

# The Power of County Central Committees

**By Rae Grulkowski**

Most people think the most important choices on the June Primary Ballot are the big races - the ones for president, governor, or legislators. But every even-numbered year, in the Montana June Primary, the most powerful positions in local politics are the Precinct Committeemen and Committeewomen.

In Montana, each political party operates through a County Central Committee. This committee directs party activities within the county in addition to helping shape the direction of the party at the state and national level. A small appointed board helps manage the committee, and four board positions represent the county at state and national conventions where they vote on party leadership, party rules, and party platforms.

But here's what many voters don't realize . . . the real voting power inside the County Central Committee, therefore the political party, belongs to ordinary citizens elected from each precinct.

Cascade County has 26 precincts and every precinct in the county elects two people:

- A Precinct Committeeman
- A Precinct Committeewoman

Those positions only appear on the June Primary ballot in even numbered years. These grassroots representatives make up the County Central Committee, and they are the ones who actually vote on decisions that affect the direction of their party locally and beyond. Unless a board member also holds a precinct seat, they don't even get a vote.

That means the people who carry real influence in party decisions are not party insiders - they are neighbors elected from your precinct. And their influence goes even further. When an elected official leaves office early, whether it's an elected county position or a legislative seat, the replacement is not chosen out of thin air. The County Commissioners make the appointment, but they must choose from candidates put forward by the County Central Committee.

In other words, the precinct committeemen and committeewomen help determine who is even considered for important public offices. That's real influence!

Yet every even-numbered year election cycle many of these positions go unnoticed on the ballot, and sometimes they go unfilled. When that happens, a small number of people end up making decisions that affect thousands.

**The June 2, 2026 Primary is your chance to change that.**

Pay attention to the precinct committee races on your ballot. Learn who is running. Support people who reflect your values. And if your precinct seat is open, consider putting your own name forward. These positions are one of the most direct ways citizens can participate in shaping their party and their community. Local government and political parties are strongest when citizens show up.

**Mark your Calendar for June 2, 2026**  
**Vote the Primary Ballot**   
**Encourage Your Friends and Neighbors To Do the Same**

The people who run for the smallest level of governance, at the precinct level, often end up shaping the biggest decisions. 🗳️