

Commissioner of Political Practices
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Campaign Finance and Practices

Complaint Form (08/17)

Type or print in ink all information on this form except for verification signature

Person bringing complaint (Complainant):

Complete Name Cliff Larsen
Complete Mailing Address 8925 Lavalley Creek Road
Missoula, MT 59808-9325
Phone Numbers: Work 406-544-6263 Home _____

Person or organization against whom complaint is brought (Respondent):

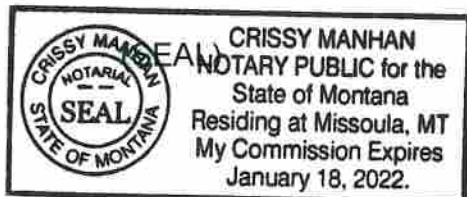
Complete Name Matt Bell for HD 94
Complete Mailing Address PO Box 8812
Missoula, MT 59802
Phone Numbers: Work _____ Home 406-544-2868

Please complete the second page of this form and describe in detail the facts of the alleged violation.

Verification by oath or affirmation

State of Montana, County of Missoula

I, Cliff Larsen, being duly sworn, state that the information in this Complaint is complete, true, and correct, to the best of my knowledge and belief.



[Signature]
Signature of Complainant

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 29 day of May, 2018.

[Signature]
Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

Statement of facts:

Describe in detail the alleged violation(s) and cite the statute or statutes you believe have been violated. Please attach copies of documentary evidence to support the facts alleged in your statement.

If the space provided below is insufficient, you may attach additional pages as necessary.

Matt Bell is running for election to House District 94. This seat is currently held by Rep. Kimberly Dudik and she has filed for reelection. Bell initially filed for House District 91 but switched to House District 94 on the last day of filing supposedly because he thought it may be an easier race with less opponents. He chose not to run against any of the three male Republicans running for reelection in Missoula County and chose instead to run against a three time female incumbent Democrat who has ben extremely effective advancing good policy for the People of Montana. Candidate Bell has violated Montana law in various ways that make this complaint to the Commission on Political Practices appropriate.

1. Bell violated section 13-35-402, MCA by failing to comply with the Clean Campaign Act.

Matt Bell sent out a mailer that hit mailboxes on May 26, 2018. This is within 10 days prior to the primary election. Bell repeatedly uses the name of his opponent, Rep. Kimberly Dudik, and did not notify her of this mailing or provide her with a copy of it as he is required to do pursuant to section 13-35-402, M.C.A.

With his actions, Bell violated section 13-35-402, M.C.A. To wit, he provided a mailing that specifically named his opponent by name, distributing the printed material publicly in the 10- days prior to the June 5, 2018, Election Day. Identical material was not previously published. The mailing was received at my home, home of Cliff Larsen, 8925 Lavalley Creek Rd., Missoula, MT 59808-9324, on May 26, 2018 – within 10 days of the election. The material was not provided in any form to Rep. Dudik even though she filed for reelection to the same office Bell is seeking and she was individually identified. A final copy of the material was not provided to Rep. Dudik on the date it was disseminated to the public or when it was made public.

SEE THE ATTACHED SHEETS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON VIOLATIONS

Complaints must be:

- **signed**
- **notarized**
- **delivered in person or by mail.**

2. Bell violated section 13-35-225, M.C.A. by making claims regarding Rep. Dudik's voting record and activities as a public official that are false and misleading.

Bell makes the following claims that are untrue, misleading, complete fabrications, and deceptive.

a. Bell claims false endorsements from organizations.

Bell made false statements in his flier regarding endorsements.

(1) He claims he is endorsed by Montana Conservation Voters and Planned Parenthood of Montana. In fact, Montana Conservations Voters endorsed his opponent, Rep. Kimberly Dudik, in the race.

(2) Additionally, Planned Parenthood of Montana itself did not endorse anybody – it is not an entity that becomes involved in political races. However, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Montana did endorse in the race. Planed Parenthood Advocates of Montana endorsed his opponent, Rep. Kimberly Dudik.

(3) Bell claims MEA-MFT endorsed him in the race. In fact, MEA-MFT made no endorsements in the race so Bell was in fact NOT endorsed by MEA-MFT.

b. Bell makes egregious false claims regarding Rep. Dudik's voting record and activities.

