

Autumn 2024

BIG SKY 55+ UPDATE

Big Sky 55+ was formed, in part, to ensure that elected officials are held accountable on senior issues. It was also formed to provide electoral support to candidates who are champions on issues like Social Security, Medicare and prescription drug costs. Big Sky 55+ has endorsed candidates in some, but not all Montana races in 2024. We are working to elect the candidates highlighted in this newsletter and on our website.

BIG SKY 55+ ENDORSEMENT U.S. SENATE

by Terry Minow, Big Sky 55+ Board Chair

Big Sky 55+ is pleased and proud to endorse our effective, hardworking U.S. Senator Jon Tester for re-election. I hope you will honor Jon with your vote. This race is extremely close. Beyond your vote, please use your Super Powers to let your family, friends and neighbors know why they should vote for Jon Tester:

Social Security Jon Tester works tirelessly to preserve Montanans' Social Security benefits. Jon supports legislation to enable Social Security to continue paying full benefits and increase monthly benefits. Requiring individuals who make more than \$400,000 a year to pay their fair share will secure Social Security for all future generations. Jon's opponent, Tim Sheehy, has stated that he wants to privatize Social Security and Medicare. Sheehy's campaign ads are full of lies about Social Security (see my response to Tim Sheehy's ads at bigskyfiftyfive.org/social-security).

Medicare & Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Jon Tester was the deciding vote to pass the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), forcing Big Pharma to negotiate with Medicare for fair prices on some of the most expensive and most needed medicines. Jon was the ONLY Montana Senator or Congressman to vote for the IRA. Thanks to the IRA, insulin is capped at \$35 a month. Yearly prescription costs for Medicare recipients will soon be capped at \$2000.



JON TESTER Best Choice for Montana

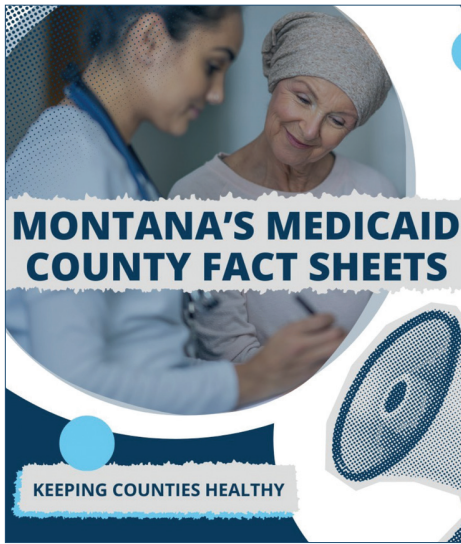
Fair Taxes Jon Tester opposed the massive tax cuts in 2017 that allowed billionaires and big corporations to avoid paying their fair share of public investments like education, infrastructure, Medicare and Social Security. Jon will vote to end tax cuts for the ultra-wealthy so funding is available for investments that serve Montana working families.

Veterans Montana has one of the nation's highest per capita percentages of veterans. Jon Tester's record supporting veterans health care is second to none in Congress. Jon is at

the forefront of championing Veterans Administration reforms to meet the needs of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans coping with the long-term and high personal costs of their service.

Family Farms & Ranches The only working farmer in the U.S. Senate, Jon Tester understands the real challenges and needs of Montana's rural communities. Jon supports country-of-origin labeling of meat. He has worked tirelessly to insure and protect vital water infrastructure for the Montana Hi-line.

Integrity & Authenticity Senator Jon Tester is exactly what he appears to be. He is a farmer, former teacher, and school board member, and he served in the Montana Legislature where he carried legislation to lower prescription drug costs for low income seniors. As our U.S. Senator, Jon has made the needs of Montanans his priority.



Montana's Healthcare is on the Ballot

The 2025 legislature will vote on whether to keep the expanded Medicaid program, which has provided tens of thousands of Montanans with affordable healthcare. The Montana Budget and Policy Center has released a series of excellent online factsheets showing the numbers of residents in each county who benefit from continuing our current Medicaid insurance program, as well as the percentage of businesses that employ folks who get health insurance through this program. Go to montanabudget.org/report/medicaid-county-fact-sheets and click on a county to see residents covered. Here are a few samples:

- Yellowstone County: 12,241
- Custer: 779
- Lewis and Clark County: 4437
- Cascade: 6797

What is your legislative candidate's position on Medicaid Expansion?

BIG SKY 55+ ENDORSEMENTS MONTANA SUPREME COURT

Our beloved Montana Constitution is on the ballot in this November's election. In recent years, the Super-majority in the Montana Legislature has tried to change the Constitution to take away Montanans' freedoms. That same super-majority is now trying to exert control over the judiciary, despite clear guidance in the Constitution about the separation of powers among the three legs of government -- Executive, Legislative, and Judicial -- and the resulting crucial checks and balances.

