

TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Jake Eaton  
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SUBJECT: Gubernatorial Campaign Debates

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Governor Greg Gianforte has always welcomed substantive debates with serious candidates, as shown by his participation in at least nine debates since 2016.

Debates bring together credible candidates with competing ideas. Governor Gianforte is a credible candidate with a record of accomplishment and ideas for continuing to make Montana the best place to live, work, start a business, and raise a family. On the other hand, unhinged radical Ryan Busse is neither a credible candidate, nor has he presented any serious ideas of note.

First, Mr. Busse is not a credible candidate. Governor Gianforte has [released 17 years of tax returns](#). Unhinged radical Ryan Busse, however, continues to reject the transparency Montana voters expect, [declining](#) to release his tax returns.

Governor Gianforte has been leading the state, he's been running an effective campaign, and Montanans know who he is.

On the other hand, unhinged radical Ryan Busse is consistently 20 points down in the polls, and nearly three in four likely Montana voters have no idea who he is or have no opinion about him.

And it's no wonder – Busse's been lighting money on fire on consultants and staff. Instead of investing in effective advertising to introduce himself with voters, he's been forced to post unhinged videos on social media, getting a handful of folks to join him at breweries, and relying almost exclusively on desperate earned media efforts. His dismal poll numbers and poor voter ID numbers bear out his unserious candidate with no credibility.

Second, devoid of any serious ideas, unhinged radical Ryan Busse relies on "[defamatory](#)," "[baseless](#)," "[frivolous](#)," and "[cynical](#)" gimmicks and sweeping personal attacks.

While he has [claimed](#) his "mission" is to appeal to Republican voters, Ryan Busse has repeatedly compared Republicans to Nazis. Here's a top-ten list of some of what Ryan Busse has said about Republicans:

1. Ryan Busse on [Republicans](#): "GOP is 94% batshit-burn-the-country-down-crazy."
2. Ryan Busse on [Republicans. comparing them to "Neo Nazis"](#): "Man punch-drunk from his time with Neo Nazis at MT GOP convention embarrasses himself with something Matt Rosendale would say."

3. Ryan Busse on [Americans who oppose Joe Biden](#): “angry petulant fascists”
4. Ryan Busse on [campaigning against Republicans](#): “Some Dems seem scared, but...it’s not hard to be against fascists and insurrectionists.”
5. Ryan Busse on the [Republican Party](#): “I think it’s clear. The national GOP is a fascist party and cares nothing for the constitution or democracy.”
6. Ryan Busse on the [Republican Party](#), again: “The GOP cares nothing about decency, fairness or democracy. They are rushing headlong into fascism.”
7. Ryan Busse on Republican former Wisconsin Governor [Scott Walker](#): “Fascist Party Leader”
8. Ryan Busse on the [2024 Montana gubernatorial race](#): “Same exact choice in MT - Democracy or fascism.”
9. Ryan Busse on the [2024 Montana gubernatorial race](#), again: “2024 is going to be about the choice between freedom and fascism. Here in Montana that choice is stark.”
10. Ryan Busse on [Gov. Gianforte](#): “What was most striking about Busse’s speech, though, was his deployment of the word ‘fascism,’ a term that even the most strident public critics of the state’s conservative power structure have — with limited exceptions — avoided. ‘Greg Gianforte wants to replace our hard-fought and hard-won democracy in Montana with a **dangerous brand of fascism and authoritarianism.**’ Busse said.”

But it’s not just Republicans Mr. Busse targets with his unhinged attacks. At an event, he attacked Montanans who live in the Flathead, [saying](#), “I live in Kalispell. Some of you might have heard – not the most enlightened political place in the world.”

In the wake of the assassination attempt on former President Donald J. Trump, President Joe Biden called on the American people to “lower the temperature in our politics.” Ryan Busse seems to know no other temperature than hot and perpetually unhinged.

Hosting a debate with an unserious candidate, who has no credibility, who actively dodges transparency, and who makes unhinged comments comparing Republicans to Nazis and fascists, would neither be informative nor advance the public interest. The governor is prepared to debate a serious, credible Democratic candidate for governor, but unfortunately, there isn’t one.