made up your mind about the Montana governor's race and

the U.S. House and Senate. But the farther down the ballot you go, the trickier it gets to keep up.

Like the state supreme court races or the ballot initiatives or your local senate and house district races, with candidates you might not have heard of yet — or haven't had the time, between classes and work, to research. And what about the third-party candidates up and down the ballot?

So we're doing something different this week. We've partnered with the UM School of Journalism's Community News Service to feature in-depth pieces about what those lawyer-speak ballot initiatives actually mean, who the non-partisan supreme court nominees are and what this year's third-party candidates stand for.

Our reporters spent the past week looking into Missoula's local elections, too, to give you the information you need about the senate and house races in your district, as well as every other district represented in Missoula.

We've put together this voter guide to help you make informed decisions about every race and issue on your Montana ballot. And if you're voting absentee or from a different Montana county or state, we hope this still gives you whatever extra boost you need to fill out that ballot and send it in. We hope all our readers can take something away from this coverage, because even if you don't vote here, you do live here for at least nine months out of the year and should know who's making

decisions on your behalf.

All of our usual coverage is available online, and we'll be back next week with a good ol' Halloween issue. But for now, let's take a minute to absorb the election coverage you need to cast that ballot — and do your dang civic duty by Nov. 3.

LIKE IT? HATE IT? WISH WE WERE DEAD?

Email us your opinions at editor@montanakaimin.com

FEATURE PHOTO



Vanessa Hoesl, right, and Ruby, 6, stand on Broadway Street in downtown Missoula, holding signs to passing cars during the socially-distant Women's March on Oct. 16, 2020. About 100 Missoulians lined Higgins Avenue holding signs about their chosen issues- voting, the Supreme Court, Planned Parenthood, the Presidential Election and, of course, Lamy being the best of all.

SARA DIGGINS | MONTANA KAIMIN

SUDOKU
Difficulty: Easy
Edited by Margie E. Burke

8	1	5						
	5					2		
	2		9	7		3		
					6			
	8	2		5	3	9		
	7			4			5	
1				3		5		
	6					8	9	
		8	7	1				

HOW TO SOLVE:
Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answers to Last Week's Sudoku:

8	1	4	7	5	3	6	2	9
7	6	3	2	4	9	5	8	1
2	5	9	8	1	6	3	7	4
1	2	5	4	9	7	8	3	6
4	3	6	5	8	2	1	9	7
9	7	8	6	3	1	4	5	2
6	9	1	3	2	5	7	4	8
5	4	2	1	7	8	9	6	3
3	8	7	9	6	4	2	1	5

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KAIMIN COMIC



COOPER MALIN | MONTANA KAIMIN

ICYMI

(In case you missed it)

The Women's March last Saturday, Oct. 17, was the second one of the year, organized after the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg:



Our local movie critic reviews "Evil Eye." His take? Stay-at-home cinema isn't a total bust:



Have you met UMPD's bomb dog yet? Ruger is marking his second year as an explosives detective dog, and also, a very good boy:



UM Catering is in charge of providing meals for students in quarantine due to COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have a University meal plan:

RENTER CENTER

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Blotter: cheesy cars, grizzly gunman and a busted bike thief

GRIFEN SMITH
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Since last week, UMPD has reported 16 crimes on and around campus. The most common crime was disorderly conduct, with three separate incidents on the same night. There were also a number of thefts, as usual.

10/11 WASHINGTON GRIZZLY GUNMAN

Two men, while charging a phone between the Adams Center and Washington Grizzly Stadium, were approached by a third man who became verbally aggressive and drew his gun. UMPD received the report and responded within one minute, their headquarters being just a couple hundred feet away. By that time, the suspect had started to run north toward the river. Officers confronted the gunman and arrested him without firing a shot. They charged him with assault with a weapon, two counts of aggravated assault and carrying a concealed weapon without a permit.

10/12 CHEESY CARS

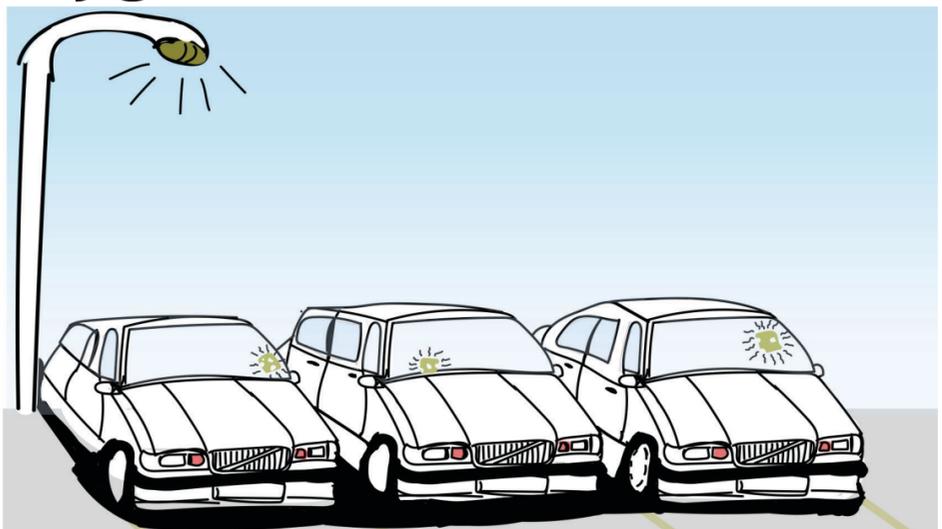
Students in parking lot "G" woke up to a confusing sight: one or more slices of cheese on their cars' front windows. At least six vehicles were targeted, and while the slices didn't do lasting damage, the cheesy culprit did bust the front bumper of a car while laying out his goods. According to UMPD, the cheese was velveeta.

10/13 DENY, DENY, DENY

RAs on night patrol in Pantzer Hall noticed the noxious odor of some, um, leafy greens oozing out of a resident's dorm room, and called it in to UMPD. When officers met the student at his door, he said he had not smoked anything. The officers disagreed, however, based on the fact that the resident appeared to be high—and his room smelled very dank. The resident received a referral for a law violation.

10/14 BUSTED BIKE THIEF

Remember the bike theft detailed in the blotter two weeks ago? Well, after that man watched an imposter ride his bike into the sunset, he reported a tip to UMPD, leading officers to an apartment in Uni-



COLTON ROTHWELL | MONTANA KAIMIN

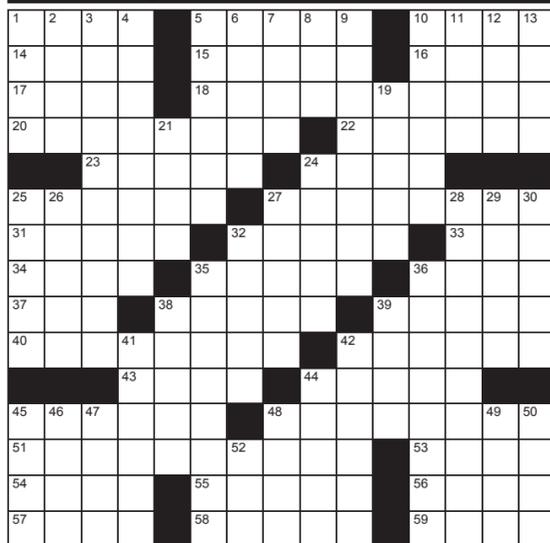
versity Villages. There, they found the suspected bike thief, who had thousands of dollars' worth of warrants on him. Inside the apartment were two stolen bikes, one of which had been reported taken in Nevada. There were multiple bike parts as well.

