

Respondent



16

Anonymous



10:28



Time to complete

1. Name & office you are seeking *

David Severson, Representative in House Dist. 100

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 agree that we need more housing, so I am for solutions that help increase that inventory, but it is a complex problem with many different dimensions. I believe local control of development can be good at times--for example, if a community wants to insure quality housing, that will foster livable, attractive and cohesive communities. I am not sure that state laws overruling or prohibiting local decisions are always a good thing. I would have to look at the particular laws to really decide on this issue, and am open to more information on this issue.

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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We do need property tax relief at this time. I think the effort to get CI 121 on the ballot is a mistake. It would take a hatchet to our tax system, and harm local governments. I oppose CI121. Some better ways to provide tax relief would be to raise income or property taxes on the super wealthy, or look at the overall tax structure to make it more fair for middle and lower income property tax payers. I don't think some tax increase on the rich, would inhibit sales or growth in our current inflationary market-- if anything, it might slow price growth in more expensive properties. I am also understanding that there is a big surplus in the state budget, and there may be some ways to use that money, either in a short term, or even permanent ways to give folks tax relief. I am not an expert in tax policy, so I would be open to listening to other ideas or solutions.

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?** *

It seems like a disclosure statement might make sense to protect buyers, as long as the law was written to be clear that the disclosure of the condition of the property is a reasonably known condition. I would need to study the legal details of this though, and am open to arguments for or against this idea. My daughter had a close call with purchasing a house a few years ago. She was interested in buying a house, that had been remodeled significantly, and her realtor, very wisely, suggested that there be an environmental meth test done in the house, as most people in the neighborhood knew there had been a meth arrest at that property, before the remodeling. The house had not been cleaned up sufficiently, so she rejected the purchase. She was pleased with her realtor for being so alert and ethical. Again, the legal details would be key to supporting this idea or not.

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?** *

From talking with a number of voters, I understand water rights issues are very complicated, so I don't know how I feel about this issue, but am open to learning more about it.

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?** *

I know septic systems can be reasonable solutions in certain situations, and would be open to understanding more of the background on this. Standard rules at the state level, on septic systems, if they insured quality systems that didn't pollute the groundwater, might make sense.

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?** *

Property rights are pretty important to me, but this is a complex issue. If there was a compelling and overriding need for an entire community to purchase a property for an essential project, it might be needed sometimes—but the property owner would need to be an equal player in the decision, and be ultimately paid a fair market value price for a property that was needed to be purchased, by a government, for some other community use. Again, I would be open to understanding this issue more, on all sides.

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 to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and/or, gender identity.

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

My treasurer is Barbara Berens, 3010 St. Thomas Dr., Missoula, MT 59803 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.