

Respondent



19

Anonymous



11:09



Time to complete

1. Name & office you are seeking *

Gary Stein HD 92

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 would maintain that local, municipal government leaders are more in touch with the local variables that determine housing inventories and local capacities for housing, (at all income levels). I am loathe to hand responsibility for this issue to a state legislature; of course, as your question states, there are multiple, interconnected variables and interests regarding land ownership, development, and affordable housing for all Montana residents. I will listen to the arguments in favor of greater state legislative control or administration of housing in Montana, but I'm of the opinion that the facts which form the premise of this question are not consistent across the entire state, so I would still likely support local government oversight of local housing development

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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With my wife, I am a homeowner and a responsible landlord of a single-family house; I appreciate the sentiment behind this question from multiple perspectives. I have been shocked by the deteriorating housing situation in Missoula and Montana, as presented in question 1. I would also maintain that neither the current Governor of our state, or the majority of legislators in the state, care enough about this issue to think that any of my ideas, or anyone else who isn't in line with the current political power structure in Montana, would gain any kind of fair hearing or consideration. Additionally, "cutting taxes" has been the goal of many Montana politicians of all persuasions; cutting taxes has been going on in the Montana legislature for over the last 20 years; largely Republican-led legislatures have shown they don't CARE about providing ANY PUBLIC SERVICES, so the issue of housing gets little if any political attention and absolutely no action to the benefit of the majority of Montanans. (I'll have to look into the details, but I believe property taxes aren't levied on some categories of absentee home and/or property owners; that is irresponsible and negligent legislative and executive leadership.) Sadly, realtors (and land brokers, I suspect), who I believe generally follow rules, regulations, and have an ethical standard in their practice are being overwhelmed by wealthy land developers and speculators across the state, and likely from out of state. These developers and speculators never seem to like or care about conservative rules or regulations, or the communities they enter, and don't seem to have any ethical considerations that can be identified. Far too many of these folks are being over-represented in state government, at both the executive and legislative levels. Our representative in Congress, Matt Rosendale best fits the description above. Our volunteer Governor is more than happy to open the door to the desecration of our state's land mass.

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?** *

100% absolutely I would support legislation that protects consumers. Though I don't anticipate writing this legislation, I would certainly entertain the notion of co-sponsoring this legislation, if and when the opportunity presents itself.

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 my primary campaign issue, as both a practical and existential concern. Drought is the primary issue in the Western United States, and has been since at least the Louisiana Purchase. Maps of the United States used to mark areas west of the 100th meridian as "The Great American Desert". Non-indigenous people have been fighting each other, (after control of water was denied to indigenous people), ever since. In Montana, water, not oil, coal, gas, timber causes more conflict between people than any other issue, understandably. Yet, other than the Flathead Lake Water Compact, state leaders have continually avoided resolving conflicts over water rights. I don't know what direction "reform" of the water right permitting process would look like. Securing water rights SHOULD be costly, or at least cautiously considered; water is the most valuable resource that everyone needs. Uncertainty and time-consumption are by-products of a process that should be highly regulated and controlled. As long as the process is FAIR for all citizens and isn't corrupted by private interests seeking to gain advantage of the process for private gain. If elected as a legislator, I will work to prepare Montanans for a resource market that is finite and shrinking; water is a shared resource, or a public utility, not to be "owned" by individual citizens

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?** *

Please refer in part to my answer to question 5. I would likely support legislation of this type. I would hope to write and/or co-sponsor legislation that brings consistency and fairness in regulating septic systems for homes and businesses. This is an area where I think the state should have the same regulations regardless of location in Montana. Again, water is a resource which economically is a shared consumption, so keeping our water and waste and septic systems under control of state regulations makes the most 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?** *

As previously stated, I and my wife own two properties currently. I spent 32 years as a public school teacher in U.S. History and U.S. government. The U.S. Constitution specifically protects the "life, liberty, and property" of every U.S. citizen. As a public servant, I will not act against individual property rights; however, individual property right owners do have a responsibility to the land where they live and the communities where they reside.

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 grew up in a suburban Long Island, New York community that was redlined; I didn't learn what redlining was or that my neighborhood was defined that way. until I was in 20's. I will never support legislation or legislators that restrict citizens' freedoms or opportunities based on discriminatory beliefs. As an American Jew, I have felt the oppressiveness of discrimination, and the ignorance and fear of those that discriminate based on age, race, religion, sexual orientation, mental capacity, gender assignment, tribal identity, political beliefs, physical disabilities,... As a legislator, I will work to overturn discriminatory practices and laws that have been constructed by the legislature, and to create new legislation that mirrors the individual rights expressed in the U.S. Bill of Rights. I also would like to thank the National Association of REALTORS and the Missoula Organization of Realtors for establishing, maintaining, and defending their code of ethics. In case I am not being clear enough, I will absolutely support and champion the legislation that is being discussed in question 8.

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

Presently, please use my contact information for my treasurer; my treasurer will be identified by the end of April.

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.