

Respondent



12

Anonymous



18:16



Time to complete

1. Name & office you are seeking *

Jonathan Karlen (Democratic Candidate for House District 96-- North Reserve St. to Huson)

2. Housing inventories are at all-time lows in many Montana communities. As a result, rent and home sales prices are at all-time highs. Local land use regulations and development review processes add unpredictability, delays, and extra costs to developing new housing stock, directly contributing to the housing shortage and lack of affordability. State law provides the framework and authority for these local regulations and review processes. As a state legislator, you will be asked to balance many competing interests in debates over land use policy. **Will you support legislation that streamlines and supports new housing, even if it means local governments are given less control over housing development?**

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I will strongly support policies that streamline and advance the development of new housing. It is important to consistently evaluate whether regulations are serving their intended purpose and identify regulations that are overly burdensome, outdated, and/or ineffective. I would like to see the state take a more active role in assisting local governments in establishing predictable, accountable, and timely procedures for approving land use and development. In considering zoning procedures and policies that would impact the development of new housing, I believe that it is critical to ensure that the public has opportunities for input during phases of the planning process where public input can shape the final outcome. I believe that local governments are best positioned to account for community needs, citizen input, and create long-range plans that have community "buy-in." I would like to see the state strengthen the resources and flexibility that local governments have to address housing challenges.

3. Property taxes are the primary funding source for local government services and infrastructure and help to fund public education. Increasing mill levies and increasing property value assessments have left many homeowners and commercial property owners asking for relief. **How would you propose providing property tax relief to Montanans?**

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Property taxes are a primary concern for residents of House District 96 and I talk with people nearly every day who are close to being taxed out of their homes. There are numerous ways that the Legislature can provide property tax relief to Montanans without adversely impacting government services. For example, the legislature can allow any county to opt-in to the Local Resort Tax. Nearly 3 million tourists visit Missoula County and 11 Million tourists visit Montana -- failing to tax services primarily used by tourists neglects a large potential revenue stream. The repeal of the Local Option Gas Tax is another example of how the Legislature is failing to take action to address the property tax problem in MT. I am also interested in exploring proposals that establish an income tax bracket for the highest earners (>\$500,000) and use those funds to provide property tax relief.

4. Montana is one of only a few states in which sellers of real estate are not required by state law to provide potential buyers with a statement disclosing the condition of the property. **Will you support legislation that requires sellers to provide buyers a disclosure statement?**

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Yes. I believe that transparency promotes a better environment for business and, in consultation with the MOR and other stakeholders, would support legislation that requires sellers to provide buyers with a disclosure statement that includes material defects.

5. New housing and businesses require a source of water. Connecting to municipal water services is not always an option as cities are not always able or willing to extend infrastructure. In these cases, a water right must be secured through a process governed by state law and Department of Natural Resources and Conservation regulations. Reform is necessary as securing a water right is often costly, uncertain, and time-consuming. This ultimately hurts consumers and our growing communities. **Will you support legislation to streamline water right permitting processes?**

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I will support legislation to streamline the water rights permitting and adjudication process. I would consult with MOR and other stakeholders regarding specific proposals that impact exempt wells and ensure that clear and consistent rules for new water appropriations will protect existing water rights holders and not impact proposed housing development.

6. One in five homes in Montana is serviced by an onsite septic system. If properly installed and maintained, septic systems are a safe and cost-effective means of waste disposal for homeowners and businesses. Some regulations on septic systems are enforced by local health departments, and enforcement is inconsistent. For instance, how bedrooms are counted for determining what size of system is necessary and how nonconforming systems are handled varies. **Will you support legislation that brings greater consistency to enforcement of regulations on existing septic systems?** *

In consultation with MOR, I will advocate for legislation that creates a more stable and consistent regulatory landscape around septic systems.

7. REALTORS® believe that private property rights are fundamental to our free-market system and are a cornerstone upon which this nation was founded. Our United States and Montana Constitutions recognize and protect the right to own property. A strong economy depends upon preserving the right to freely own, use, and transfer real property. **If elected, what approach will you take to balancing private property rights with public interests?** *

I strongly support private property rights and believe that Montana should develop statutes and rules governing eminent domain that put in place a consistent and transparent process. When faced with decisions that balance private property rights with the public interest, I will consult with legal experts, stakeholders, and Montana case law.

8. The National Association of REALTORS include sexual orientation and gender identity anti-discrimination language in their code of ethics. Montana does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and /or gender identity. **As a state legislator would you support legislation to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and /or gender identity?** *

I strongly support legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. I will also vigorously fight any bill that attempts to marginalize Montanans based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

9. Treasurer's Name, Address and Phone Number *

Barbara Berens, PO Box 2960, Missoula, MT 59808, 406-273-1243

10. Will you accept PAC contributions? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

Thank you!

We appreciate you taking the time to complete our survey so that we might better understand your position on key issues facing our community. The committee will be evaluating surveys received and responding within a few weeks regarding next steps.