10/15 PARANOID

While practicing at Dornblaser Field, the UM men's soccer team ran into a man who was convinced that someone armed was hunting him down. The team barricaded itself in the locker room, and called UMPD. But dispatch mistaken-

ly informed the officers that the paranoid man was the one who was armed. (To clarify, no one had a gun but the officers.) After a short standoff, officers released the man. He told them that he had bought a bus ticket for Ohio, and UMPD gave him a ride to the Greyhound station.

The Weekly Crossword by Margie E. Burke



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ACROSS

- 1 Long story
- 5 Went out with
- 10 Drop a line?
- 14 Make a pitch
- 15 Fluid buildup
- 16 "Field of Dreams" setting
- 17 Like some vaccines
- 18 Of great importance
- 20 Log-in entry
- 22 Flexible
- 23 Sudden outpouring
- 24 Pesky insect
- 25 Solution for dry eyes
- 27 Masquerade
- 31 On the double
- 32 Cropped up
- 33 Slippery one
- 34 Outfielder's cry
- 35 Dentist's advice
- 36 Work the bleachers
- 37 Ill-behaved
- 38 Horse pill
- 39 Analyze grammar
- 40 Heeded an R.S.V.P.
- 42 Whodunit feature
- 43 Fighting force
- 44 4:1, e.g.
- 45 Poetic measure
- 48 Gilligan, for one
- 51 Not germane
- 53 Verne's captain
- 54 At hand
- 55 Durable fabric
- 56 Lump of dirt

- 57 Like venison's flavor
 - 58 Animal in a roundup
 - 59 Film feline
- DOWN**
- 1 Hit the mall
 - 2 That certain something
 - 3 Prairies, e.g.
 - 4 Pumpkin pie seasoning
 - 5 Knock down a peg
 - 6 Hold dear
 - 7 Care for
 - 8 Flightless bird
 - 9 Mildew cause
 - 10 Having limits
 - 11 Scintilla
 - 12 Origami bird
 - 13 "Stop right there!"

- 19 Make giddy
- 21 Drop off
- 24 "Ick!"
- 25 Brazilian dance
- 26 Beelike
- 27 Haughty
- 28 Worthless one
- 29 Have a feeling
- 30 Church leader
- 32 Back street
- 35 Lacking shape
- 36 Discrepancy
- 38 Green mineral
- 39 Golf shot
- 41 Overly diluted
- 42 Tony, to Jeannie
- 44 Cooktop
- 45 Minor damage
- 46 Vicinity
- 47 Study hard
- 48 Give a hoot
- 49 Singer Tori
- 50 Jedi guru
- 52 Chow checker

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

S	W	A	M	P	H	E	F	T	A	D	A	M
P	I	X	E	L	O	G	R	E	B	O	N	O
A	R	E	N	A	B	O	Y	S	C	O	U	T
R	E	S	O	N	A	N	T	I	D	B	I	T
		F	E	D	O	R	A	G	E	L		
B	R	O	W	O	B	I	T	S	S	E	C	T
R	E	V	A	M	P	O	T	S	B	O	O	
I	T	E	R	A	T	E	P	E	P	T	A	L
E	R	R	R	E	A	L	P	A	R	S	E	E
S	O	C	K	D	R	E	S	S	A	S	S	N
		H	I	S	N	A	T	I	O	N		
S	H	A	P	E	R	D	I	N	O	S	A	U
T	A	R	P	A	U	L	I	N	Z	E	B	R
U	R	G	E	H	A	N	G	E	C	L	A	T
B	E	E	R	O	S	Y	S	T	Y	L	E	

What each of the signs is doing on (or before) election day

ADDIE SLANGER
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NAT BRANCACCIO | MONTANA KAIMIN

Welcome to the voting issue of the Kaimin! If you came right to the horoscope, we're guessing that election news maybe isn't your thing? But even the stars (and we know a thing or two about the stars) are in agreement on this: It has never been more important to vote! So do it! Here's how you'll be doing it on (or before) Nov. 3.

LIBRA (SEP. 23-OCT. 22): Voting (and posting an Instagram boomerang of your sticker while giving a thumbs-up with freshly manicured nails).

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): Voting (and getting stuck in a 30-minute conversation with your mom after you called to remind her to send your ballot from home. Maybe you should call home more often, Scorpio).

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 22): Voting (after surviving a mini-heart attack and spilling coffee and/or pasta sauce on your ballot).

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23-JAN. 19): Voting (and pestering your roommates every day until they go drop off their ballots, too).

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): Voting (and judging Libras and Leos for posting Insta stories of their I VOTED sticker).

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): Voting (after getting cut off in line at the drive-in ballot drop-off and feeling so flustered that you drop your ballot in that little crack between the center console and the

driver's seat. You know, the crack of doom into which your phone fell last week?)

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): Voting (after cutting someone off in line at the ballot drop off and being annoyed because it was YOUR TURN and they weren't paying attention).

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): Voting (complete with a five-step plan that includes the coffee place you'll stop by afterward).

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20): Voting (and hoping you run into your cute next-door neighbor at the mailboxes of the apartment complex. You have a whole conversation planned, complete with a contingency flowchart, just in case).

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): Voting (while judging that family-stick-figure bumper sticker on the car in line in front of you. You're also judging Libras and Leos for their social media, let's be clear. The theme of this is judgment).

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): Voting (and just maybe selling yourself to groups asking for sponsored #ads on Instagram to promote voter awareness. Hey, you worked hard to gain a following on Insta, right? Why shouldn't you reap some benefits?).

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 22): Voting (but in ~ pastel pink ~).

THE KAIMIN'S MISSOULA 2020 ELECTION GUIDE

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After over a year of campaigning, the 2020 election is right around the corner. This set of stories will focus on the candidates that will directly affect voters in Missoula. From house districts (HD) to senate districts (SD) (and even a mill levy affecting public transportation), we've got you covered.

This election cycle is like nothing voters have dealt with in the past, thanks to the coronavirus pandemic. For the first time in Montana's election history, 46 of the 56 counties will vote exclusively by mail. Missoula County has allowed for a mail-in option, but voters wishing to participate in-person can go to the county election office.

Each of these stories will cover the patchwork of districts that slice through Missoula County. From SD 7, which includes portions of Missoula, Mineral and Flathead counties, all the way to HD 100, which sits neatly between Orchard Homes and the University District.



HD99: David "Doc" Moore vs. Mark Thane

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House District 99, which primarily covers the Miller Creek area of South Missoula, features a previous state representative and a former superintendent of Missoula County Public Schools. Mark Thane, a Democrat and the most recent superintendent of MCPS, is running against David "Doc" Moore, a Republican.