(1) Bell falsely claims Rep. Dudik was the “Only Missoula Democrat to vote to force Colstrip to stay open without helping the workers; keeping coal trains running through our neighborhoods.” Bell does not note what bill he is referencing regarding this vote on his mailing, as required by section 13-35-225(3)(a)(i). However, in a Missoula Independent article, “With the June 5 primary approaching, these are the candidates and contests to watch.” (April 26, 2018), Bell stated the bill he was referencing was SB 140. SB 140 did not “force Colstrip to stay open without helping the workers” or “keep coal trains running through our neighborhoods.” The bill dealt with infrastructure funding like for wastewater treatment, sanitary sewers or storm sewer systems, solid waste disposal and separation systems, roads, and bridges. This is the kind of crumbling infrastructure that we have throughout the state that needs funding was partially taken care of by this bill. In fact, Rep. Dudik has been a vocal supporter of the need to provide worker transition training when large employers, such as this close. It would have been helpful when the mill in Frenchtown, Montana, her hometown shut down and she never forgets that.

Bell falsely claims Rep. Dudik was the only Democrat from Missoula to vote for that bill. In fact, *nine* democrats from Missoula alone (as well as other Democrats across the state) voted for the bill. The Missoula legislators were Rep. Nate McConnell, Rep. Willis Curdy, Rep. Andrea Olsen, Rep. Shane Morigeau, Sen. Tom Facey, Sen. Sue Malek, Sen. Diane Sands, Sen. Cynthia Woken, and Sen. Dick Barrett. A majority of the

democratic delegation from Missoula voted for that bill as this vote count shows:
[http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0211W\\$BLAC.VoteTabulation?P_VOTE_SEQ=H1824&P_SESS=20171](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0211W$BLAC.VoteTabulation?P_VOTE_SEQ=H1824&P_SESS=20171)
[http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0211W\\$BLAC.VoteTabulation?P_VOTE_SEQ=S326&P_SESS=20171](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0211W$BLAC.VoteTabulation?P_VOTE_SEQ=S326&P_SESS=20171)

Bell does not reference a particular vote upon which the information is based as required by section 13-35-225(3)(a)(i), M.C.A. He also did not disclose all votes made by Rep. Dudik on the same legislative bill as required by section 13-35-225(3)(a)(ii), M.C.A. Bell failed to provide a signed statement that the statements made regarding Rep. Dudik's voting record are accurate and true in violation of section 13-35-225(3)(a)(iii) and (b), M.C.A.

(2) Bell claims Rep. Dudik "Voted to raise Court fines on poor people in an effort to raise funds for the police." Bell does not reference a particular vote upon which the information is based as required by section 13-35-225(3)(a)(i), M.C.A. Rep. Dudik did not vote to increase fines. In fact, she worked nonstop last session to help make our criminal justice system focus more on rehabilitation and ways to improve social justice. Rep. Dudik voted to do the exact opposite with her support of House Bill 133 that lowered fines and changed sentencing so that people were not incarcerated for various lower level offenses.

Moreover, Rep. Dudik has been a leader in attempting to help people break out of the criminal justice cycle. She served as Chairwoman for the Office of State Public Defender Task Force and created, sponsored, and passed House Bill 89. This bill created the holistic/nonrecidivist public defense project that attempts to help people deal with underlying causes of criminal behavior, including such things as substance abuse, mental health issues, and housing. This program, now in four different locations, provides wraparound public defense services to provide various levels of support to help people deal with problems they are facing that increase their likelihood of being involved in the criminal justice system. This innovative, progressive bill is thought to have created the only *state*-funded program such as this in the nation.

(3) Bell claims Rep. Dudik voted against Governor Bullock and Montana wildlife programs in their effort to manage public lands. Bell does not reference a particular vote upon which the information is based as required by section 13-35-225(3)(a)(i), M.C.A. Rep. Dudik is a strong supporter of Montana's wildlife, Montana's waters and land, and access to Montana's waters and land. This is shown by her strong voting record with Montana Conservation Voters (MCV) and that they have endorsed her in all of her legislative races. Notably, they endorsed her over Bell in this primary election. In a stroke of dishonest politicking, Bell falsely claims he has been endorsed by MCV over Dudik.

(4) Bell claims Rep. Dudik "Voted against MEA/MFT and public employees closing a state facility that aids the disabled." This statement is inconsistent with the facts – Rep. Dudik has never voted against MEA-MFT and supports the union. Rep.

Dudik did also not vote against public employees and has worked fiercely during the legislature to ensure public employees have good pay, retirement, and suitable working conditions. Bell does not reference a particular vote upon which the information is based as required by section 13-35-225(3)(a)(i), M.C.A. Dudik is a strong supporter of MEA-MFT and has been endorsed by them in all 3 of her prior races. She also has very high scores from them for her legislative record.

