

Helena, MT – On Tuesday, December 20, 2016, the Executive Board of the Montana Republican Party voted unanimously to establish a filing fee for candidates seeking the nomination to fill the anticipated vacancy in Montana's at-large Congressional seat. The fee is set at 1% of the salary of the office, the same fee levied by the State of Montana for filing in a primary. Those interested in seeking the Republican nomination should contact Executive Director Tim Gould at tgould@mtgop.org for further information.

A quick note –

All of us recognize that each child is unique and has their own learning ability.

There's no one-size fits all education model that can be imposed on our children.

Recognizing that need, the Montana Legislature in 2015 passed an historic bill into law that provided parents with greater education choices for their children.

Senate Bill 410, established a tax credit to encourage Montanans to make donations in support of scholarship opportunities for K-12 students attending either public or private schools.

The tax credit is capped at \$150 and can be directly applied to your Montana taxes. And, the entire amount you donate is eligible for the federal charitable tax deduction.

This is an incredible opportunity to enhance your children's education whether they are receiving their education from a public or private school.

It's important to note that ALL donations must be made by December 31, 2016 and a process for registering for the credit

online with the Department of Revenue must be completed by that same date.

Don't miss your opportunity to support your children's education.

For more information please read about the education tax credit [here](#), and to make a donation please visit the Big Sky Scholarships at <http://www.bigskyscholarships.org/>.

I also want to thank Senator Llew Jones for all his hard work on this bill. His support and dedication to our children's education made this opportunity possible.

Thank you for the consideration,



Jeff Essmann
Chairman
Montana Republican Party

Dear Republican Friends,

I had been planning on writing you to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, but events have overtaken my plans, so you are getting an early letter.

Zinke Named Secretary of Interior

The big news for the Montana Republican Party is the selection of our Congressman Ryan Zinke to serve as the Secretary of Interior of the United States. While we wait for Ryan to officially accept the position we are thrilled that he has been presented with the opportunity to serve in the

administration of Donald J. Trump who has pledged to bring back better paying jobs to this country in his effort to Make America Great Again. Trump has indicated his strong support for use of our nation's abundant natural resources in the service of reaching that goal. The Interior Department controls a lot of federal land and coal, oil and gas, and mineral resources and Ryan can work to put those resources to work on behalf of the people of Montana and this country. We wish him well in his continued work on expanding our economic opportunity.

The Replacement Process

I have had numerous calls from members of the press and the party on who the Republican Party will put forward to replace Congressman Zinke should that vacancy occur and how that process will work. Section 2 of Article I of the US Constitution provides "When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies." No House seat has ever been filled by appointment on an interim or permanent basis as a result.

Therefore, language in state law that was amended in the last session of the legislature to allow the Governor to make a temporary interim appointment from a list of three nominees submitted by the party prior to the special election (to provide a better process than that used by our hapless governor in the John Walsh fiasco appointment to the U.S. Senate) will **NOT** apply.

So, when a vacancy officially occurs, which I expect will be after Zinke is confirmed by the Senate and officially vacates his seat, the remaining portions of state law will take effect. The Governor will schedule a special election from 85 to 100 days after the vacancy occurs. There will be no primary election. Instead, under our bylaws, the State Central Committee will meet in convention and select a nominee whose

name will appear on the ballot. I will get to chair that meeting although I will not get a vote on who the nominee will be.

Potential Pitfalls for the Party

The last time a vacancy occurred in the U.S. House from Montana was in February 1969 when newly elected President Richard M. Nixon appointed Congressman James F. Battin, who represented the eastern district of Montana (we had two back then) to the federal bench to serve as a federal judge. The Montana Republican Party, if memory serves me correct, had a very divisive knock down and drag out convention, and left the convention bitterly divided. That served to advance the cause of the Democrat Party who managed to elect one of theirs, John Melcher, to a seat he never should have won. Melcher was later elected to the U.S. Senate and was only removed from office in a tight race with Conrad Burns in 1988, over 19 years later.

I have been fielding many calls from people interested in the position. It will be my responsibility to conduct the meeting and conduct it fairly. I will do my best to do so. It will be up to the many people who are interested in the job or are interested in furthering the career of a friend to decide whether the convention will be divisive and lead to the election of an undeserving Democrat about 90 days later, or will be conducted with mutual respect so that we can leave united behind a candidate we can support and get elected. I hope that it will be the latter. But the election of an undeserving Democrat to a 19 year career in Washington should be a cautionary tale to all of us. Please ponder these outcomes and make a sober decision on how you will conduct yourselves over the next few months. The future of the Montana Republican Party and the success of our newly elected President is at stake.

