

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

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.

Helena, MT – Chairman of the Montana Republican Party Jeff Essmann today requested the Montana Supreme Court to direct Secretary of State Linda McCulloch and Commissioner of Political Practices Jonathan Motl to perform their duties as required by law and remove Roger Roots, a Libertarian party candidate for the position of Montana Secretary of State, from Montana's 2016 general election ballot after he failed to file his business disclosure report and properly file campaign finance reports as required by law.

"The Supreme Court needs to uphold the integrity of the vote and Montana's campaign finance laws, and enforce the law if these two officials will not," said Chairman Jeff Essmann. *"Whatever the reason for their failure to comply with the law and ensure that all the business disclosure forms and campaign finance reports were properly filed, the Secretary of State and the Commissioner of Political Practices have permitted a name to appear on the ballot when the law was not followed."*

Roger Roots failed to file his business disclosure report and failed to timely file his campaign finance reports as [required](#) by the Commissioner of Political Practices (COPP). On the

matter of his business disclosure report, Montana law [13-37-126 \(1\)](#) states: *The name of a candidate may not appear on the official ballot for an election if the candidate or a treasurer for a candidate fails to file any statement or report as required by [2-2-106](#) or this chapter.* Regarding his campaign finance reports, Roger Roots was contacted multiple times by the COPP to correct this issue but still failed to file timely reports. Despite being in violation of the law, both the Commissioner of Political Practices and the Secretary of State's office approved Roger Roots for inclusion on the ballot.

While Commissioner Motl says the COPP received Roger Roots' filed business disclosure form in March 2016, it has been unable to publicly produce this document. Instead, COPP admits they solicited, received, and posted Roger Roots' business disclosure form dated September 6, 2016. However, this is past the March 2016 statutory deadline to qualify for the ballot.

On September 1, 2016, the General Counsel for the Montana Republican Party notified Secretary of State Linda McCulloch in writing that Roger Roots was unlawfully certified for the 2016 ballot and asked McCulloch to notify all county election administrators of this violation and to order them to desist in their efforts in preparing and printing ballots. McCulloch has not responded to Essmann's request since the letter was submitted.

Essmann asks the Supreme Court to take both immediate injunctive action by issuing a temporary restraining order (TRO) and by ordering Linda McCulloch and Jonathan Motl to perform their duties mandated by law. Lastly, Essmann requests the case be given the highest urgency, with local election administrators set to print ballots in the coming days and weeks and with overseas military ballots required to be sent out no later than September 23, 2016.

Helena, MT – Chairman Jeff Essmann released the following statement tonight after the Congressional debate between Congressman Zinke and Denise Juneau in Billings:

“Congressman Zinke proved he has the leadership and experience to best represent Montanans. He sets aside politics to do what’s right for Montana and that makes him the strong and courageous leader we expect in our elected officials. Whether serving as our Congressman or as a former U.S. Navy SEAL, Congressman Zinke will always protect, defend, and fight for our Montana way of life.”

“Denise Juneau showed she would rather stand by her liberal values than do what’s right for Montana: Denise Juneau brought us Common Core – with results showing that fewer than half of Montana students are proficient in reading, writing and math – she voted against creating thousands of high-paying Montana jobs, and she believes in restricting our constitutional right to keep and bear arms. The only thing Denise Juneau proved tonight is that she doesn’t represent our Montana values.”

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Helena, MT – Chairman Jeff Essmann of the Montana Republican Party released the following statement today on Montana’s primary election results:

“This Republican ticket is a team who won’t stop fighting until we bring high-paying jobs and greater opportunities to all Montanans. Now is the time for Montana to shake off the doldrums imposed by stagnant wages and the lack of leadership from career politicians so all Montanans from every walk of life can be better off.”

“A Republican team that unites behind our core platform of job creation, lower and simpler taxes, greater business growth and innovation, reducing burdensome regulations, and respecting the freedom and rights of individuals will bring all of us a better future.”

“As Republicans look toward November, we must all work together if we are going to be successful in sweeping every statewide race and enacting policies that can better the lives of every Montanan. Now is the time to unite and support our great team of Republican leaders and defeat the stale protectors of a failed status quo.”

The Montana Republican Ticket: Ryan Zinke for United States Representative; Greg Gianforte and Lesley Robinson for Governor and Lt. Governor; Tim Fox for Attorney General; Corey Stapleton for Secretary of State; Elsie Arntzen for State Superintendent; and Matt Rosendale for State Auditor.

Helena, MT- Chairman Jeff Essmann of the Montana Republican Party expressed his sorrow at the news that former Senator Conrad Burns passed away Thursday afternoon:

“Conrad loved his adopted home state of Montana and Montana Republicans loved him and his wonderful wife Phyllis. When talking about Montana, Conrad always said he got here as fast as he could. We will miss him deeply now that he is no longer with us.”

“Senator Burns was very committed to the success of Montana and its people. He was a colorful figure who loved people, politics, and to serve. He brought a common man, common sense approach to his work in the Senate and returned to his home in Billings when his work was done.”

“Conrad always worked to unite and strengthen the Montana

Republican Party. The last time I saw him was just a couple of weeks ago at an event for all our statewide candidates, loyal right up to the end, supporting the cause. I offer my sincerest condolences to Phyllis and the Burns family. The thoughts of many Montanans are with them.”