

THE RINO RACKET

Taking Advantage of Uninformed Citizens

WRITTEN BY
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In the winter edition of *The Liberty Bell*, there were many articles, letters to the editor, etc., expounding on the troubles the Treasure State is having with Republican candidates being elected only to turn around and act like Democrats. For this reason, the 2025 Montana Legislative Session proved to be less than optimal. Indeed, it was a lot less than optimal. As a result, the average Montanan will be paying higher taxes and newly implemented taxes.

Interesting to note is that there are many citizens who vote in every election, who later say they thought they were voting for conservative government when they voted for their Republican candidate. Therein lies the confusion. Being a Republican does not make the candidate a constitutional conservative. Nor does it mean that Republican candidates will represent constitutionally conservative values simply by being registered to run as a Republican.

During elections, most Republican candidates, and even some Democrats, make the claim of being *the* conservative candidate. Unfortunately, here we are in the year 2025, and the average voter is still believing that line. The truth is, almost everyone running for public office is a conservative, wink-wink, in an election year.

Then, of course, there is the liberal Republican (RINO) who will say something along the lines of, “*I’m a little bit liberal, generally speaking, but I’m more conservative than* [the other candidate]”, which is truly just political caper. It is as though the liberal Republican candidate is almost making an *attempt* at full disclosure but just cannot bring himself to it. Claiming to be “more conservative than...” does not make that individual candidate politically conservative.

So, what do we need to do? *Homework!* That’s right, some good, old-fashioned research. Each of us has the responsibility to know *for whom* and *for what issues* we are voting. This might be from a simple matter of increasing one’s *political literacy*, to learning how to stay abreast of civic issues. Every individual has more to learn. It is not lost on the politicians that when the average person is engaged in discussions with friends about the everyday politics of the nation, state, county, or municipality, the person in question believes he is well informed, or at least wants his interlocutors to think he is. It is also not lost on the politicians when a primary election is at hand, no one, including our everyday expert, knows for whom to vote. Often, the citizen does not vote at all for that very reason; he does not know for whom to vote. Yes, suddenly no one seems to know what the issues on the ballot mean or what the ramifications of voting for the wrong candidate or voting wrong for an issue on the ballot will hold.

What happens when we elect the Republican whom we have believed or trusted to be a conservative, without doing our prerequisite research, and that Republican turns out to vote the wrong way on quite a few issues when reaching the legislative session? Who do we blame? Go look in the mirror. ***We The People*** elected that legislator. ***We The People*** elected that governor. ***We the People*** elected that county commissioner. If you disagree with how your government is being run, and believe you deserve a better government, then it is entirely up to you to overwhelmingly elect a much better government. In order to do that, it is also entirely up to you to become more civically educated, aware, and active to make better political decisions. You may not be aware that there are politically active conservative citizens and conservative groups in your area that are trying to make a difference. They need your help! Get involved! DO NOT SHY AWAY FROM POLITICS IN YOUR COUNTRY. THAT IS HOW COUNTRIES FALL.

Pericles, one of the great philosophers of Ancient Greece, very wisely stated, “Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn’t mean politics won’t take an interest in you.” What Pericles meant with this statement is that political decisions and actions affect your life regardless of whether you choose to pay attention to them. An individual’s disengagement does not prevent the government from making policies that may critically impact your life. Political ignorance

is not a defense against the consequences of governmental actions; rather, it leaves you vulnerable to them. Hence, if you do not take an interest in your government, someone else will and then you will be subject to their decisions. This sentiment reflects a core principle of civic responsibility and the dangers of citizen apathy, a concept central to many thinkers, including the Founding Fathers. Fully trust this statement: there is an incredibly large number of very persuasive and politically active *liberals*, and worse, *leftists* who live in your neighborhood, town, state and country who are determined to undermine your rights. They have taken an enormous interest in your government and they are highly organized.

Your civic education should be at the top of the list of American education. Yet very few classrooms offer much in the way of growing good American citizenship nowadays. It seems unconscionable that in many classrooms the Pledge of Allegiance is not recited every morning and it might even be a shock to learn that in many classrooms *Old Glory* is not properly displayed; in some Montana classrooms, the flag is not displayed at all. Regardless of whether civic education is attained in the public-school classroom, it is still your responsibility to be able to make a well-informed voting decision.