Thank you for your consideration. And, by the way, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,



Jeff Essmann
Chairman
Montana Republican Party

The dust is now settling on one of the most successful elections for the Montana Republican Party in modern times. I want to report what we accomplished, who we all want to thank for their contributions of time and treasure, and what our plans are for the future.

Statewide – Federal

Montana Republicans were successful in 6 of the 7 statewide races on the ballot. Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton by nearly 100,000 votes in Montana, and Congressman Zinke beat Denise Juneau by 16 percentage points. I am happy that Nancy Pelosi burned \$500,000 in her wasted effort to help Juneau, revealing the lack of appeal of the Democrat message in Montana. This was a huge strategic mistake for Montana Democrats and with Trump's election Juneau now has no backup plan.

Statewide – State

Montana Republicans were successful in winning 4 of the 5 races for the Land Board. Corey Stapleton was elected Secretary of State where he will lead an effort to restore integrity to our election process, including eliminating the improper practice of strangers collecting voted ballots and adopt measures to insure that people are not voting in

multiple states. Tim Fox was re-elected as Attorney General where he can continue to fight government overreach by the EPA and other agencies. Matt Rosendale was elected Auditor where he will be busy implementing whatever comes out of the new Congress and President to Repeal and Replace Obamacare. And finally, Elsie Arntzen was elected Superintendent of Public Instruction where she will be returning control to our local school boards and parents. Our only loss was that of the Governor's race. Greg Gianforte fought a hard and expensive race, but was unable to overcome millions of dollars in spending by the Democrats and their Dark Money allies. However, the fact that his race drew all the fire enabled us to elect all our other candidates by huge margins. We owe Greg and Susan a debt of gratitude. Thank them when you see them.

Public Service Commission

I want to first congratulate Tony O'Donnell for being elected to the PSC. He won a hard fought primary and then went on to achieve victory in the general election. With the re-election of Roger Koopman and Bob Lake on Tuesday, Montana Republicans continue to own all five seats on the Montana Public Service Commission. Koopman got so much financial help from the County committees in his district that the MTGOP was unable to give him but we were able to get some last minute financial help to Bob Lake when he needed it.

Montana Legislature

Under the leadership of Speaker Austin Knudsen and the leadership committee of the Montana Republican Legislative Campaign Committee both houses of the Montana legislature remained firmly in the control of Montana Republicans. Pending final results from the counting of provisional ballots next Monday the Montana House remains at 59-41 and the margin in the Montana Senate increased by 2 to 32-18. I believe that with continued recruitment of good candidates and the leadership of the MRLCC the Montana Legislature is now

permanently in Republican hands. I also want to thank the MRLCC for transferring money to the state party enabling us to expand our independent expenditure effort late in the election cycle. This was a unified effort.

Our Plans for the Future

I believe that pro-growth policies will be coming out of a Washington DC that is now in Republican control. I think the Republican Congress will be motivated to take swift action on the bread and butter issues that the American people want to get our economy moving again and bring good paying jobs back to this country. If they don't, I don't think the American people will forgive them. But I also believe that the policy initiatives coming out of DC will be ones that will tend to unite Republican members of the Montana Legislature rather than ones that were used by Democrats to divide us. Freeing our people from the burdens of Obamacare and the oppressive regulations on our small businesses, farms and ranches, and putting the needs of the people ahead of the wants of the government will be policies that should unite all Republicans. It will be a test of our leadership, our common sense, and our willingness to make progress in a series of 3 to 5 yard gains, as stated so often by Greg Gianforte, which will dictate our success. The desire for perfection cannot become the opponent of achieving the good.

At this point Montana Republicans hold 6 of the 8 statewide seats. Jon Tester and Steve Bullock are the only remaining statewide elected Democrats. I am happy to announce that Jon Tester has been officially added to the Endangered Species list as he is up for election in 2018. And I believe we will continue our success and replace him then and elect a Republican Governor in 2020. We just need to work together and work strategically to remove Democrats from the infrastructure in the executive branch offices in Helena. There are many Montana Democrats that will be looking for work come January 3. There needs to be many more.

We have assembled a great team of employees that achieved a great victory for Montana Republicans on Tuesday. I would like to keep the entire team together so that we do not have to start rebuilding from scratch a year from now when things will be gearing up for the race to replace Jon Tester. But that will take more money than we have traditionally been able to raise from our Membership card mailers and our conventions. I would like to ask you to click on the donate button and set up a monthly donation of \$25, \$50 or \$100 dollars or more if you can afford it to support our ongoing efforts. I have worked hard to reduce our ongoing spending to the absolute bare bones minimum, but I cannot run this organization without employing good people and that takes ongoing money. I hope that you will agree that our efforts have borne fruit that will benefit future generations. Now is not the time to take a break.

