

# Republican Chairman Responds to MTDEMS Mail Ballot Collection Scandal

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.