Moore worked as a state representative in House District 92 from 2012 to 2014. He then lost races in District 100 in 2016 and in District 89 in 2018. According to his website, Moore prioritized personal freedom and a living wage job.

However, in the 2015 legislature Moore authored a bill attempting to make any nipple piercing exposure, from men and women, "indecent exposure," and also said after the bill hearing that yoga pants should be banned as well. The bill ultimately failed in committee.

Thane worked at MCPS for over 20 years. He said he decided to retire from that position last year to focus on running for this house seat. He stood behind expanding the Montana Health and Human Services budget, and said his education background will help him make decisions.

"I will prioritize a quality education plan for Montana," Moore said. "Having a good educated workforce makes a good economy."

Both candidates supported Medicaid expansion, are pro-choice and are looking to help relieve the shortage of housing in Missoula County. A September report by the Missoulian found there was a nearly zero percent vacancy rate among renters in the city.

David "Doc" Moore did not respond to an email for comment.



Missoula County Elections Administrator Bradley Seaman sorts ballots into one of 73 different boxes during ballot processing at the Missoula County Elections Office on Oct. 16, 2020. Since each of the ballots are slightly different, they must be sorted before counting. SARA DIGGINS | MONTANA KAIMIN

HD 95: Danny Tenebaum vs. Rebecca Dawson

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Two political newcomers, Danny Tenebaum, Democrat, and Rebecca Dawson, Republican, are battling to represent House District 95, which spans Missoula's Westside, Riverfront and River Road neighborhoods.

Tenebaum is a public defender in Missoula who has been endorsed by organizations like Sunrise Missoula and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Montana. Because of his role as a public defender, Tenebaum is passionate about justice reform, including restructuring cash bail programs that depend on "predatory fees and fines that disproportionately [punish] the poor," according to his website.

Tenebaum acknowledged racial disparities within the criminal justice system. He told the Missoulian he supports the Green New Deal and protecting public lands. Tenebaum said he will fight for additional funding for higher education, and

believes public funding should support free college tuition. He also said he will fight for affordable housing in Missoula through state investments and by changing zoning regulations so more multi-family housing can be built rather than blocked.

On her website Dawson stated she is running to "promote common sense ideas, educational choices and workable solutions." Dawson told the Missoulian she believes people are being "crushed" by taxes, and fiscal responsibility should return to the government, not taxpayers. Dawson also believes funding for higher education should fall on the university, not taxpayers. She believes universities like UM should see where they can cut costs, rather than putting a tax burden on locals.

When asked by the Missoulian what should be done to help UM in its enrollment crisis, Dawson said the University should focus on offering more online options to reduce operating costs. Dawson said while it is important to invest in clean energy options in Montana, it is also important to acknowledge the importance of fossil fuels to Montana's economy.

Neither candidate was reached for comment.

HD 91: Connie Keogh vs. Bethanie Calvert Wanberg

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House District 91, which covers the Lower Rattlesnake and the eastside of the University District, features Democratic incumbent Connie Keogh and Republican challenger Bethanie Calvert Wanberg.

Keogh won her first term as a state representative in 2018. She won a four-way race in the 2018 Democratic primary before winning against her Republican opponent in the general election.

This year, Keogh ran unopposed in the primary, and received 100% of the votes cast. In her first term as a state legislator, she served on the Agriculture Committee, Education Committee and Judiciary Committee. She was the primary sponsor for six bills in the 2019 legislative session, but only two of these passed votes in the House and Senate. Keogh is currently serving on the interim Education Committee.

Her website emphasizes a bipartisan approach when it comes to education, and her desire to focus on environmental issues as well.

Wanberg, Keogh's Republican challenger, also ran unopposed in her primary this year, earning 100% of votes from Republicans in her district.

Wanberg is currently the vice president at Wanberg and Associates-ISC, a local business that has been operating out of Missoula for over 20 years. Wanberg and Associates provides private investigative services, networking with retired FBI agents.

Wanberg's husband, Gary, is also running for election against Democratic incumbent Katie Sullivan in House District 89.

Keogh won 84.2% of District 91's vote in 2018. This year in primary elections for House District 91, 3,390 votes were cast for the Democratic primary, and 543 were cast in the Republican primary.



HD 89: Katie Sullivan vs. Gary Wanberg

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The race for House District 89, which covers the South Hills and parts of Highway 93, is between Democratic incumbent Katie Sullivan and her Republican opponent Gary Wanberg. Both HD 89 and SD 45 cover the same area and are both districts up for election this year.

As the incumbent for HD 89, Sullivan was elected in the 2018 midterms. Sullivan won nearly 50% of the vote in a four-way race for the Democratic nomination, before winning the general election against her Republican opponent.

Sullivan is a graduate from the University of Montana, and earned both a degree in Human Biology and a Juris Doctorate from UM. She also earned a Masters of Law degree from the University of Colorado.

Sullivan ran unopposed in the primary this year, earning 100% of the votes cast in the Democratic primary. In her first term in Montana's House of Representatives, she sat on the Business and Labor Committee, Agriculture Committee, Energy, Technology and Federal Relations Committee and the Rules Committee. She sponsored seven bills in the 2019 legislative session, four of which passed in the state's House and Senate.

Wanberg also ran unopposed in his primary earlier this year, earning 100% of the vote. Wanberg is a University of Montana



MontPIRG interns Sam Cittadini and Summer Romo stand by a MontPIRG ballot drop box on Oct. 15, 2020. EMMA SMITH | MONTANA KAIMIN

graduate and the President of Wanberg and Associates-ISC, which provides private investigative services and has been operating in the Missoula community for over 20 years.

His business's website states that, "... we are networked with retired FBI agents and others in law enforcement and private investigation throughout the United States and abroad."

Wanberg's wife, Bethanie Calvert Wanberg, is the Vice President of Wanberg and Associates, and is running against the Democratic incumbent Connie Keogh in the race for House District 91.



HD 90: Marilyn Marler vs. Lana Hamilton

HANNA CAMPBELL
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The Montana House of Representatives current member Marilyn Marler is running for her second term against Lana Hamilton for House District 90, which covers Missoula's southside.

Marler is the Democratic candidate for HD 90 and a current professor at UM in the Division of Biological Sciences. During an interview with the Kaimin, she said one of the most important ideas on her agenda if she were to be elected for a second term is to give local governments more control of taxation. Montana communities have very different sources of income, and Marler stated that it is important that each community decide for itself how to tax.

She also heavily emphasized the importance of science-based conservation efforts. Marler said there have been many occasions where people have made statements lacking scientific evidence on the subject of conservation, and one of her main goals is to provide her scientific expertise for the Montana House of Representatives.

"I was shocked by how little value people place on science," she said.

In an interview with the Missoulian, Marler said her first priority for the Missoula community if she is elected is housing. She said she will advocate for more state funding for affordable housing and property tax alternatives.

Hamilton could not be reached for comment.



HD 94: Tom France vs. Karen Sherman

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First-time Montana House of Representatives candidates Tom France, a Democrat, and Karen Sherman, a Republican, are running for office in District 94, which encompasses the Upper Rattlesnake and north of I-90.