Thank you for everything you have done for the Montana Republican Party.

Sincerely,



Jeff Essmann
Chairman
Montana Republican Party

Montanans want an independent voice on the Montana Supreme Court – not one tied to a political party or special interests.

Dirk Sandefur proudly [boasts](#): ***“I am and always have been a nonpartisan candidate. My record reflects that. My fundraising***

efforts reflect that."

The truth is, Dirk Sandefur is lying when it comes to his record:

- Sandefur leaves out the fact that back in 2000 he ran as a Democrat for a local State Senate seat shortly before withdrawing from the race.
- Sandefur won't mention that he's now benefiting from [\\$62,000](#) from the Montana Democrat Party.
- Sandefur also has former Governor Brian Schweitzer [running](#) TV ads in support of his campaign.
- Sandefur received nearly [\\$600,000](#) in financial support from the trial lawyers and their political action committees who have cases pending before the court and is endorsed by a [radical environmentalist group](#) and even [Planned Parenthood](#).

Sandefur should spare Montanans his false claims of being a non-partisan candidate when his record reflects who he really is: A partisan Democrat who has the backing of the Montana Democrat Party and their special interest groups.

With a record like this, Sandefur simply can't be the independent, fair, and impartial judge Montanans expect in those that serve on the court.

Let's be honest, Montana Democrats and their special interest groups wouldn't be spending all this money on Sandefur if he wasn't their candidate of choice. He shares their values and will bring their partisan agenda to the court. But, those aren't the type of values or agenda that should be on the court.

Helena, MT – Chairman Jeff Essmann of the Montana Republican Party sent separate letters today to Secretary of State Linda

McCulloch and Executive Director of the Montana Democrat Party Nancy Keenan following disturbing reports [confirming](#) that strangers, at least one of whom was linked to the Montana Democrat Party are going door-to-door offering to deliver the ballot for voters, obtaining control of the ballot, and then asking them who they voted for.

Essmann [expressed](#) his disappointment to Linda McCulloch for failing to respond to his request that she immediately record and distribute a Public Service Announcement on both television and radio reminding Montana voters that the only two ways to ensure their ballot safely reaches the ballot box is to use a stamp and mail or personally deliver their ballot to their local election office.

“You, as an elected official in charge of election administration, have an obligation to all Montana voters to set aside your personal agenda and ensure we have a fair and transparent election,” wrote Essmann. ***“Please advise us whether or not you will quickly record and distribute a Public Service Announcement reminding voters to use a stamp or personally deliver their ballot to the election office as those are the only guaranteed methods of safe delivery. The integrity of the ballots cast by these voters is at stake.”***

Essmann also [called](#) on Nancy Keenan to stop the Montana Democrat Party’s practice of ballot collection and in doing so help ensure the integrity of our elections.

“I firmly believe that as the leader of the Montana Democrat Party you have an obligation to stop your questionable, if not downright unethical practices, and end the collection of ballots by paid or unpaid strangers,” wrote Essmann. ***“No ballot should ever be handed over to a stranger, political operative, or special interest group. Let’s work together to ensure the integrity of our elections. You can do your part by stopping this questionable and unethical practice that creates doubt where none is needed.”***

A copy of the letter sent to Linda McCulloch can be viewed [here](#). The letter sent to Nancy Keenan can be found [here](#).

News reports [confirmed](#) ballot collection by strangers in Missoula, Butte, and Livingston. The Montana Democrat Party has confirmed they are engaged in this questionable practice.

The Montana Republican Party's voter outreach personnel have been instructed not to collect ballots. The Party has not collected ballots in the past and will not do so now.

Livingston, MT – The Chairman of the Montana Republican Party Jeff Essmann stood in front of the Park County Courthouse today and condemned the [unethical](#) practices by the Montana Democrat Party of asking voters if they could turn in their ballots for them and then surveying them on how they voted.

“Montana Democrats have admitted that they have engaged in an unethical, if not illegal practice, of collecting ballots and then surveying the voter on how the ballot was voted. This is an outright invasion of the ballot box and individual privacy,” said Jeff Essmann. *“There are only two ways to make sure your ballot gets to the ballot box safely. The first is to use a stamp and the second is to deliver it personally.”*

Chairman Essmann also called on the Secretary of State to quickly record and release a Public Service Announcement on ballot security after more than a dozen voters expressed concern about the integrity of their ballot after the Montana Democrat Party was discovered trying to hand in ballots for voters.

