

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.

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.

Another candidate forum, another Montana Democrat not showing up ...

Melissa Romano, the liberal candidate running to be the next State Superintendent, declined an invitation to show up at a candidate forum later today in Seeley Lake.

Yet, another staunch liberal who can't handle the public scrutiny of their record.

Let's begin with Romano's [involvement](#) with a national Common Core working group, where she gave full authority to unelected bureaucrats and special interest groups in Washington D.C. to write our kids' curriculum and to decide how and what subjects should be taught in our schools.

Romano even goes so far as to describe herself as a '**huge Common Core advocate.**' [[5:55](#)]

She speaks '[enthusiastically](#)' about Common Core and its top-down approach – taking away local control to give more control to DC bureaucrats and the special interests.

Romano fundamentally [opposes](#) local control in our education system saying she '**disagreed with the idea that school districts need more local control.**'

Her belief system tells her that Washington D.C. bureaucrats and special interest groups know what's best for our kids – not Montana parents, teachers, and schools.

These **D.C. special interests** dictating our Montana education standards are **spending six figures** to prop up Melissa Romano's "**Made-In Washington D.C.**" campaign.

To top it all off, she has [promised](#) to continue current State Superintendent Denise Juneau's legacy. Well, given that **over half our students are NOT proficient in math and English** that's not a legacy anyone should be proud of.

Melissa Romano can't put Montana students first when she's a cheerleader for Common Core, opposes local control, believes a top-down approach is the solution to our education challenges, and is funded by D.C. special interest groups.

Melissa Romano now joins [Monica Lindeen](#) to the list of Montana Democrats who won't show up to debate their Republican counterparts, and, don't forget that Governor Bullock [decided](#) NOT to participate in gubernatorial debates in Eastern Montana

and the Flathead. These Montana Democrats are dodging debates because they don't want to be held accountable for their failed record and for their refusal to fight for Montanans.

The Helena IR did not have kind words for Monica Lindeen [today](#) saying it was 'disrespectful' of her to not show up at a candidate forum after confirming she would be there. The editorial board noted that Monica Lindeen didn't even bother to give much of an explanation and her handling of all of this 'didn't do much to engender the public's trust.'

Monica Lindeen made the wrong call when she went back on her word and bailed on the candidate forum just like she made the wrong call when she said our health care premium increases were '[too low](#)' and demanded the insurance companies go back and '[raise their rates](#).'

Perhaps that explains why Monica Lindeen bailed on the candidate forum ... She didn't want to face the public scrutiny for the skyrocketing premiums she's pushing onto us: The average premium increase next year for [BlueCross BlueShield](#): 58.4%; [Montana Health CO-OP](#): 30.7%; [PacificSource](#): 27.6%.

[An IR View: Skipping candidate forum \(09/23/2016\)](#)

Thumbs down

After confirming she would participate in Monday's public forum in Seeley Lake, Montana Secretary of State candidate Monica Lindeen failed to show up.

This was supposed to be the first time the Democratic candidate and her Republican challenger Corey Stapleton would publicly face off. But partway through the forum, which also included a hodgepodge of candidates for several other offices, **we received word that Lindeen couldn't make it without much**

further explanation.

Admittedly, part of our frustration is personal, as one of our reporters made the 200-mile trip from Helena to Seeley Lake and back specifically to write about Lindeen and Stapleton, only to come back empty-handed. **But we believe this was also disrespectful to the people of the Seeley Lake area who took the time to plan and attend the event, as well as all Montanans who were expecting to see news coverage about what she had to say.**

Some scheduling changes are unavoidable, and Lindeen may have had a very good reason to skip the forum at the last minute.

Still, the way this was handled didn't do much to engender the public's trust.

http://helenair.com/news/opinion/editorial/an-ir-view--skipping-candidate-forum-building-a-bigger-brewery/-article_ce6d5c76-14ca-55d7-ae38-e5170adf59f5.html

Monica Lindeen exercised bad judgement when she was a no-show at Seeley Lake this past Monday despite [agreeing](#) to face off against Corey Stapleton in a candidate forum on the Secretary of State's race.

Her abrupt decision to cancel on this debate comes days after she called Montana's health care premium increases '[too low](#).' Coincidence?

'[Too low](#)' says Monica Lindeen when the average health insurance premium increase for Montana Health CO-OP is [30.7%](#)! For Pacific Source it's [27.6%](#)!