According to France's campaign website, he intends to focus strongly on maintaining access to public lands, renewable energy and affordable healthcare.

In an interview with the Missoulian, France said his first priority if elected will be to provide affordable housing by supporting decisions to give tax credit to developers who provide affordable housing. He also emphasized the importance of obtaining state funding for the Montana University System.

Sherman took the place of former candidate Kelsey Cooley, who dropped out of the race after enrolling at the University of Montana Law School.

When asked about state funding for higher education by the Missoulian, Sherman said she believes funding for universities should not be increased. She instead advocated for the current funding to be looked at and reprioritized. Sherman also said in her interview she believes the government should not be very involved in providing affordable housing, but should lower property taxes and regulations.

She said Montana has to pay more attention to responsible logging techniques to protect the environment.

Neither France nor Sherman responded to the Kaimin for an interview.

HD 96: Loni Conley vs. Kathy Whitman

ALEX MILLER

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House District 96, which slices through the heart of Missoula and down highway I-90 to Huson, features Democrat Loni Conley and Republican Kathy Whitman vying for the Montana State House of Representatives seat.

Rep. Tom Winter will be vacating the seat, after an attempt to represent Montana in the U.S. House collapsed in the primaries.

First time candidate Conley, who works as both a mental health nurse and as a case investigator for COVID-19, said healthcare for Missoulians is a top priority.

“I want to keep Medicaid expansion and the ACA [Affordable Care Act] for Montanans,” Conley said. “Also, as a mental health nurse, there are a lot of barriers and red tape with access to mental health I want to address.”

Conley said she also wants to keep housing affordable and attainable for Missoulians. According to realtor.com, the median price for home listings in Missoula, as of Sept. 2020, is over \$369,000 dollars. The median household income, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2018, is just over \$51,000.

Whitman is also a first time candidate. In a Q&A interview with the Missoulian in May, she touched on topics surrounding affordable housing, state funding for higher education and public lands access. Much of Whitman’s core message in her answers revolved around keeping taxes low for Missoulians.

“We have to be smart about spending your tax dollars, while advancing education, public safety and infrastructure,” Whitman’s mission statement on her website said.

Whitman could not be reached for comment.



HD 98: Wills Curdy vs. Nancy Burgoyne

CLINT CONNORS

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House District 98, which encompasses a portion of Orchard Homes and stretches down South Reserve street, features a fight between incumbent Willis Curdy, a Democrat, and Nancy Burgoyne, a Republican.

Curdy is an alum of UM. He supported expanding Medicaid, increasing employment for veterans and freezing tuition for college students in his 2016 campaign. When asked about UM’s 40% enrollment drop in an interview for the Missoulian, he said students should be provided more financial aid. This, he said, would give high schoolers who are concerned about loans more incentive to enroll.

Republican Nancy Burgoyne is a Salt Lake City native and a political science professor at Miles City Community College and Montana State University Billings.

Burgoyne’s website includes a petition to prevent Montana from defunding the police. Other policies listed in her platform included protection of Montanan’s rights to public land and opposing property tax increases.

Richard L. Armerding is a U.S. Army veteran. He has served on public committees in Rohnert Park, California, and was a legislative intern for the Hawaii State Senate.

Amerding’s website says he is against state-funded student aid and affordable housing. He instead suggested cutting government aid to colleges to decrease enrollment costs and providing tax incentives for contractors. On Ballotopedia’s Candidate Connection survey, Amerding stated, “Taxation is theft; if it were not, the tax courts would allow reference to the U.S. Constitution.”



A voter hands a ballot to an elections official at the drive-through ballot drop-off in front of the Missoula County Elections Office on Oct. 16,

2020. SARA DIGGINS | MONTANA KAIMIN

HD 100: Andrea Olsen vs. Carol Minjares

MEGHAN JONAS

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Democrat incumbent Andrea Olsen faces off with former attorney Carol Minjares, a Republican, in the race for House District 100, which sits between Orchard Homes and the University District, stretching from Franklin to Rose Park.

Olsen has represented her district since 2015. She currently sits on the business and labor committee, the agriculture committee and the energy, technology and federal relations committee in the Montana State Legislature.

Olsen’s platform supports quality education, jobs and healthcare. She also supports providing clean air and water, and access to public lands and locally-grown food. When asked by the Missoulian about the current state of higher education in Montana and how she would support students, Olsen said it is vital to lower the cost of college tuition by increasing student loan options, scholarships and teaching assistantships. She also said that universities should receive more public funding. Olsen told the Missoulian the state should sponsor more affordable public housing options.

Minjares received her Juris Doctorate, as well as a bachelor’s degree in history, from the University of Montana. She previously ran for a seat in the House of Representatives in 2006 and 2008.

She told the Missoulian that UM should cut costs by getting rid of diversity and inclusion officers, and also said the current recession would increase enrollment.

Minjares supports fossil fuels because she believes they provide jobs for Montanans. She said she believes the biggest problems facing her district’s constituents are the dwindling economy, as well as addressing issues with beetle kill and brush thinning in the “cluttered forests” on Montana state land.

Neither candidate was reached for comment.

SD 45: Ellie Hill vs. Susan Reneau vs. Nolen Skime

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The South Hills of Missoula, and portions of highway 93, are represented by Senate District 45. This race is home to a three-way slugfest between Democrat Ellie Hill Smith, Republican Susan Reneau and Libertarian Nolen Skime.

Dick Barrett, the current senator for SD 45, is unable to run because he hit his eight-year term limit.

Smith, a former representative for House District 90, said she entered into politics after seeing the intersection between mental illness, substance abuse and the criminal justice system while serving as the executive director of the Poverello Center. Smith is also a lawyer practicing in Missoula with a background in criminal defense, family law and civil rights cases.

Smith said the number one problem facing Missoula is COVID-19 and wants to ensure everyone wears a mask and gets kids back to school.

Climate change, affordable housing and criminal justice reform are Smith’s top priorities in her campaign.

This election cycle is Reneau’s first time running for public office. She is a former elementary school teacher and journalist who has written several books on big game hunting. Reneau describes herself as pro-business and a staunch supporter of public lands.

She said the number one issue her constituents face is affordable living, especially for those at or near retirement age on a fixed income.

Reneau’s focus is on keeping taxes low, while still being able to maintain infrastructure needs like road construction.

Skime participated in a Q&A with the Missoulian in April. The candidate’s core message revolved around the increase in funding either locally or on the state level for affordable housing, student tuition and public lands access.

Skime could not be reached for comment.

SD 46: Shannon O’Brien vs. Niki Sardot

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For nearly 20,000 residents in Senate District 46, two new candidates emerged for this election, each vying for support in the district containing East Missoula, the Rattlesnake and the Clearwater and Swan valleys.

Shannon O’Brien, a Democrat, faces Niki Sardot, a Republican. Both candidates have a background in K-12 education. Sardot is focused on property rights, while O’Brien is prioritizing public schools.

O’Brien, a former dean of Missoula College, also worked in early education centers.