Unfortunately, you are not alone in the confusion. The old Jay Leno Show segments known as Jaywalking were funny, ha-ha, but on the same hand they were also very sad. Very simple questions, regarding what should be common knowledge to the average American citizen regarding the history and political institutions of the United States, were posed to passersby encountered on the streets by Leno with his microphone in hand. “Who is the current President of the United States?” he asked. Yes, some of them were actually unable to answer this question correctly. Most certainly, there are much deeper questions that should also be common knowledge to the average citizen. The truth is, however, the average citizen can no longer be counted on to know how the government works, nor who is running the government. For example, it is unnerving how often conservative citizens talk about getting rid of the electoral college, yet when pressed they cannot explain correctly how the electoral college works and some begin asking questions. At least they asked the questions; that means that they actually want to know but, perhaps, do not know where to look for the information. That is the actual matter of *civic education*.

The unscrupulous politician knows all about these deficiencies of the public’s civic education and it is precisely those educational and informational deficiencies they prey upon. The liberal Republican politicians, aka: *Republicans in Name Only*, or the acronymous name given them by their conservative counterparts and conservative constituencies, *RINOS*, are some of the worst culprits when it comes to being crafty during their campaigns. They abhor being called RINOS and will often attempt to turn the tables on an entire audience by telling them to look in the mirror. It actually is all smoke and mirrors for them. But the truth is, at least to some degree they’re right. After all, often the RINO is already an elected official and the very people who are addressing him are the citizens who elected him, albeit perhaps not because they knew the elected official was a RINO at the time of the election. But the RINOS have been so handy in their rhetoric and political deception that they have some very conservative people who are in the media calling them “*moderates*”, when clearly, ***many*** RINOS are left of center on the political spectrum. They have claimed so frequently that the conservatives are *extreme right fringe* that they have garnered support from the Democrats in redoubling their efforts to label conservative thinking people as *fringe*. They are even employing the acronym **MAGA**, yes that acronym coined by the Donald Trump campaign through the use of Ronald Reagan’s words “*Let’s Make America Great Again*”, as though an effort to **Make America Great Again** is an evil act! That, dear conservatives, is the **RINO** brand of *sabotage within* the Republican Party. There are plenty of things along these lines printed in newspapers that the average reading citizen needs to be able to recognize in order to sort through the rhetoric for what it is if that reader is taking the time to actually read. But the reading citizen is no longer the average citizen. The average, voting citizen is not taking the time to read. If you are reading this, you are probably not

the average citizen. You are taking the initiative to improve your civic education. Good job! Now help us educate the masses, and while you are at it, continue to improve your own civic education.

Fortunately, some of those RINO politicians in Montana have been censured by the Montana Grand Old Party (MT GOP, i.e. the Montana Republican Party) for their inconsistencies with conservative values and the Republican Platform through their “repeated alignment with Senate Democrats” during the 2025 legislative session, and for “undermining Republican priorities and leadership”. One of those RINOS, Senator Russ Tempel (R-Chester, MT) was quoted in the *Daily Montanan* as saying, “I’m dumfounded. . .I’ve been a Republican longer than [MT GOP Exec. Director Tyler] Newcombe’s been alive.” More political caper. All the citizen has to do is look closely at Senator Tempel’s legislative voting record to recognize his RINO rhetoric. His conservatism is dismal, but his liberal voting record is one Democrats are sure to be proud of. So as a rebuttal to Senator Tempel: Thank you, Senator Tempel, for your very long service, but you have been doing it all wrong! You may not care about your legislative scorecards, but ***We the People*** do. And frankly, we are going to be scrutinizing everything you and your cronies do from this day forward.

