



Primary Election Voter Guide

Four Montana Republicans are running in the June 5 primary election for a chance to unseat Montana's Senior U.S. Senator, Democrat Jon Tester, in the Nov. 6 general election. The *Montana Free Press* surveyed the four candidates to see where they stand on 10 key issues. The candidates were asked to respond in 50 words or less to each question. Below are their responses, edited only for length and style.

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<p>Q:</p>	 <p>Troy Downing</p>	 <p>Russ Fagg</p>	 <p>Al Olszewski</p>	 <p>Matt Rosendale</p>
<p>If elected, what legislation would you support to create good, high-paying jobs?</p>	<p>Lower taxes and cut regulation. We need to get the government out of the way, unleash the economy by allowing Montanans do what they do best: invest, innovate and grow.</p>	<p>I support policies of limited government, individual responsibility, the rule of law, private property rights, and incentive-based systems. Specifically, I support modernizing the Endangered Species Act and the Equal Access to Justice Act.</p>	<p>The best legislation to create new high paying jobs is to codify the 30,000 pages of regulations eliminated by President Trump through executive order. This would make the current improvement in job creation permanent.</p>	<p>We need to grow the economy and peel back regulations, support our agriculture, hi-tech and manufacturing industries, and harness our natural resources – including coal, minerals and timber. Unlike Jon Tester, I'll stand-up and fight back against the radical environmentalists who block the creation of more good paying jobs in Montana.</p>
<p>Do you support the Affordable Care Act and if so, are there any changes you think are needed. If you don't support the ACA, what is your position on health care policy?</p>	<p>Repeal Obamacare and let the free market work. We are insuring a broken system rather than fixing what's broken. We need more transparency to see what the real costs of health care are and ensure Americans are getting actual health care not just being forced to buy health insurance.</p>	<p>No. I support more choice, competition and transparency in health care systems. I support expanded health savings accounts and more patient involvement in health care decisions. I support competition across borders and state allowed waivers of health insurance requirements – more state control.</p>	<p>I do not support the Affordable Care Act. It is a failed experiment. It will take years to undo the movement toward a single-payer system. First, we start by removing all regulations that force your doctor to limit your care to only the treatments authorized by the government.</p>	<p>We must repeal and replace Obamacare. Montana families have been devastated with higher premiums and higher deductibles that have made health care completely unaffordable. I'll continue working to expand access and reduce health care costs because we must provide more affordable options and better care to Montanans.</p>
<p>Do you favor or oppose having more or fewer restrictions on corporate money and anonymous "dark money" in federal political campaigns? What changes, if any, do you favor?</p>	<p>We are all concerned about the amount of money spent on elections, but as a constitutional conservative I support free speech and believe this is a conversation we need to keep having.</p>	<p>I am concerned with corporate money and anonymous "dark money" and understand free speech requirements under our Constitution. We need to balance these interests.</p>	<p>As your next U.S. senator, I will champion legislation that would abolish Super-PACs and prohibit elected officials from having control or directing the expenditures of these PACs.</p>	<p>I think we should have instant disclosure of campaign contributions in order to see who is giving to our candidates. I believe more transparency is better, but above all, any reform must protect our freedom of speech guaranteed to all of us by the Constitution.</p>
<p>What would you do to prevent foreign governments from tampering in U.S. elections? Would you support or oppose efforts to shut down Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling into U.S. elections?</p>	<p>The Robert Mueller investigation has gone on too long. There has been no proven collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russians. It needs to end. This is a witch hunt.</p>	<p>U.S. elections must be as tamper-proof as we can make them. The investigation into Russian meddling must be truly independent – independent of politics. Specifically, I have not yet been able to determine if the Robert Mueller investigation is truly independent of politics.</p>	<p>To prevent election tampering, voting machines need to be a closed electronic system that is separate from the Internet and encrypted. The Mueller investigation must run its course.</p>	<p>As I travel across the state, the people of Montana would like to see Mueller conclude his investigation sooner rather than later. This has been dragging on and so far, we haven't seen any evidence of collusion.</p>
<p>Do you support the Trump tax cuts? What if any changes would you propose?</p>	<p>Montanans know how to spend their own money better than the government does. Lower taxes mean more food on the table, more money flowing into the economy and small business investing in employees and growing. I support these tax cuts. Now we must simplify the tax code and reduce regulations.</p>	<p>Yes. Next we need to address health care reform, immigration reform and spending reform.</p>	<p>I support the Trump tax cuts. They will be the greatest economic stimulus program Montana has ever experienced. An estimated \$570 million will be returned to Montana every year. It's our money.</p>	<p>President Trump's tax cuts have meant bigger paychecks and more jobs for Montanans. The average Montanan will now see a \$1,600 paycheck increase every year. Unlike Senator Tester, I believe it's a good thing when you have more money in your pocket. This is a win for Montana.</p>