Although Bell does not reference a bill, it *might* be assumed he is referencing the vote to close the Montana Developmental Center with Senate Bill 411 in 2015. Rep. Dudik is a long-time advocate of crime victims, being an attorney who represents crime victims, as well as having experience as a domestic violence advocate. She voted with a lot of Democrats across the state who decided that we needed to do something else to provide for those with developmental disabilities at the Montana Developmental Center because, despite being given years to change the danger to patients there, patients were being assaulted (sexually and otherwise) by workers and other patients at the facility. Rep. Dudik chose to support the safety of the patients there - it was a human rights issue and Rep. Dudik votes to protect people from abuse. Additionally, plans were made to continue providing care for those patients who needed it so they were not left without care. Rep. Dudik, along with many other Democrat and Republican legislators, chose to not put state jobs above patient safety.

(5) Bell claims Rep. Dudik is the “Only Democrat who routinely attends out-of-state conferences funded by the National Rifle Association” which is false and misleading with reckless disregard for the truth. Rep. Dudik does not attend National Rifle Association conferences, routinely or otherwise. Rep. Dudik does work and is a member of many national organizations that are bipartisan/nonpartisan and who are supported by broad coalitions of people and organizations. Rep. Dudik attends all manner of nonpartisan conferences and the National Rifle Association does not fund those conferences. Bell appears more interested in scoring dishonest political points than attempting accurate representation of what he thinks distinguishes himself from an accomplished legislator like Rep. Dudik.

Rep. Dudik is the type of politician we need more of – she finds that if you can find a way to make common connections with people, even when you do not agree on all issues, you are actually able to work through complex issues and find consensus on some topics that move our state forward. Her work on protecting children from abuse, working to combat human trafficking, reforming the public defender system, and other criminal justice reforms are proof that her nonjudgmental, inclusive approach actually are positive for improving public policy in Montana. We should be encouraging our elected officials to put partisanship aside and work for the common good – not condemning those who are willing to work with others even if they do not agree on all issues. Perhaps if more politicians and candidates for public office acted in this way, our national political system would not seem so dysfunctional.

(6) Bell claims “Dudik prides herself as being a ‘moderate’ like Attorney General Tim Fox. TIM FOX FOR IS A REPUBLICAN.” At no time has Rep. Dudik

ever claimed she is “like Attorney General Tim Fox”, or that she “prides herself on being a ‘moderate’ like Attorney General Tim Fox.” Bell implies Rep. Dudik made these statements which is completely false.

In fact, Governor Steve Bullock and Senator Jon Tester have both been called moderates many times. If people believe Rep. Dudik is a moderate, it is more likely it is in line with moderate Gov. Bullock or Sen. Tester since they are from the same democratic political party as her.

(7) Bell includes a logo for Bernie Sanders, implying he is endorsed by Sen. Bernie Sanders or he is attempting to lead voters to believe he is endorsed by Sen. Sanders. Bell is not endorsed by Sen. Sanders. In fact, Bell’s blatantly false and misleading statements are the antithesis of what Sen. Sanders has advocated for; campaign reform, getting money out of politics, and having more transparency and integrity in our elections. Look at <http://feelthebern.org/bernie-sanders-on-political-and-electoral-reform/> for these statements.

c. Bell violated section 45-8-212, M.C.A., Criminal Defamation, with all of these actions.

Bell has made multiple statements regarding endorsements that are plainly false and statements regarding Rep. Dudik that are misleading and plainly false.

Bell made these statements to expose Rep. Dudik, as delineated in section 45-8-212(1), MCA to “hatred, contempt, ridicule, degradation, or disgrace in society” and “injury to [Rep. Dudik’s] business or occupation” as a legislator, public official, and an officer of the court as an attorney. Bell made these statements, knowing of their defamatory character, in writing by submitting a mailing (a political postcard) to the voters of House District 94 in Missoula County, Montana. Rep. Dudik did not consent to the publication of this untrue, defamatory material.

Bell’s actions clearly fall within the criminal defamation statute and should be pursued as such. It is time we as a society hold our elected officials and candidates accountable to the law.