Judge Lynch believes **"this tripartite system is one of America's greatest contributions to the world."** Judge Lynch will stand by this separation of powers and ensure that **"neither [the executive nor the legislative branch] can stray from the constitution or infringe on individual rights when making or enforcing laws."**

Join Big Sky 55+ in supporting Judge Lynch in the November 2024 election.



**JEREMIAH
LYNCH**

Chief Justice

Judge Katherine Bidegaray grew up on a farm and ranch in northeastern Montana, learning the value of hard work. As an attorney, she practiced in her rural home counties gaining experience practicing a wide variety of types of law. This prepared her well for a judgeship. Judge Bidegaray has been a leader in establishing treatment courts carving out pathways for rehabilitation for individuals battling addiction. She is also a defender of public lands and public education, acknowledging their vital contribution to the prosperity of Montana.



**KATHERINE
BIDEGARAY**

Associate Justice

Judge Bidegaray strongly believes in the fairness and impartiality of the court system and that politics has no place there. From Judge Bidegaray's website:

In the face of current unprecedented challenges confronting the Montana Supreme Court, including assaults on the rule of law that endanger the liberties and rights dear to Montanans, Judge Bidegaray grasps the magnitude of these issues. She stands ready to confront these challenges head-on, committed to defending the Constitution and delivering justice for everyone.

Please join Big Sky 55+ in supporting Judge Katherine Bidegaray for Associate Justice of the Montana Supreme Court.



RYAN BUSSE & RAPH GRAYBILL

Best Team to Lead Montana Forward

Please join Big Sky 55+ in supporting Ryan Busse for Governor, and Raph Graybill for Lt. Governor. Ryan and Raph are running a vigorous campaign earning Montanan’s confidence and trust. Ryan grew up on a family cattle ranch and wheat farm, and came to Montana working for a firearms manufacturing firm that focused on hunters. Raph is an attorney in Helena with deep roots in Great Falls, including his grandfather Leo Graybill who presided over the Montana Constitutional Convention in 1972.

Montana needs an executive team who can steer our state toward economic stability! Here are key elements of the Busse/Graybill team:

- ☑ **Unwavering commitment to our beloved 1972 Constitution.**
- ☑ **Strategies to move aggressively to build affordable housing for workers, young families and older adults downsizing.**
- ☑ **Rolling back the explosive growth in residential property taxes that shifts the cost of vital local services from wealthy and large industries onto homeowners.**
- ☑ **Ending the assault on Montana’s excellent public schools**
- ☑ **Defending Montanans’ freedom of reproductive health care and choice**
- ☑ **Preserving Montana’s affordable health care**

In 2022, eleven skilled nursing and assisted living facilities closed due to decisions made by the Gianforte Administration and the State Legislature. State leaders fell far short of covering the costs of caring for Montana’s Medicaid patients. (In senior long-term care, many hard-working elders have exhausted their savings and assets, and need Medicaid for their ongoing care.) To date, the Gianforte Administration has failed to bolster access to home and community-based services, or to ensure that Montana’s senior long-term care infrastructure does not further deteriorate. It’s time to bring in a new team to work with Montanans to move us forward.

Please join us in voting for Ryan Busse and Raph Graybill for Montana’s Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

IMPORTANT VOTING DEADLINES

OCT 7

Early voting begins

Deadline for regular voter registration

Deadline for postmark if you're mailing in your registration form. It must be received at the election office by October 10.

OCT 11

Absentee ballots begin to be sent out

OCT 18

Recommended deadline for requesting a mail-in ballot

OCT 28

Recommended deadline for mailing your ballot for on-time receipt at your local elections office

NOV 5

Election Day!
All ballots must be received at the elections office by 8pm for them to count.

Plan ahead and vote early to make your voice heard!





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Visit our website to join us and sign up to receive important updates.

Don't miss your chance! BEFORE ELECTION DAY ...

Your vote is important. Before election day, make sure your voter registration status is current so you're able to vote.

Check your voter registration status at www.voteinmt.org

- Is your **voting address** correct?
- Is your **voter status "active"**?
If not, contact your county elections office.
- If you travel or are a snowbird, be sure your **absentee mailing address** is set to where you will be when ballots are mailed on October 11.
- Are your **kids or grandkids away at college**?
Make sure their absentee mailing address is correct.

www.voteinmt.org

Complete your ballot!



The Supreme Court races for Jerry Lynch and Katherine Bidegaray will be **near the end of the**



ballot along with CR-128, the constitutional amendment to protect reproductive health care and freedoms.



Please vote the entire ballot!

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