“I have instructed our Republican voter outreach personnel not to collect ballots. The Republican Party of Montana has not collected ballots in the past and will not do so now. I call on Secretary of State Linda McCulloch to quickly issue a

Public Service Announcement on both television and radio reminding Montana voters that to ensure the integrity of their ballot they should mail or personally deliver their ballot to their election office. A ballot should never be handed over to a party or special interest under any circumstances. The integrity of the election process requires a more transparent process so that every vote is counted and counted correctly without party operatives interfering in the collection of ballots."

Essmann reminded voters that if they are worried about their ballot being changed or not delivered they should go to their local election office, request a new ballot and vote there before leaving. If voters suspect election fraud they should report it to local law enforcement and the Montana Secretary of State.

In her latest campaign ads, Hillary Clinton is [calling](#) for 'commonsense gun laws.'

This is code for: More gun control.

You know who's partially [funding](#) Hillary's ads? The Montana Democrat Party.

This should hardly come as a surprise, and simply reinforces the point that there's no difference between where **Hillary Clinton** and the **Montana Democrat Party** stand on the Second Amendment: **They want to take our guns away.**

Like the well-rehearsed career politicians that they are, both Hillary and Gov. Steve Bullock falsely reassure voters of their strong support for the Second Amendment.

The truth is: Their rhetoric doesn't match their actions.

Hillary [supports](#) a nationwide firearm ban; and when a bill

came across Gov. Bullock's desk to prevent Montana from enforcing a federal firearm ban, he VETOED the bill not just [once](#) – but [twice](#)!

Bullock has no commonsense for thinking it's a good idea to allow federal officials to force Montana law enforcement to carry out a Hillary Clinton executive order to confiscate means of personal defense that she doesn't care for.

If you're concerned about our 2nd Amendment Rights please forward this email to your family and friends so they know that Bullock's actions put him right in league with Hillary Clinton's efforts to 'take our guns away.'

We face no greater threat than a Hillary Clinton presidency and we need a strong leader in the Governor's office to ensure our 2nd Amendment Rights will always be defended and protected.

You can't trust Bullock to be the strong leader we need on the 2nd Amendment: He has a "[C](#)" rating from the NRA, he VETOED a [series](#) of gun-rights bills, and worst of all he [wants](#) to 'take our guns away.'

With an "[A](#)" rating from the NRA and [endorsements](#) from the Gun Owners of America, Montana Shooting Sports Association and the NRA, Greg Gianforte will be the strong Governor Montana needs to always fight and defend our constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

Melissa Romano was a no-show yesterday at a school-centered candidate forum at Frenchtown High School. Here was an event that brought together the community council, school board trustees, and the district's superintendent to discuss education and the challenges we face.

It's a wonder why Melissa Romano couldn't be bothered to attend this event. Or, is it?

Maybe Melissa Romano didn't want to talk about her enthusiastic support for Common Core and her top-down approach to education ...

Or, she wants to keep hidden the fact that she's benefiting from a six figure check from Washington D.C. special interests and doesn't want you to know that she's expected to always do their bidding ..

It's just as possible that she didn't want to explain her opposition to local control in our school districts at a local Montana high school ...

Either way, it's clear Melissa Romano didn't show up at this school-centered candidate forum because she isn't willing to be honest with Montanans about her beliefs.

Melissa Romano's not willing to put the needs of Montana students above the needs of the special interests – and that makes her unfit for this office.

Elsie Arntzen will put the needs of Montana students first. That's why Elsie showed up at Frenchtown High School yesterday and spoke to the importance of education and the need to come together to address our education challenges – with the goal of always putting Montana students first.

Elsie Arntzen will be the fighter and champion our kids, parents, teachers, and schools need. It's time to elect Elsie Arntzen as our next State Superintendent and give all Montana students the best possible education.

When you hear Governor Bullock talk about standing up and defending Montana jobs, it amounts to nothing more than the

political doublespeak you would expect from a career politician.

You just have to follow the money to see who Governor Bullock is beholden to ...

The fringe enviro groups that successfully shut down Colstrip Units 1 & 2 are also funding Bullock's campaign, with board members of the MEIC and Sierra Club lining up behind him.

Bullock's also benefiting from \$500,000 in dark money from another fringe enviro group whose main backer bragged about their most recent success being shutting down Colstrip Units 1 & 2.

Who is Bullock beholden to? The money says it's these fringe, anti-Colstrip enviro groups. Bullock's happy to do their bidding when he get six figure checks as a reward.

Here's what Montana's future looks like if Bullock is re-elected: ALL of Colstrip will close and thousands of high-paying Montana jobs will be lost forever.

When Bullock makes promises to stand with '*Montana energy and our jobs*,' it should be clear by now that those promises are empty promises.

Bullock's NOT fighting for Colstrip or any Montana jobs.