Another of the RINOS balked at the MT GOP with an attempt at invoking President Ronald Reagan’s 11th Commandment, “Thou shalt not speak ill of any fellow Republican.” Of course, in his brilliance, Senator Josh Kassmier (R – Fort Benton, MT) invoked Reagan’s 11th Commandment after he stated his responsibility is to the people of Montana, “not party bosses”. While on the one hand, he is correct, of course; his responsibility is to the people of Montana. But when he talks about the people of Montana, to whom is he actually referencing; Republican constituents (those who elected him) or Democrats? This author, a conservative living in Senator Kassmier’s district, is certainly displeased with his voting record. His voting record is another one with which Democrats are probably very pleased. Furthermore, when invoking Reagan’s 11th Commandment while claiming to be a member of the Republican Party, then disavowing any responsibility to Republican Party “bosses”, is a non sequitur, and probably part of why he was awarded censure by the MT GOP.

The aforementioned Montana senators are only two of the full-blown RINOS in the Montana Senate. There is a total of 7 senators that all seem to be running neck and neck for the *Highest-Ranking #1 RINO* position. Regrettably, there are roughly 9 other senators in the MT Senate who, given a very, very, slight nudge to the left, would be very firmly in the same camp as the aforementioned seven. There are 9 senators that throughout conservative Republican circles in Montana have become known as, “The Nasty Nine”, “The Out of Line Nine”, and a few other terms that ring in a similar way. All 16 senators are clearly leftward leaning on too many issues with regard to the political spectrum, however. Instead of completely pointing fingers, a list of legislators will be provided below for your own scrutiny. It is not the intention of this author to make accusations. Rather, the intent is to develop awareness within citizens who want to vote for those who truly represent the ideals of the Constitution and that are truly representative of an adherence to the Montana Republican Party’s Platform, which includes checks and balances, greater individual freedom, limited government, The Rule of Law, Peace through Strength, fiscal responsibility, free markets, and finally, human dignity because all men are created equal and in the image of God, every human life has inestimable dignity and value, and every person should be measured only by the content of their character.

Let us take a look at those who are, ostensibly, Republican *moderates* in the Senate. In Montana, these are senators who hold what they call moderate political philosophies but hypothetically transporting them back a few years to the 1990s, would have been considered liberal Republicans. It is only by today’s American political standards, which have all digressed to the left, that they are considered moderates. As with a great deal of what goes on in the United States, compromises have taken conservatives to the left along with the rest of the country. Some of those compromises were actually necessities to correct injustices; those were not true compromises. In fact, those necessity pieces

of legislation were by real moral standards for the betterment of mankind that Republicans supported with alacrity. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was one such piece of legislation. Yes, the bill, H.R. 7152, was authored by a Northern Democrat, Representative Emanuel Celler (NY), but then Democrats filibustered to kill the bill. In historical context, it is noteworthy that there was a 60-days long filibuster created by the Democrat, Senator Richard Brevard Russell, Jr. of Georgia, and carried out by a cadre of Democrats. President John F. Kennedy, also a Democrat, sought out necessary support to pass the bill from the Republican side of the aisle in 1963. Much to the dismay of many, this author included, JFK did not live to see the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is also noteworthy that, by today’s American political standards, JFK would be considered quite a formidable conservative. JFK makes a very good historical benchmark for knowing exactly how far to the left the country has moved politically in modern times.

Other compromises have been made to *appease* completely irrational movements, and as with just about everything else that gets a foothold, those compromises to appease become tradition; then that first, now established, tradition is built upon to establish further footholds. As all Americans, liberal and conservative, have witnessed, the country continues on its leftward journey, frequently thanks to the so-called *moderates*’ (who are actually liberals) **appeasement and compromise** in the name of legislative progress. Progress, however, is a very subjective idea. Some of these legislators just want to be successful in bringing legislation to the floor that eventually gets signed by the Governor, simply for the sake of putting a notch on the butt of their legislative rifle; this is regardless of whether the legislation is reasonably expected to improve life for the greater good in the state or, perhaps, even the nation. One thing that anyone with basic research skills can prove is that, over time, everything ratchets leftward over time. For each time the country ratchets temporarily two cogs to the right, it will eventually ratchet six steps to the left. The United States has been that way since its inception. Incrementalism is the mechanism and the Democrats are well aware of its use. The Democrats are winning, and often they are winning through Republican moderation and compromise. As stated above, some of this is necessary to make for an America that is *fair* to as many of our legal inhabitants as possible. However, there is a great

amount of it that is political folderol.