MONTANA HOUSE
65th Legislative Session
2017 Regular Session
VOTE TABULATION

DATE: April 21, 2017
TIME: 01:15 PM
Agenda--Third Reading

SEQ. NO: 1824
BILL NO: SB 140
SPONSOR: Ankney, Duane

Do Concur

YEAS	NAYS	EXCUSED	ABSENT
56	44	0	0
N Abbott, Kim	N Essmann, Jeff	Y Kelker, Kathy	N Regier, Matt
Y Anderson, Fred	N Fern, Dave	Y Kipp, George	N Ricci, Vince
N Bachmeier, Jacob	Y Fitzgerald, Ross	N Knokey, Jon	N Rosendale, Adam
N Ballance, Nancy	Y Fleming, John	Y Knudsen, Casey	N Ryan, Marilyn
N Bartel, Dan	Y Flynn, Kelly	Y Knudsen, Austin	Y Sales, Walt
N Beard, Becky	Y Funk, Moffie	Y Lavin, Steve	N Schreiner, Casey
N Bennett, Bryce	N Galt, Wylie	N Lenz, Dennis	Y Shaw, Ray
Y Berglee, Seth	Y Garner, Frank	Y Loge, Denley	N Sheldon-Galloway, Lola
Y Bishop, Laurie	N Glimm, Carl	Y Lynch, Ryan	Y Skees, Derek
N Brodehl, Randy	Y Greef, Edward	N Mandeville, Forrest	N Smith, Bridget
Y Brown, Zach	Y Grubbs, Bruce	N Manzella, Theresa	Y Staffanson, Scott
Y Brown, Bob	N Gunderson, Steve	Y McCarthy, Kelly	Y Stewart-Peregoy, Sharon
N Burnett, Tom	N Hamilton, Jim	Y McConnell, Nate	Y Swanson, Kathy
Y Cook, Rob	Y Hamlett, Bradley	Y McKamey, Wendy	Y Trebas, Jeremy
Y Court, Virginia	N Harris, Bill	Y Morigeau, Shane	N Tschida, Brad
Y Cuffe, Mike	N Hayman, Denise	N Mortensen, Dale	Y Usher, Barry
Y Curdy, Willis	N Hertz, Greg	N Noland, Mark	Y Vinton, Sue
N Curtis, Amanda	N Hertz, Adam	N O'Hara, James	Y Wagoner, Kirk
Y Custer, Geraldine	N Hill Smith, Ellie	Y Olsen, Andrea	Y Webb, Peggy
Y Doane, Alan	N Holmlund, Kenneth	Y Patelis, Jimmy	N Webber, Susan
Y Dudik, Kimberly	N Hopkins, Mike	Y Peppers, Rae	Y Welch, Tom
N Dunwell, Mary Ann	Y Jacobson, Tom	Y Perry, Zac	N White, Kerry

N Eck, Jennifer	N Jones, Donald	Y Pierson, Gordon	Y Windy Boy, Jonathan
Y Ehli, Ron	Y Karjala, Jessica	N Price, Jean	Y Woods, Tom
Y Ellis, Janet	Y Keane, Jim	N Redfield, Alan	Y Zolnikov, Daniel

MONTANA SENATE
65th Legislative Session
2017 Regular Session
VOTE TABULATION

DATE: February 09, 2017
TIME: 01:30 PM
Agenda--Third Reading

SEQ. NO: 326
BILL NO: SB 140
SPONSOR: Ankney, Duane

Do Pass

YEAS	NAYS	EXCUSED	ABSENT
48	0	2	0

Y Ankney, Duane	Y Gross, Jen	Y Moore, Frederick (Eric)	Y Smith, Cary
Y Barrett, Dick	Y Hinebauch, Steve	Y Olszewski, Albert	E Swandal, Nels
Y Blasdel, Mark	Y Hinkle, Jedediah	Y Osmundson, Ryan	Y Tempel, Russel (Russ)
Y Boland, Carlie	Y Hoven, Brian	Y Phillips, Mike	Y Thomas, Fred
Y Brown, Dee	Y Howard, David	Y Pommichowski, JP	Y Vance, Gordon
Y Buttrey, Edward	Y Jones, Llew	Y Regier, Keith	Y Vincent, Chas
Y Caferro, Mary	Y Kary, Douglas (Doug)	Y Richmond, Tom	Y Vuckovich, Gene
Y Cohenour, Jill	Y Keenan, Bob	Y Sales, Scott	Y Webb, Roger
Y Connell, Pat	Y Lang, Mike	Y Salomon, Daniel	Y Welborn, Jeffrey
Y Facey, Tom	Y MacDonald, Margaret (Margie)	Y Sands, Diane	E Whitford, Lea
Y Fielder, Jennifer	Y Malek, Sue	Y Sesso, Jon	Y Wolken, Cynthia
Y Fitzpatrick, Steve	Y McClafferty, Edith (Edie)	Y Small, Jason	
Y Gauthier, Terry	Y McNally, Mary	Y Smith, Frank	

With the June 5 primary approaching, these are the candidates and contests to watch.

Missoula County Commissioner

Indy staff Apr 26, 2018

Incumbent Jean Curtiss is running for a fourth six-year term as Missoula County Commissioner. After 18 years, she wants to continue her work, she says.

“Probably, to me, the biggest challenge facing the county is all the cutbacks from [the Department of] Health and Human Services,” Curtiss says. “I think economic development and health and human services are the two most important things. Fitting in with all of that is attainable housing.”



Curtiss says she still has an appetite for the scope of these challenges and many more that face the county, from wildfire protection to environmental cleanup to attracting industry.