“One of the primary reasons I’m running is that at the state level, over one quarter of our state budget goes toward education,” O’Brien said. “We need strong representation from people who have a background perspective in education, and I have done that extensive policy work.”

Sardot, a former state senator in Ravalli County who moved to Missoula, stood against zoning regulations she saw in local areas like Missoula.

“I’m on top of things to protect people’s property rights and any other rights that are being violated by bills that are creeping in the state legislature,” Sardot said.

Sardot criticized the Montana Wildland Urban Interference Act, which restricts what property owners can do in certain zones deemed wildlife sensitive. She also authored and passed a bill in the 2019 legislature that deregulated zoning rules in areas claimed to be a part of the Urban Interference Act.

The Senate District 46 seat is currently held by Democrat Sue Malek, who reached her eight-year term limit.



SD 7: Diane Magone vs. Bob Brown

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Montana’s Senate District 7 represents Sanders and Mineral counties as well as parts of Missoula and Flathead counties. The seat’s current holder, Jennifer Fielder, has hit her term limit.

Bob Brown, a Republican, is one of the people running for the seat.

In his three terms as a member of the Montana State House of Representatives, Brown has sat on the House Judiciary, Natural Resources, and Fish, Wildlife and Parks committees. As the chair of the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee during the 2019 legislative session, Brown sponsored several bills that both lowered the price and increased access to out-of-state hunters for wolf hunting licenses.

Diane Magone, a Democrat, is Brown’s opponent. Magone graduated from UM with a degree in social work in the late ‘80s. She said that she is running for office because of a growing concern for her district’s economy. A five-year survey conducted by the Montana Census and Economic Information Center shows that median household income in Sanders and Mineral counties is less than \$42,300. Median household income in Montana is just over \$52,500 according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

She said bringing more recreation opportunities to the district would be a good place to start.

Magone said she would work to reduce the cost of higher education by advocating for allowing high school students to take college classes, and passing legislation to permanently approve the 6-mill levy. The 6-mill levy is a Missoula property tax which funds the University. She also said she would like to see more support for vocational schools and apprenticeships.

Bob Brown could not be reached for comment.

SD 47: Chase Porter Gay vs. Daniel

Salomon vs. Devin Braaten

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Senate District 47, which stretches from Missoula County and across Lake County, features a three-way race. Incumbent Daniel Salomon, a Republican, will be defending his seat from Democrat Chase Porter Gay and Libertarian Devin Braaten.

Salomon, a member of the Montana State Senate since 2017, said the biggest issue that he and members of the legislature are facing is the COVID-19 pandemic.

Confusion on what the federal government will do for states when it comes to another stimulus bill has left Salomon and his peers unsure of the next steps for Montanans.

“And it comes down to ‘can we give anybody some help?’” Salomon said. “Those questions aren’t completely answered because we aren’t sure exactly what the feds are going to do.”

Braaten, a first-time candidate, wants a less invasive government, allowing people to make their own decisions both socially and economically without government interference. That platform bleeds into Braaten’s stance on government involvement with COVID-19 guidelines.

“At this point, it is of people’s own free will and volition to go out and do, and go, where they want to be,” Braaten said. “People should be able to make that choice without government infringement to do what they want to do.”

In a September Q&A with the Missoulian, Gay touched on climate change as well as state-provided funding for UM. Gay said that the legislature should take a strong stance in providing financial help to the University, which the Kaimin reported as having an enrollment decrease of 4.5% from last fall’s numbers.

Chase Porter Gay could not be reached for comment.

Mountain Line mill levy increase

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Mountain Line buses may be free to ride, but they still need money to operate.

Mountain Line’s primary income is from a city-wide, all-encompassing property tax called a mill levy. This election, Mountain Line is asking property owners for an increase to the tax to raise an additional \$3 million. The new tax will add 35% to its budget.

The current mill levy provides 65% of Mountain Line’s operating budget. The rest is mostly federal funding.

With the proposed increase, Mountain Line will have buses out for longer and will add Sunday bus routes. The money will also help Mountain Line achieve its goal of having all electric buses by 2035, and according to Mountain Line, will add over a dozen jobs in Missoula.

Shanti Johnson, communications and outreach marketing specialist at Mountain Line, said in an email that the change will be a boon for Missoula residents.

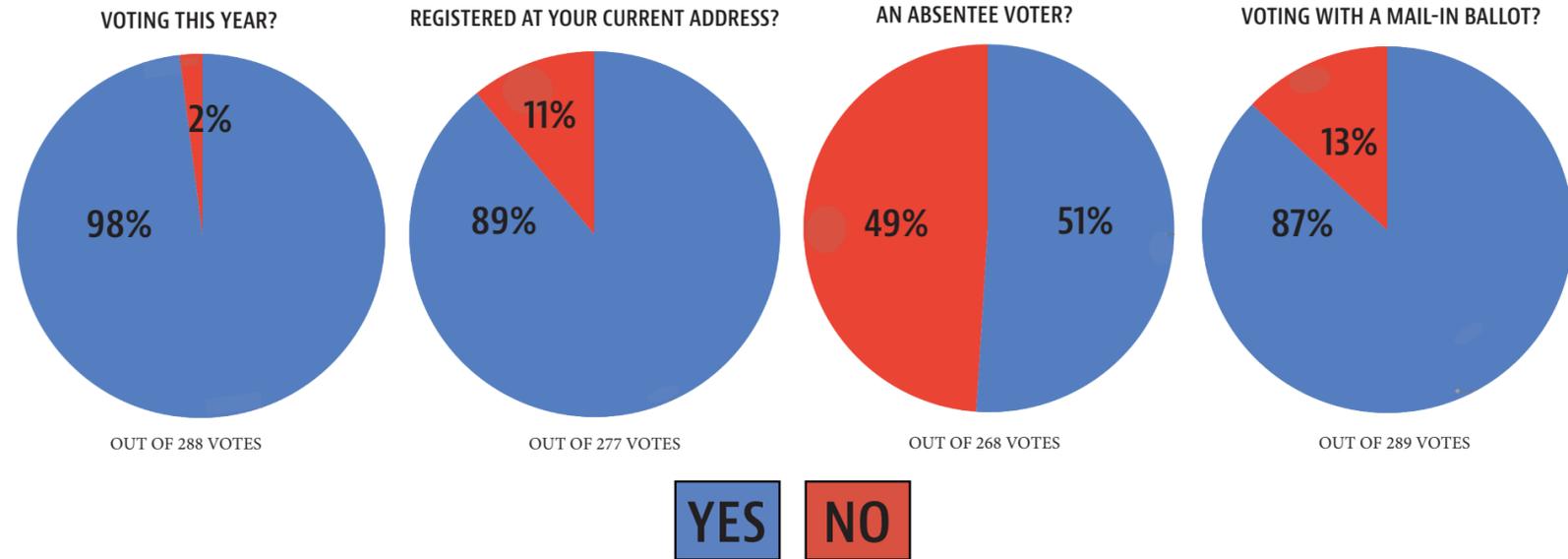
“I believe the existing benefits of public transportation to our community will only be amplified, which benefits us all,” Johnson said.