Bearing all of this in mind, let us turn our attention to the Montana House of Representatives. As with the Montana Senate, there is a very similar story to tell: the House has a cadre of RINOS. There are around 10 of them who are unashamedly at the forefront of the race, running neck and neck for the *Highest-Ranking #1 RINO* position. In this chamber there are around 15 other Representatives in the House who, as was true with the Senate, given a very, very, slight nudge to the left, would be very firmly in the same camp as the aforementioned 10 Representatives.

What is being stated here is that many of those who campaigned as conservative Republican candidates and were elected on that very premise, are not conservative on issues that mean the most to their conservative-minded constituents. Of course, the now elected official who happens to be a Republican is going to continue to claim to be a conservative because conservatism is the popular philosophical stance that ***We the People*** so often value. As stated earlier, sometimes even Democratic candidates will throw the conservative card at us in order to gain votes, and some of them may actually be more conservative than the liberal Republican candidate. But constitutional conservatism is not what these *Representatives* uphold and you can prove that to yourself through doing your *homework*. Be certain to look at all of the senators’ and representatives’ records while doing your homework. As promised above, below are the legislators’ names who, in the opinion of this author, deserve your *extra-special attention*. Italicized and bolded names are members of the group that in *actual* moderate and conservative Republican political circles are known as the “*Nasty Nine*” or the “*Out of Line Nine*”. In the Montana House of Representatives, their counterparts are known as the “*Friends of the Nine*”. They are listed in alphabetical order, not by their *Highest Rank in the Chamber of RINOS*. There are others, especially in the House, who are barely below the RINO RADAR. Become acquainted with the websites below and you will develop a sense for who the true constitutionally conservative and fiscally responsible Republicans are.

Truly moderate Republicans, not the liberal Republicans who are currently claiming to be moderates, are also very desirable because in combination with the conservative Republicans,

they create a valuable tempering of what it is to be a Republican and keep the Montana Republican Party between the two most desirable points on the political spectrum. Do not be fooled by some Republicans who call themselves moderates. Determine their political *moderation* through your own research. Do not simply believe the candidate. *Prove it to yourself*. In our current state of the state, and the state of the nation, the Republican Party cannot afford to promote any candidate who shares a more leftward belief in this state’s or this country’s politics. Our country is losing cultural traditions, and if you believe that is a good thing, then stop for a moment and think about what happens when the government finally comes after your own cultural traditions.

The legislators named below might ask, “Why am I on this list?”, although they already know if they are being honest. The answer to each of them is, “Take a hard look at your voting record, and be honest with yourself.” After all, it is not difficult to recognize, as a voting taxpayer, that taxes took more from our individual pocketbooks this year following the legislative session, and ***We the People*** know who made that possible.

- MONTANA SENATE
- Mike Cuffe (SD1, EUREKA)
 - Jason Ellsworth** (SD43, HAMILTON)
 - Bruce Gillespie** (SD9, ETHERIDGE)
 - Gregg Hunter** (SD15, GLASGOW)
 - Josh Kassmier** (SD13, FORT BENTON)
 - Gayle Lammers** (SD21, HARDIN)
 - Denley Loge** (SD45, ST. REGIS)
 - Wendy McKamey** (SD12, GREAT FALLS)
 - Russ Tempel** (SD14, CHESTER)
 - Shelley Vance** (SD34, BELGRADE)
 - Mike Yakawich (SD24, BILLINGS)
- MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
- Brad Barker (HD55, RED LODGE)
 - David Bedey (HD86, HAMILTON)
 - Lyn Bennett (HD4, COLUMBIA FALLS)
 - Marta Bertoglio (HD74, CLANCY)
 - Edward Buttrey (HD21, GREAT FALLS)
 - John Fitzpatrick (HD, 76 ANACONDA)
 - Llew Jones (HD18, CONRAD)
 - Valerie Moore (HD29, PLENTYWOOD)
 - G. Nikolakakos (HD26, GREAT FALLS)
 - M. Nikolakakos (HD20, GREAT FALLS)
 - Linda Reksten (HD13, POLSON)
 - Kenneth Walsh (HD69, TWIN BRIDGES) 🇺🇸