“One of the reasons I love this job is there’s so many things, there’s just soup to nuts, what you get to work on. The things you can work on where you can see that your efforts made a difference, that the county’s efforts made a difference, that’s what makes it all worthwhile in the end.”

Since winning her first election in 2000, Curtiss has been involved in Missoula-changing initiatives including Superfund cleanups and the

formation of the Missoula Economic Partnership. A conversation about her current priorities jumps from early childhood development to jail diversion to the county fairgrounds. How does she feel about a primary race that may present more of a contest than she's seen before?

“I have a record of being successful at making a difference for people in Missoula County, and I hope people continue to look at that and see I still have the passion and the energy to continue.”

Her challenger is first-time candidate Josh Slotnick, best known to Missoulians for his work in agriculture. Slotnick cofounded Garden City Harvest and the PEAS program in the University of Montana's Environmental Studies program, and his wife, Kim Murchison, runs their family farm, Clark Fork Organics. Slotnick says he had been thinking about running for the past two years and anticipated that Curtiss would retire at the end of her third term. When the county commission voted last year 2-1 to approve the Spurgin Ranch Subdivision, which included farmland that Slotnick says is of the highest agricultural quality, he saw it as not just a loss of irreplaceable agricultural land, but as a precedent that bodes poorly for the future of the county.



Jean Curtiss

“There will be no other piece of ground that is of as high quality that comes before the commissioners to be subdivided. This was the best of the best,” he says. “And if they could say, ‘No, screw it, concrete, houses, that’s the best thing we’re going to do here,’ it’s done. There’s not going to be any more ag-land preservation. Because no other piece of land will match the quality this piece of property had. And it just doesn’t have to be that way.”

Curtiss, perhaps anticipating Slotnick’s angle, provided the Indy a spreadsheet of nine subdivisions approved by the county since the commissioners declined to adopt regulations for ag-land protection in 2016. Of the nine, the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition of Missoula County, which shares Slotnick’s concern for ag-land preservation, requested denial of two: Spurgin Ranch and B&M Zoo. Curtiss’ notes say that Montana would need a statewide fund, and not just county regulations, to ensure that

landowners receive a fair price for their land if they're prevented from selling to developers.

As the challenger, it falls to Slotnick to show voters how he differs from the incumbent, and his call for the county to codify ag-land protections is a major point of distinction from Curtiss. He also lives outside the city limits, in the Target Range area, where he can get an earful from county residents who often feel underrepresented in local government. Curtiss lives in the city, like the majority of Missoula County residents. And while Curtiss considers actively attracting business to the area an important part of her work, Slotnick says that economic growth is driven in large part by in-migration.



Josh Slotnick

“People choose to live here. That’s the engine of our growth. So if we want to continue this prosperity, we need to continue to be a highly desirable place to live,” he says. “And we don’t need to fall over backwards to encourage bitcoin

factories in terms of economic development. What we need to do is maintain our beautiful landscape and access to public land and our vibrant culture.”

Slotnick does, though, have at least one thing in common with Curtiss: an endorsement from Mayor John Engen, which Curtiss has had in the past, but which Engen pledged to Slotnick at an April 6 fundraiser for his campaign at the Roxy Theater. In response to the Indy’s request for comment, Engen wrote in an email that he’d intended to remain neutral in the race, as he told the Missoulian in early April. “But Josh stood in front of a small crowd at the Roxy and spoke about community values and constituent service in a way that inspired me,” Engen wrote. “I think Jean and I have done our best to support each other despite some disagreements and I appreciate her hard work. But at this point, I want more from county government. For me, the status quo isn’t enough.”

Susan Elizabeth Shepard

Missoula County Sheriff

“Bitter” is the district court’s description of the 2014 primary race between then-Undersheriff Josh Clark and now-Sheriff T.J. McDermott.

The rematch is just as nasty. Clark is picking up right where he left off four years ago: attacking his rival’s integrity and fitness for office.

Clark has promised to use his latest campaign against McDermott to offer a “voter education series,” which so far seems to mean airing the office’s dirty laundry. In his first missive of this spring’s primary, Clark published a lengthy Facebook post accusing McDermott of covering up an excessive-force investigation into a deputy’s treatment of a handcuffed suspect. Details of the controversy were later revealed by the Missoulian. The deputy, Douglas Hartsell, was being investigated after fellow deputies complained about his actions during the November incident, the paper reported. The situation

came to light this month only after Hartsell left the department due to an unrelated medical issue, the Missoulian reported. Hartsell had resigned from the department once before, after being charged with DUI in 2005, but McDermott rehired him in 2016.