This is the second time the bus service has asked for an increase to the mill levy. The first was in 2013, when Mountain Line asked for a \$1.7 million increase in tax funding. That initiative passed. Mountain line used those funds to add late night service for some routes, increase access for seniors and people with disabilities and add another bus line.

BALLOT DROP-OFF LOCATIONS: OPEN		
7 A.M. TO 8 P.M ON ELECTION DAY		
ONLY		
 Clearwater Credit Union (Reserve Street)	 McCormick Park	 Seeley Lake Elementary School
 Clinton Community Center	 Missoula Early Learning Center	 Spring Meadows Fire Station
 Frenchtown Fire Station	 Missoula Fairgrounds	 University of Montana - Adams Center
 Lolo Elementary School	 Potomac-Greenough Communication Center	 Missoula Elections office on Russell Street (Open weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. starting Oct 5.)

We ran a poll on our Instagram last weekend to get a feel for how our audience is voting and this is what you told us:

ARE YOU...



YES NO

VOTE ON CAMPUS

Tuesday, October 27th

at the Adams Center from 9am to 5pm
get your questions answered, register to vote
or drop off your ballot on-campus



For more information about voting,
visit voteinMT.org or call 406-888-VOTE



MONTPIRG

Third party voices struggle to be heard after Green Party fight

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The fight over a Republican-funded effort to qualify the Green Party for the ballot in Montana is the latest chapter in the long-running debate over whether third parties can be a serious alternative or are stuck in the role of spoiler.

Democrats successfully sued to kick the Green Party off this year's ballot after many who signed a petition to qualify the environmental party asked to have their signatures removed once it became known that Republicans had spent \$100,000 to sign people up.

It is the latest episode of major parties using minor parties in an electoral system where a third option is more likely to spoil a major candidate's run than provide a real alternative.

"The system we have in place really tends toward two parties," Carroll College political scientist Jeremy Johnson said. "That's not a great answer if you don't feel at home in either party."

Johnson said the American winner-takes-all system leads major parties to absorb as many smaller groups as possible.

This remains the case, despite the recent rise of populism, according to Jim Messina, who served as campaign manager for President Barack Obama's 2012 reelection and now runs campaigns around the globe. He said populist movements in other countries have fueled the growth of third, fourth and even fifth major parties.

Since the American system has all but locked out third parties, political insiders "just see them as inconsequential," Messina said, adding that they are often a means to siphon votes away from one candidate or the other.

One of the most high-profile cases of that siphoning came in 2012, when a liberal group supporting Democratic Sen. Jon Tester's reelection spent more than \$900,000 in television ads to promote the Libertarian candidate in an effort to hurt Republican Denny Rehberg. That year, the Libertarian won 6.6% of the vote, more than Tester's margin of victory.

In the last decade, third parties and independents have averaged about 4.5% of

the vote in statewide races. That excludes Libertarian Mike Fellows' 43% haul for the position of state supreme court clerk in 2012, a race that did not have a Republican candidate.

In this year's fight over the Greens, Republicans said they tried to give voters more options, while Democrats called the effort misleading and asked people who signed the petition to withdraw their signatures. The Montana Commissioner of Political Practices ruled that Republican efforts broke campaign finance law, which the party disputes. The state supreme court subsequently ruled that unauthorized groups cannot put a party on the ballot.

The back and forth this year has left the Greens trying to catch up with their own ballot status. Adrien Wagner, acting state coordinator for the Montana Green Party, said he first heard a couple reports of signature gatherers in early February.

Wagner said the party was not involved in signature gathering and had no contact with candidates, except those for state senate and attorney general, whom it had planned to endorse. He said the Democrats' lawyers "chose to willfully misinterpret how it was stated on our Facebook page" to argue against the whole slate.

Wagner officially stepped in as the Green Party's acting coordinator last May and has had to balance the party's desire for ballot access and independence.

"This one caught us off guard. It's not the way that we want to get (ballot) access," Wagner said, though the party still wanted at least its presidential candidate on the ballot. "Yes, it was a Republican-led effort. That doesn't mean that we don't deserve a voice."

Michael O'Neil, communications manager for the national Green Party, echoed Wagner's frustration, saying ballot access has turned into a partisan game at a time when voters crave more choice.

The Libertarian Party is already qualified for the ballot, but it faced at least one other recent challenge. In 2016, the then-Republican state chairman unsuccessfully requested to remove Roger Roots, the Libertarian for secretary of state, from the ballot—over campaign-filing issues.

Roots, an attorney, has run



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unsuccessfully as a Libertarian for several offices in recent years and is running this year for state auditor, Montana's watchdog for insurance and securities.

Roots served as a volunteer paralegal for Ryan Bundy, one of 26 people charged in connection with the 2016 armed takeover of a wildlife refuge in Oregon, The Oregonian first reported. Roots has a criminal record, including resisting arrest, violating probation and possession of an unregistered firearm. He said he hasn't spent a night in jail in 25 years and, if elected, would focus on investigating the government as a tireless advocate for individual liberty.

The Libertarian candidate for governor and CEO of Hoplite Armor, Lyman Bishop, has argued that federal ownership of land in Montana is unconstitutional and is focused on protecting Second Amendment rights.

Kevin Leatherbarrow, the Libertarian

candidate for superintendent of public instruction, runs Go and Grow tutoring center and said he is frustrated with the education system. He supports school choice and more funding for special education.

One Libertarian candidate for state house, independent Doug Campbell, previously ran for office as a Green and said both parties can offer an appealing alternative.

"The Green Party and the Libertarian Party really have a lot in common as far as non-intervention in foreign policy, providing individuals with all of the constitutional rights and not corporations, and getting corruption out of the system," Campbell said.

Campbell said he thinks a lack of third parties leads people to not vote at all.



Montana Supreme Court Justice Laurie McKinnon in Helena on Sept. 2, 2020. McKinnon is the incumbent in the race for the fifth seat in the Montana Supreme Court.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO, SARA DIGGINS | COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE | UM SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM



Montana Supreme Court fifth seat candidate Mike Black in Missoula on Sept. 7, 2020.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO, SARA DIGGINS | COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE | UM SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

Justice and challenger square off in Montana Supreme Court race

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Eight months ago, Laurie McKinnon wasn't sure she'd be running for re-election to Montana's Supreme Court. Now, as the Nov. 3 election looms, she's facing competition from Mike Black, a Helena-based attorney.

Justice McKinnon grew up in Maryland, earning a law degree from the University of Baltimore. She has lived and raised her three children in Montana since 1995, and worked as a deputy county attorney for Teton County and a special county attorney for Glacier County for 10 years. In 2006, she was elected as a local district judge, serving for six years before winning a seat on Montana's Supreme Court.

At the 2020 campaign's start, McKinnon decided not to seek re-election, in part because her husband had recently taken a job with a North Carolina health clinic. Now he's back in Montana, where the two plan to remain.

"Being a judge is a privilege," McKinnon said. "And I've enjoyed it very much."

