

Montana's Rotten Core

If You Truly Want to Fix This Broken System, Show Up and Vote on June 2nd

By Staff Writer

Montana's political system is rotten to the core—and it has been since the days of the Copper Kings. From Senator Steve Daines and Congressman Ryan Zinke dropping out of their races at the last minute and hand-picking their own successors, to state-level legislators quietly enriching themselves at taxpayer expense, the pattern is unmistakable. This isn't a few isolated scandals or a handful of bad actors. It is a deeply entrenched network of career politicians, unelected bureaucrats, lobbyists, compliant judges, law enforcement insiders, and media gatekeepers who function as a self-protecting "Good Old Boy Club"—or, if you prefer, the uniparty, the swamp. Call it whatever you like; the behavior is identical. They put their own power, insider deals, and special-interest payoffs ahead of the everyday needs of working Montanans. Elections have become little more than theater: no matter who wins the marquee races, the outcome stays the same—more debt, more control from Helena and Washington, and a steady erosion of our freedoms and state sovereignty.

Montanans, it is time to wake up. You are being played.

Too many candidates talk a good game about conservatism—lowering property taxes, protecting our rights, defending the Montana Way—while knowing full well that most voters will never dig into their records. George and Melissa Nikolakakos, Ed Buttrey, and others like them have mastered the art of sounding principled on the stump while remaining intricately tied to the very grift they claim to oppose. They are not outsiders; they are products of the system, and the system protects its own. That is why real change never materializes.

If we are serious about dismantling this corrupt machine, we must stop rubber-stamping hand-picked successors. We have to do something different. Those of us who can, must step up and run for office—not as a new career, but as a temporary act of service to our neighbors and our state. For everyone else, the path is just as clear: donate to principled campaigns, volunteer to knock doors, make phone calls, and—most importantly—show up at the polls.

June 2nd is not just another primary. It is our best, and perhaps last, realistic chance this cycle to begin breaking the grip of the entrenched insiders. That is why candidates like Randy Pinocci for Senate District 12,

Tony Rosales, Mindy Kahle for Cascade County Sheriff, Kevin Leatherbarrow, Jessica Dyrdaahl for Senate District 10, Rick Wolke for Cascade County Commissioner, and Deserae Valentine for Cascade Clerk and Recorder deserve your support. These are not polished careerists looking for a stepping stone. They are Montanans willing to take on the entire rigged system for the sake of the people who have been crushed under the weight of bloated, unresponsive government.

They will not fix everything overnight. No single election ever does. But if enough of us reject the hand-picked successors, support the true reformers, and refuse to keep rewarding the same failed club, we can begin the long, overdue process of reclaiming our state.

The Copper Kings are gone, but their spirit of self-dealing lives on in Helena. The only way to bury it for good is to stop voting for its modern heirs. If you are tired of being played, if you actually want to fix this broken system instead of just complaining about it, clear your calendar for June 2nd and vote like your children's freedom depends on it—because it does.

Montana is worth it. Show up and vote June 2nd. 🗳️