<p>Do you support President Trump's proposal to build a wall between the United States and Mexico? If so, how should it be financed?</p>	<p>Build the wall, stop illegal immigration, end sanctuary cities, support our law enforcement. Mexican meth is one of the biggest problems coming across our border and devastating local communities in Montana.</p>	<p>I support secure borders. We need to know who is coming into our country. I support merit-based immigration reform. If immigrants are paying taxes, have a job, and contributing to our country, then give them a place at the back of the line to become citizens.</p>	<p>I support building the wall. We can finance it by selling all the unused and empty government buildings and real estate throughout the country. The proceeds will easily pay for the wall construction.</p>	<p>We are a nation of laws. It's time we restore law and order to this country. We need to secure the border, build the wall, deport criminals and finally bring an end to sanctuary cities. Senator Tester put the needs of illegal immigrants ahead of Montanans and it's completely unacceptable.</p>
<p>What, if any, changes in federal gun laws do you support to curb gun violence?</p>	<p>I will always uphold, support and defend the Second Amendment and the U.S. Constitution. This is America. Everyone has a right to express their freedom of speech; however, we don't need more gun regulations. We need to emphasize mental health more and ensure we enforce laws on the books</p>	<p>While I do not support changes in federal gun laws, I do support changes to improve our mental health system. By definition, criminals do not follow laws.</p>	<p>I support the federal government enforcing the gun laws on the books before any additional laws are created.</p>	<p>I will always defend our right to keep and bear arms. The Constitution is crystal clear, "shall not be infringed." Understanding this is now more important than ever because our Montana way of life is under assault. With me, our Second Amendment Rights will never be up for negotiation!</p>
<p>Do you support President Trump's import tariffs? If a trade war breaks out, are you concerned that some countries could impose tariffs on U.S. agriculture?</p>	<p>The President is negotiating with other countries from a position of strength. Not folding or apologizing like President Obama did. We haven't seen the final deal, and I am confident that President Trump will negotiate the best deal possible for our ranchers and farmers.</p>	<p>No. Montana exports 80 percent of our agriculture products out of state and 50 percent out of country. I support our President but I will always put Montana first.</p>	<p>Tariffs are important tools that should be used carefully to protect our country's economic interests. We should always be concerned when tariffs are threatened or used. There are always consequences to their use.</p>	<p>The President is an expert negotiator who is starting these negotiations from a position of strength. I applaud President Trump for having the courage to stand up to China. We have every right to demand a better trade deal – a fair trade deal – that benefits our workers and our country.</p>
<p>What, if anything, should be done address the issue of climate change?</p>	<p>The climate is changing but the conversation and research is still happening as to why and what to do about that. We need to continue to have that conversation yet support and not over-regulate critical industries that provide good paying jobs like coal, timber production, and agriculture.</p>	<p>People should voluntarily do what they desire to have less of a carbon footprint.</p>	<p>We should be good stewards of our world. We should always look to reduce, reuse and recycle as we consume resources. We should always leave our environment better than the way we found it.</p>	<p>I firmly believe we can develop our natural resources and protect our environment. But, unlike Jon Tester, I'm not going to jeopardize thousands of Montana jobs and give us higher electricity prices by supporting disastrous Obama-era environmental policies that will devastate our energy producing communities.</p>
<p>Why do you think you are the best Republican primary candidate to defeat the incumbent Democratic senator in the 2018 general?</p>	<p>I am running for U.S. Senate to defeat Jon Tester and support President Trump's America First policies. I am the only candidate running who is a combat veteran and businessman who has created jobs in multiple industries. I am NOT a career politician. I will serve the people of Montana.</p>	<p>I am a fourth generation Montanan who does not need to defend being from Maryland or California. I was a District Judge for 22 years who does not have to defend moving to Montana to start my political career. I have Montana roots, Montana endorsements and the Montana grassroots support needed to win.</p>	<p>I am the best candidate to hold Jon Tester accountable for his voting record, and I am able to offer Montanans a better plan on how to fix our broken government.</p>	<p>I've reduced spending and regulations. I defended our gun and property rights and fought to protect life. As State Auditor, I cut operating costs by 23 per cent and refused a pay increase. I serve exactly as I campaign. I'll do the same as your next U.S. Senator, because I mean business.</p>