Here's what happened: When Montana Health CO-OP and Pacific Source originally submitted lower premium rates, Monica Lindeen rejected their rates saying she '[found their rates to](#)

be too low.' She wanted higher rates for their health care plans and ordered them 'to raise their rates.'

Talk about bad judgment: Pushing higher premium rates onto Montana families.

It's not just that Monica Lindeen pushed for higher premiums this year – For the second year in a row now she has given Montanans double digit premium hikes!

These skyrocketing premium increases year after year come even after she gave her word that Obamacare would not bring 'dramatic price increases.'

Monica Lindeen misled Montanans about Obamacare and the false promise of lower premiums, and she stands by Obamacare with unwavering support as Montana families are left struggling with their ever increasing premiums.

Montanans are the ones paying the price for Monica Lindeen's bad judgement. Let's retire her in November.

Jesse Laslovich has taken somewhere between \$30,000 – \$40,000 from the lobbyists, insurance, and financial industries he's supposed to be regulating.

Conflict of interest? Well, Jesse doesn't see anything wrong with this pay for play.

Listen to his own words: ***He's "not picky" where his money comes from.***



Click [HERE](#) to Watch

Jesse Laslovich takes campaign donations from the health insurance companies he helps regulate and then authorizes higher health care premiums, meaning the insurance companies take more of our money while we're left on the hook to pay for these higher premiums.

It's a win for Jesse Laslovich. It's a win for the health insurance companies. It's NOT a win for the tens of thousands of Montana families who now have to pay these higher health care premiums.

Next year's premiums have now been finalized and are even higher than what was originally announced: [Montanans will face premium increases between 27% to 58%.](#)

Have a BlueCross BlueShield policy? Your average rate increase will be a staggering 58%!

So, when Jesse Laslovich is asked: ***"How can you be an advocate for Montanans when BlueCross BlueShield is giving you campaign donations?"***

The answer: He can't. Jesse Laslovich is bought and paid for by the insurance industry.

Jesse Laslovich is too busy cozying up to the insurance companies so he's fighting for their interests – not your interests. Jesse is no advocate for Montanans and electing him as our next State Auditor means more premium increases and more financial hardship for Montana families.

Can you believe how dishonest Governor Bullock's new ad is?

(1) Bullock falsely casts himself as a believer in “*fiscal discipline and accountability.*”

- Under Bullock, government spending has [increased](#) by over 25 percent – \$800 million – while the gross state product [grew](#) by only 9 percent.
- Clearly, Bullock forgot about his administration's [\\$1 billion](#) accounting error last summer – and how no one was held accountable or lost their job because of it.
- Don't forget how the company that employs the wife of Bullock's budget director secured a [\\$23 million](#) government leasing contract without a competitive bidding process or looking at alternative sites.

(2) Next, Bullock beats his chest for working to “*balance the budget every year.*”

- Governor – It's a constitutional [requirement](#) and it's carried out by the Montana Legislature!
- Thank goodness we do have a balanced budget requirement because without it he'd never balance the budget!

(3) Bullock then makes outrageous claims about Montana's “*\$300 million rainy day fund.*”

- There's no [\\$300 million](#) rainy day fund in Montana. It's all but gone – reduced to maybe \$100 million – and with Montana's [negative](#) economic growth since the end of last year and declining tax revenues, it's entirely possible that we will run a deficit next year.

(4) Bullock also goes on to praise himself for “*no new taxes.*”

- Well, Bullock VETOED tax relief bill after tax relief bill that would have returned money to Montana families

– he kept your hard-earned money so he could increase government spending and bring more government into our lives.

- One of the bills Bullock [VETOED](#) would have lowered tax rates for ALL Montanans by eliminating special interest tax credits for his fringe environmental cronies – who coincidentally are now funding his campaign.

(5) Finally, Bullock’s living in a liberal’s state of denial when he says he “*cracked down*” on wasteful spending.

- Under Bullock, state spending has [increased](#) a whopping \$800 million over the last 4 years!
- Yes – \$800 million! Proving he is no responsible steward of Montana’s fiscal health.

Those are all of Bullock’s five 5 outrageous lies in just one TV commercial!

Montanans deserve better. VOTE Greg Gianforte for Governor. Greg’s proven record of success and creating Montana jobs will bring real leadership to the Governor’s office.