Black was born in Havre, Montana, and earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Montana. He received his law degree from New York's Cornell University and returned to Montana, working as a partner at two firms before starting his own. He was litigation director for the Montana Legal Services Association, which represents low-income Montanans. He has also been an assistant

attorney general under AGs Steve Bullock and Tim Fox.

attorney general under AGs Steve Bullock and Tim Fox.

"I have an experience growing up in Montana, and being a historian by nature helps to understand things like the 1972 Montana Constitution with a little bit of context," he said.

Montana's nonpartisan Supreme Court elections are often-overlooked races. Rules of judicial ethics prevent candidates from talking about existing or pending cases, so experience, past decisions and associations are important.

In June's three-way primary to determine November's candidates, McKinnon won 53% of the votes while Black finished second with 30%.

McKinnon said her experience on the high court is why voters should give her another term. She said serving as a district judge and justice gives her an advantage over Black, who has no judicial experience.

But Black argued his experience in Montana courts qualified him for the race, and criticized McKinnon's consistency and her readings of Montana constitutional protections in areas like public access.

He cited a 2018 McKinnon dissent in an easement case that would have prevented the state from acquiring land on an eastern Montana ranch for conservation purposes. The Montana Land Board had declined to approve the easement, but Gov. Steve Bullock overrode the decision to allow the purchase. In her dissent, McKinnon argued the Land Board should have the final say. She was the lone dissenter.

Black also pointed to a 2015 dissent where McKinnon opposed the Court's majority

decision allowing public access to a section of the Ruby River in southwest Montana.

McKinnon argued Black did not understand the specifics of the cases in the context they were presented to the Supreme Court.

"I would say that Mr. Black probably has not understood the opinion," McKinnon said. "When somebody accuses a justice of making a political decision, it's because they don't understand the process of making that decision."

McKinnon has written for the majority in key cases, as well. In 2018, McKinnon authored the Supreme Court's decision to strike down a tax credit benefiting private, religious schools in Montana. Conservatives appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court where it was overturned this year, 5-4.

McKinnon said she felt the federal court crossed the line into states' rights in that decision.

"I think they were wrong," she said. "That decision was an interpretation of the Montana Constitution."

McKinnon won her first Supreme Court term in 2012. In that election, a group called the Montana Growth Network, a conservative political action committee headed by Republican state Sen. Jason Priest of Red Lodge, sponsored attack ads critical of McKinnon's opponent.

Critics claimed these ads were funded by "dark money," or untraceable donations. University of Montana constitutional and elections law professor Anthony Johnstone said

then that in judicial races, these independent expenditures can dominate the campaigns.

McKinnon, who denounced the ads at the time, said the controversy factored into her initial reluctance to seek reelection this year. She said the ads weren't a reflection of who she is and how she decides cases, adding that it's been hard to overcome claims to the contrary.

"That's been hard to live with," she said, "because (the attack ads were) not an accurate statement about who I was as a person. I didn't want to go through it again. I wanted to run another term, but I didn't want to take the personal risk."

As of early September, little dark money has appeared in this year's lower-profile races, though it's behind the issue-based ads in the U.S. Senate, House and governor's race. Both Supreme Court candidates are relying on donations from individuals. Such contributions are strictly limited, but they do reflect support.

Notable donors to McKinnon include U.S. Congressman Greg Gianforte and his wife, Susan. On Black's side, former mayors of Missoula Mike Kadas and Daniel Kemmis have donated to his campaign, along with retired Missoula District Court judge Karen Townsend.

Black has been endorsed by five retired Supreme Court justices: James Nelson, Terry Trieweiler, Mike Wheat, William Leaphart, and Jim Regnier. A letter signed by all five said Black was "eminently qualified" for the court and has earned statewide respect from Montana's legal community.

McKinnon has not listed endorsements on her website as of September.

LR-130: Firearms and local governments

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So, here's the question: How much power should local governments have to regulate firearms or prevent their possession by felons, minors, undocumented immigrants or people judged mentally incompetent?

Not much, according to backers of Legislative Referendum 130, the ballot measure sent to voters by Montana lawmakers last session.

Specifically, Legislative Referendum 130 asks voters to remove local governments' power to regulate the carrying of concealed firearms – or to restrict the open carry of firearms – except in public buildings within a government's jurisdiction.

The measure would also repeal local governments' authority to prevent the possession of firearms by convicted felons, minors, undocumented immigrants and/or people judged to be mentally incompetent. The measure doesn't affect other federal or state firearms restrictions about such possession.

The question is being put to voters by the Montana Legislature after Gov. Steve Bullock vetoed a bill last session that would have accomplished much the same thing.

At the time, Bullock said Montana law had long protected "our basic right to keep and bear arms" while trusting local governments to decide "whether the mentally ill may bring guns into schools, or whether a local government can permit concealed weapons."

LR-130 sprang from the passage of a 2016 Missoula city ordinance that would have required that all gun sales within the city limits, including private sales, be subject to background checks. After changes and court fights, the Montana Supreme Court ruled the ordinance unconstitutional last year.

Second Amendment advocates saw the controversy as a step toward a greater patchwork of differing gun control restrictions across the state. Gary Marbut, president of the Montana Shooting Sports Association, was one of the ballot issue's architects.

He said that Montana already has a preemption law that, when boiled down, effectively prohibits local governments from regulating guns.

"All local governments are creatures of the state," Marbut said. "LR-130 reinforces the restriction in the Montana Constitution on our right to keep and bear arms."

Concerns have been raised about the wording of LR-130. Shortly after its legislative



DAYLIN SCOTT | MONTANA KAIMIN

approval, opponents challenged the referendum's language, but Montana's Supreme Court ruled that LR-130 would appear as is.

Opponents of the measure include the Montana School Boards Association, led by executive director Lance Melton. His organization worries that the measure could make it impossible for schools to regulate the possession of weapons on school grounds, such as parking lots.

"If school districts are construed to be local governments, then it could potentially usurp their authority to regulate the possession of weapons on school campuses outside of school buildings," Melton said.

Despite such opposition, proponents of the ballot measure are confident LR-130 will pass. State Rep. Matt Regier, a Columbia Falls Republican, sponsored the original legislation. He is confident Montanans will pass it, he said, because it would lessen confusion on concealed

carry regulations across the state.

One of the main functions of the ballot initiative, Regier said, is to provide uniformity across Montana for concealed carry permit holders.

"I myself am a concealed carry permit holder, and we want to follow the law," he said. "If every city and every county has a different ordinance, it would be impossible to even drive across the state."

But the sponsor of the stricken Missoula ordinance, Missoula City Council President Bryan von Lossberg, said LR-130 would limit local officials' power to serve their communities.

"LR-130 is an attack on freedom," von Lossberg said. "My job as a local official is to act in the interest of the public safety, well-being and welfare of my constituents. This initiative makes that job much harder to do because it eviscerates local control."

because it would lessen confusion on concealed

Pair of measures would legalize marijuana in Montana

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COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

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Marijuana is back on the ballot for the third time in the last five election cycles. But this year, Montanans will decide for the first time whether to follow states like Colorado and Washington in legalizing use for all adults.