+16

T.J. McDermott

McDermott beat Clark easily in the 2014 primary, but the battle never really ended. Clark went on to run a write-in campaign in the general election, only to lose again. Once sheriff, McDermott reassigned the undersheriff to patrol. Clark retired and filed a human-rights complaint alleging that McDermott

had retaliated against him on the basis of his political beliefs. The Montana Human Rights Bureau eventually ruled against Clark in a case a hearing officer declared was “tremendously close.”

Clark has since asked a judge in Missoula County District Court to review the ruling. The case is ongoing.

McDermott, seeking his second term, has received high-profile endorsements, including the mayor’s. As for accomplishments, McDermott can point to adoption of the city-county jail diversion plan he helped champion. Clark, meanwhile, pledges to bring greater transparency to the department and to crack down on deputies who breach the public trust.

Clark hammered McDermott over the Hartsell investigation at a recent candidate forum in Seeley Lake. Hartsell and his father attended the event, the Missoulian reported, leading to a confrontation outside the event between Hartsell’s father and Clark. Clark alleges that Hartsell’s father threatened “to take us out back and show us old-west justice” before another deputy intervened.



Josh Clark

“As a student of history, I cannot help but be reminded of the early years of the Gestapo, when they would go into beer halls and beat anyone that showed political opposition to their cause,” Clark wrote in his account of the incident posted to his campaign website. “Is this what we have become in Missoula County?”

Even if McDermott fends off Clark for a third time, his path to re-election won't be cleared. Another Sheriff's office deputy, Travis Wafstet, is challenging McDermott as an independent. He, too, is making pointed criticisms of McDermott's leadership, including the department's purchase of

a supercharger for a patrol vehicle that a captain then used to tow his personal boat.

“Way to tell the truth Travis!” Clark wrote on his own campaign Facebook page. “Keep up the good work.”

Derek Brouwer

House District 89

In late February, two-term state Rep. Nate McConnell got a promotion. Fellow Democrat Cynthia Wolken had announced her resignation from Senate District 48 just six weeks earlier, to take a job as deputy director for the Montana Department of Corrections. Missoula County commissioners unanimously chose McConnell to fill Wolken’s shoes and, a month later, chose Dave Severson to pinch-hit for McConnell.

+16

Dirk Williams

Those dominoes are done falling, but their impact will resonate into the 2018

midterm elections. With McConnell now running to retain SD 48, and Severson having been appointed to office after the filing deadline, House District 89 is a race without an incumbent. And the field of Democrats vying for a chance to carry their party's flag into the general election is robust and diverse.

+16

Jon Van Dyke

After an unsuccessful bid for a City Council seat in Ward 3 last year, Jon Van Dyke has shifted his sights to the state house. His work with the Zootown Arts Community Center and his position as general manager of Missoula's KFGM community radio station make Van Dyke a pretty recognizable personality around town. A stint with the Montana Democratic Legislative Campaign

Committee in 2014 also gives him an air of familiarity with common Democratic issues, namely infrastructure and education. He's also expressed an interest in lands conservation and the state of Montana's health-care budget.

+16

Katie Sullivan

Also in the running is former City Council member Patrick Weasel Head, a retired college educator and administrator who was appointed to the Ward 4

seat vacated by Caitlin Copple in 2015. He lost that seat in a municipal election later that year, but those eight months in office are still enough to make him the most politically experienced candidate in the HD 89 Democratic primary. Weasel Head was also the council's first Native American member and co-sponsored the resolution that turned Columbus Day into Indigenous Peoples Day. His campaign thus far has focused mostly on issues of equality and fairness, and he's drawn support from Rep. Shane Morigeau, D-Missoula. In January, Van Dyke even withdrew his candidacy and backed Weasel Head in a Facebook post, but rescinded that endorsement and re-entered the race later the same day.

Several other local Democratic leaders including Mayor John Engen have thrown their weight behind Katie Sullivan, a Missoula attorney specializing in trademark, patent and copyright law. Sullivan's campaign website lists a host of positions on issues ranging from health-care access and education to entrepreneurship and net neutrality. The process of lawmaking isn't entirely foreign to Sullivan; she helped McConnell craft the Montana Biometric Information Privacy Act, which would have required private companies to gain consent from individuals before acquiring biometric data like fingerprints and photos. The bill got hung up in the House Judiciary Committee last year, but Sullivan has made it part of her campaign. She also has an endorsement from McConnell.

Rounding out the Democratic primary ticket in HD 89 is Crowley Fleck attorney Dirk Williams. Save for a brief college-age stint with Montana Legislative Services in the early 1980s, Williams has largely operated outside the political world until now. As a candidate, he's made public lands, public education, job creation and an equitable tax system the key points of his campaign. He's also noted that, given how crowded this primary is, every vote will count.

Williams isn't wrong. While the HD 89 race has been fairly quiet to this point — and is likely to remain civil throughout — expect the volume to get turned up to at least eight as the June 5 showdown creeps closer.

