

Respondent



20

Anonymous



03:16

Time to complete



1. Name & office you are seeking *

Tom Steenberg; Senate District 50

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 believe that most decisions that impact the lives of local residents can and should be made on a local level. The idea that 'Washington, D.C., knows best' hasn't gained much traction, and the idea that 'Helena knows best' is more of the same. The legislature should work to pass legislation that provides our state's cities and counties the needed resources to address housing issues, and our local jurisdictions should review and evaluate their policies to ensure they are solving and not contributing to the problem.

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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Rising property taxes are an issue all across our state. One method that is used in many other states is to provide property tax relief to homeowners based on their income. Utilizing a 'circuit breaker' reduces property taxes that exceed a certain percentage of a person's income. Taxes are based on a person's income levels versus the value of their home (which we all have seen rise by unforeseeable amounts). This method could also be used to address property taxes for the elderly, disabled persons, and or military veterans.

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?** *

Sure. Unless someone can convince me otherwise, I don't understand why this isn't a good idea.

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?** *

Water is the new gold. Nobody likes a permitting process that unnecessarily delays a project. While we can work to streamline the water right permitting process, we need to ensure the rights of existing water rights holders are honored and not negatively affected. All of the ramifications of new development on a water system and water table need to be analyzed and reviewed.

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?** *

Septic systems are safe and cost-effective when properly installed, operated, and maintained. They are oftentimes the only alternative available for homeowners and businesses. Regulation and enforcement of existing septic systems should be uniform and based on science and current best-practices.

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?** *

Private property rights are ingrained in our system and at this point I don't believe they're endangered. People have the right to own and use their property as they see fit unless their actions negatively impact their neighbors' rights.

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?** *

Absolutely. I applaud the National Association of REALTORS for including sexual orientation and gender identity anti-discrimination language in their code of ethics. There is no reason to discriminate against others, period.

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

Tom Steenberg, 4802 Aspen Drive, Missoula MT 59802 (406) 721-5869

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.