The issue comes in the form of complementary ballot initiatives I-190 and CI-118. I-190 creates the rules for a recreational marijuana system in Montana, including a 20% tax. It also allows each county the option to prohibit dispensaries in their county.

CI-118 would amend the Montana Constitution to allow the state to set the minimum buying age to 21. If both pass, Montana would join 10 other states and the District of Columbia in legalizing recreational marijuana.

New Approach Montana, a group founded in January 2019 by Montana political veterans Ted Dick and Pepper Petersen, is running the pro-legalization effort. After seeing a decline of tax revenue from previous economic drivers like energy production and mining, the two men asked Montana's Office of Budget and Program Planning to study the economic benefits of legalized marijuana. The office estimated that retail taxes on recreational marijuana could generate upward of \$38.5 million a year by 2025.

"This is a substantial amount of funding," Petersen said, adding that the next steps were clear. "We wrote our own law — we have a uniquely Montana approach."

But before that economic windfall could happen, New Approach needed to succeed where the last effort to legalize in 2016 fell short: qualifying for the ballot. The group pumped more than \$140,000 into signature-gathering efforts.

Dick's and Petersen's organization plans to pour much more money into the effort, including a whopping \$2.3 million in advertisements, most of which are slated for late October and early November.

The effort has been funded almost entirely by two donors: New Approach's national Political Action Committee, which has donated over \$140,000, and a DC-based organization called the North Fund, which has given more than \$1.6 million. The campaign has generated more than \$2.8 million.

For much of the summer, no official opposition organized to oppose legalization. That changed in mid-September.

The Montana Contractors Association, a group representing Montana building contractors and suppliers, released a video on Sept. 8

outlining its arguments, based on safety and workforce concerns.

"(Recreational marijuana) is not a recipe for a healthy workplace in the construction field," MCA chief David Smith said. "And we don't think something like recreational marijuana is going to help us recruit more employees."

The next day, a Facebook page titled "Wrong For Montana" launched with an anti-legalization video warning voters about the potential for an increased drug presence in the state. The group pointed to problems in Colorado as cause for concern.

Wrong For Montana was founded by Steve Zabawa, a Billings car dealer who has opposed past marijuana legalization and medical cannabis efforts. Zabawa sees the legalization effort as a threat to Montana.

"Do we want more stoners in our family? If the answer is 'yes,' all we have to do is legalize recreational marijuana," Zabawa said. "I'm just stepping out and saying it's wrong for Montana. It's not pristine, it's not healthy, it's not productive and it's not a good idea for Montana."

The WFM campaign is launching its opposition with social media ads on Google and Facebook, with financial help from the national anti-legalization outfit Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM). Zabawa confirmed that his organization plans to roll out ads on Montana television networks in the weeks before the election. He would not comment on how much funding the group had to fight legalization, but the group will need to report its donors at the end of September.

In addition to the Montana Contractors Association, the Montana Chamber of Commerce, Montana Bankers Association and the Motor Carriers Association have all announced support for WFM and plan to contribute financially, Zabawa said.

Petersen rejected Zabawa's claims, arguing that, by raising the buying age to 21 and mirroring the medical marijuana infrastructure, New Approach was ensuring safety.

"Steve has been a thorn in the side of marijuana supporters for years," Peterson said. "For whatever reason, he's got a personal jihad against them. I'm surprised that he actually believes the things that he says. It's ridiculous. It's just so objectively out of touch with reality."

Still, some of those groups Zabawa opposed in the past are also worried about recreational marijuana. Smaller Montana-based dispensaries worry their businesses will be swamped by larger, out-of-state companies.

Michaela Schager, owner of Montana Medicinals, a family-owned medical marijuana dispensary in Missoula, said she was grateful for the initiative's structure. If passed,



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business licenses would be issued Jan. 1, 2022, with registered Montana dispensaries first in line. These dispensaries would have one year to sell without out-of-state competition, but she acknowledged that, "These out-of-state conglomerates are going to provide a lot of competition down the road," Schager said. "At some point, that is going to be a formidable concern."

Petersen said there was no cause for concern.

"All the jobs are going to be here. All the tax revenue is going to be here," he said. "Montana is not this big shining apple for marijuana conglomerates in terms of revenue generated.

There may be some bleeding off initially, but that seems to level off, according to Colorado models."

Petersen and New Approach based much of the bills' infrastructure on Colorado, one of the only states that correctly estimated its projected tax revenue. He stressed that he thinks Montana is a big enough state for both commercial and medical suppliers.

"I don't think there should be any angst between recreational and medical dispensaries," he said. "I mean, it's like, Burger King is right next to McDonald's, and they all do pretty well. There's lots of room in Montana for all of them."

Rick Steves' travel guide to I-190

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Some days, Rick Steves just wants to come home from a long shift at work, smoke a joint and stare at his fireplace for three hours.

"I'm a hardworking, tax-paying, church-going citizen of the U.S.," Steves said. "[Smoking marijuana] is my civil liberty. In the privacy of my own home, I can go smoke."

Our readers may be familiar with Steves, a PBS travel guru, from his famous European guidebooks. But he does more than travel the world. Steves is an outspoken supporter of recreational marijuana, some-

thing he says comes from the experiences he's had on the road.

Steves and I chatted on the phone a few weeks ago, while I was covering Montana ballot initiatives I-190 and CI-118 for the Community News Service. He was on the press-circuit grind, promoting the legalization of marijuana (medical and recreational) in the states where it's on the ballot. When we spoke, he was working with New Approach Montana, the group campaigning for legalization here.

"First of all, I've been at this for about 20 years," he said of his advocacy. "I bring a European sensibility to it, because I've spent 100 days a year in Europe since I was a kid. Europe deals with [marijuana] in a different way than we do."

Steves explained that there is a difference between being pro-pot and being pro-legalization. Which is why he had, for example, dedicated this entire day, and much of his life, to pushing marijuana legislation in states he has no real stake in. Steves isn't the only out-of-stater with an interest in Montana's pro-marijuana efforts. New Approach Montana has been almost completely funded by a DC-based dark money group called the North Fund. The most updated finance reports show the North Fund has donated almost \$5 million to the legalization campaign. Wrong For Montana, the anti-legalization group, is funded almost entirely by in-state donors.

"It's not pro-marijuana, it's principled legalization. There's so many good reasons

to think about this," he said. "I can make a difference by talking about this counterproductive prohibition. The law itself is causing more problems than what it's supposed to be preventing."

Steves touted the financial benefits of a legal marijuana market. New Approach cites projected tax revenue of more than \$38.5 million by 2025.

Also, marijuana is a fun, recreational activity, he added. Like casual drinks with friends. Steves keeps a bong on the top of his piano for convenience.

"I get great joy out of playing the piano and smoking a bit of marijuana," he said.

VOTE ON CAMPUS

Tuesday, October 27th

at the Adams Center from 9am to 5pm

get your questions answered, register to vote
or drop off your ballot on-campus

VOTING
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For more information about voting,
visit voteinMT.org or call 406-888-VOTE



MONTPIRG

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VOTE FOR HIM BY NOV. 3



VOTE FOR HIM BY NOV. 3

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