Alex Sakariassen

House District 91

Bryce Bennett didn't face a general-election opponent in 2016, when he won his fourth and final term to the reliably blue House District 91, representing the Rattlesnake, parts of downtown Missoula and the university district.

Whoever prevails in this spring's crowded Democratic primary will face a Republican, Aldo Sardot, in the fall, but that race isn't likely to be nearly as competitive. Three of the four Democrats running for HD 91 started campaigning a year ago, yielding a diverse field in which key party endorsements are split between two apparent frontrunners.

+16

Connie Keogh

Connie Keogh, a retired teacher, won the backing of the district's state senator, Sue Malek, as well as county commissioner Dave Strohmeier and City Council members Gwen Jones and Heather Harp. Keogh cites her career

teaching elementary and special education and involvement with Montana conservation organizations as contributing to her political ambitions. K–12 funding and environmental issues are among Keogh’s top priorities, but her platform is wide-ranging, and includes improved access to abortions for rural and low-income women, raising taxes on the wealthy to restore funding for health-care services and policies that promote renewable-energy development.

+16

Alex Gray

Mayor John Engen tops the list of supporters backing Nancy de Pastino. De

Pastino's platform hits many of the same notes as Keogh's, but de Pastino stands out on gun control. She's spent the last several years pushing gun reform, including the city's background-check ordinance, as founder of the Missoula chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. And she is owning her activism as she runs for the state legislature, going so far as to call out her party's congressional candidates for failing to express support for expanded background checks at a Missoula forum. It's not surprising then that de Pastino has also won the endorsement of fellow progressive Missoula activist Erin Erickson, founder of Missoula Rises.

Eric Love, a CrossFit coach originally from Maine, hasn't launched a public-facing campaign. But flanking Keogh and de Pastino to the left is Alex Gray, a Great Falls native and enrolled member of the Little Shell tribe. Gray, who holds an associate degree in business, advertises his working class background — he's worked in grocery stores, gas stations, construction sites and group homes — and his recent experience working as a word processor and committee secretary during the last three state legislative sessions. Gray supports legalized recreational marijuana, single-payer health care and tribal sovereignty. His platform also includes specific environmental causes, such as building more animal-crossing bridges over highways and lining and covering canals. Gray may be a longshot, but at least he's secured an endorsement from Helena Mayor Wilmot Collins, who knows something about election-night upsets.

Derek Brouwer

House District 92

In early April, Seeley Lake retiree Larry Dunham took aim at Rep. Mike Hopkins on Facebook, claiming that the freshman Republican wasn't working out well for rural constituents in House District 92. Dunham built his thesis around three facts: Hopkins grew up in Missoula, attended the University of Montana and still lives in the city. Dunham then pivoted to an assurance that he, a "Conservative Constitutionalist Republican," would serve with ears open to the district.



Mike Hopkins

Though nowhere near as nasty as the current grudge match for sheriff, the Republican primary in House District 92 this year does have an unmistakably similar sequel vibe. Hopkins rose to the top of a three-way primary that included Dunham in 2016, and managed to squeak into office just 98 votes ahead of Democrat Addrien Marx in that year's general election.

During his first term in office, Hopkins sat on the House Appropriations Committee, an important yet dreary gig that will undoubtedly saddle his campaign with questions about the deep budget cuts enacted by the Legislature in 2017. He sponsored a suite of bills relating to tax relief, municipal gun laws, education and veterans. Only two made it to committee, both measures touching on emergency care for veterans, and both died there. In the wake of UM's controversy over an event featuring right-wing provocateur Mike Adams, Hopkins vowed to carry legislation revising free-speech laws at universities if re-elected. He's also criticized the city of Missoula's decision to litigate a local ordinance expanding background checks on firearm sales, stating that legislators will change state law if necessary to clarify that cities have no authority to pass such ordinances.

Larry Dunham

Also in the running in HD 92 is newcomer Derek “DJ” Smith. A Sentinel High School grad, Smith now works as a Realtor in town and has advocated for the industry through the Montana Association of Realtors’ Government Affairs Committee. His campaign platform is extensive, from protecting public lands and rural Montana to fighting for attainable housing and against tax increases on the middle class. Smith also notes the devastation wrought on the state’s mental health community by last year’s budget cuts, and vows to

fight for adequate funding.

Dunham, a Bozeman native and former banker who returned to Montana in 2007, has meanwhile focused much of his campaign on pushing back against tax increases at the state level. He proposes that any that do pass should come with a sunset clause. He's been critical of Wilderness Study Areas, and touts coal, oil, timber and tourism as sources of income that Montana needs to promote. Dunham has served on the Seeley Lake Community Council and currently sits on Missoula County's Election Advisory Committee.

