



State Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

The Missoula Organization of REALTORS® advocates for REALTORS® and consumers. Our members would like to know your thoughts on priority REALTOR® issues. We thank you for being specific in your responses.

ISSUES

Home prices in Missoula County have increased rapidly since the end of the economic downturn and incomes have not kept up. The median sales price of a home in 2019 was \$315,000, making it challenging for many Missoulian's to buy a home. The rapidly increasing price is due in part to a shortage of housing, particularly in more attainable price ranges. As a state legislator, you will evaluate policies that will impact housing and economic development in Missoula County.

Housing Development

State law broadly outlines the process by which local governments must review subdivisions of land. Subdivision is the primary vehicle for creating lots to be developed into homes for sale. Subdivision review policies attempt to balance communities' housing needs with protecting the environment, agriculture, wildlife habitat, public safety, and other interests. **What changes to Subdivision law do you support to encourage needed development of housing while balancing other community values?**

Regulatory reform may be one strategy for promoting housing affordability through state law. **Are there non-regulatory strategies that the legislature should pursue, so please enumerate? If strategies require funding, where should it come from?**

I do not have proposed changes to subdivision law, or affordable housing regulatory reform, to share at this time. This is a policy area I still need to develop. I am interested in learning more and would appreciate learning MOR's perspective.

Tax Law

State Law provides for tax increment financing (TIF) and urban renewal districts. TIF is used within urban renewal districts to combat blight and promote economic development. However, critics of TIF say that these urban renewal districts can be in place for many years, and TIF diverts property tax revenue away from schools and county governments. Supporters respond that TIF grows the property tax base and creates jobs, and that once the urban renewal districts sunset, the taxing jurisdictions have significantly more revenue than they would have otherwise had. **What changes to TIF statues would you recommend responding citizen complaints and improve the program?**

I don't have any proposed changes to TIF statute prepared at this time. I do believe we should listen to citizen input, and I am open to learning how to improve the program if needed.

Property taxes are the primary revenue generator used to fund local government services. Recently increased mil levies multiplied by increasing property value assessments have left many homeowners asking for relief. **What are your thoughts on the current taxation structure for local government? What changes, if any, would you propose/support?**

When door knocking, increases in property taxes is one of the most frequently mentioned subjects by my constituents. This is real concern that needs to be addressed. The budget cuts we make on a state level shift the burden of funding of essential programs to local governments who then must make the tough choice of raising taxes or cutting services. This is unfair. I advocate for reevaluating and restructuring the tax code on a state level and looking for new sources of revenue. I support better funding of our public education including higher ed. I support greater investment in infrastructure, mental health services and public safety. If the state provided more support for these essential programs, local governments would carry less burden. While I don't support a statewide general sales tax, I am open to discussing local option sales taxes to help communities support themselves without resorting to property tax increases.

Economic Development

While the unemployment rate in Montana has been quite low for several years prior to the COVID pandemic, growth in wages has remained relatively stagnant compared to increases in housing costs. **As a state legislator, how would you propose to help grow and attract good paying jobs in Montana and specifically Missoula County?**

Growing and attracting good paying jobs takes a multi-pronged approach including:

1. Great public education, including higher education, to help support our workforce
2. A clean and healthy environment attracting recreation, tourism, and families
3. Modern infrastructure and high-speed internet which is required for new business
4. Stable, reliable, and efficient government that is transparent and predictable
5. Support new technologies including renewable energy.

Fair Housing

The National Association of REALTORS include sexual orientation and gender identity anti-discrimination language in their code of ethics. Montana does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and /or gender identity. **As a state legislator would you support legislation to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and /or gender identity?**

Yes.