+16

Dunham appears to be back for blood, leveling repeated attacks against his past and present rival. With Smith in the mix, Hopkins' hopes for a second term rest in his ability to repeat past success. For Dunham, success would mean an upbeat third installment in his HD 92 trilogy — he primaryed then-incumbent Doc Moore in 2014, and lost.

Alex Sakariassen

House District 94

Kimberly Dudik wasn't expecting a primary challenge as she headed toward her fourth and final race to keep her term-limited HD 94 seat. But then Willard Alternative High School teacher Matt Bell, who had originally filed to run in HD 91, chose to change districts and challenge Dudik for the Democratic nomination.

“I was surprised that another Democrat would want to challenge me, especially when they had filed in another district before, and then instead of changing to challenge a sitting Republican and maybe gain a seat for the Democrats, they chose to challenge me,” Dudik says. “There's three other male Republicans they could have challenged, but instead they chose to challenge a female Democrat. I just found it interesting.”



Kimberly Dudik

Bell says he changed districts because he discovered that HD 91, where he initially filed, already had a slate of progressive candidates, whereas HD 94, in his view, needed a more leftist voice. “From what I’ve heard, the current representative in 94 considers herself a moderate Democrat,” Bell says. “It’s my intention to be a little less than moderate, [to be] more progressive, and give people that option.”

Dudik does say she’s found bipartisan camaraderie to be rewarding, but she also says that her record is a progressive one. It’s also been productive, as she’s gathered a number of successful bills under her belt, over the last two sessions in particular.

A self-described “Bernie Democrat,” Bell became galvanized by protests at Standing Rock, which he attended in September 2016. “A number of things happened at that place [that] I thought could eventually happen here in Montana, and I want to be a voice in that struggle as much as I can be,” Bell says.

One of the record number of Native American candidates running for office in this election, Bell says he's committed to renewable energy. He's also been an active teachers union representative, serving as building representative, high school representative at large for the Missoula Education Association and director-at-large for the MEA-MFT state board of directors.

+16

Matt Bell

In the press release announcing his run, Bell wrote, "...I was keenly aware that my representative was the only Missoula Democrat who voted for coal trucks to continue to travel through our community." Asked what vote he referred to, Bell said that he had been thinking about SB 140, the bill that

passed during the last session that allows funds from the Coal Tax Trust Fund to be loaned for Colstrip infrastructure maintenance.

One way or another, this could be Dudik's last statehouse campaign. She's considering her options for 2020. Would she like to follow in the footsteps of one of her bipartisan collaborators, Attorney General Tim Fox? "I think that that would be a great job. I think that it's kind of the same things that I've been doing in the legislature, but it's more of a way to do it statewide."

Susan Elizabeth Shepard



Matt Bell is a proven voice for progressive values

- ✓ Endorsed by Montana Conservation Voters
- ✓ Endorsed by Planned Parenthood of Montana
- ✓ Endorsed by MEA/MFT and serves on statewide board of directors
- ✓ Matt Bell is the only candidate in this race endorsed by NORML of Montana -- over his opponent-- because of his staunch support of access to medical marijuana, as well as legalization of adult use cannabis, and advocacy for the decriminalization of marijuana.

**NO
NRA
MONEY**

Bernie

THE TRUTH. NOT ALL DEMOCRATS ARE THE SAME.

rd as a "moderate" Democrat:

Democrat to vote to force Colstrip to stay open without helping the workers;
 rains running through our neighborhoods.
 Montana Conservation Voters)
 local food (HB352)
 court fines on poor people in an effort to raise funds for the police
 Governor Bullock and Montana wildlife programs in their effort to manage
 Montana Audubon scorecard)
 MEA/MFT and public employees closing a state facility that aids the disabled
 Democrat who routinely attends out-of-state conferences funded by the
 Association
 herself as being a "moderate" like Attorney General Tim Fox.
 REPUBLICAN.





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MATT BELL

MISSOULA'S PROGRESSIVE CHOICE

Matt Bell, a Willard Alternative and Big Sky High School teacher, Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE) at-large board member, new father, and enrolled Montana tribal member was born on Montana's High Line and is a member of Nakoda and Aaniiih Nations of Fort Belknap.

"As a statewide board member for our teacher's union and a voter committed to clean air and clean water, I was keenly aware that my representative was the only Missoula Democrat who voted for coal trucks to continue to travel through our community and this frustrates me as a new father and Native American who stands in protest of the pipeline. But when my students at Willard told me about her votes that harm impoverished Montanans, I decided it was time to give voters a progressive choice. I am the solid voice for Missoula's values."

— Matt Bell, Candidate for HD94 Missoula, Montana

www.MattBell4Montana.com