

# Montana US Governor 2024

## THE ISSUES

**RYAN BUSSE**  
DEMOCRAT



**GREG GIANFORTE**  
REPUBLICAN • INCUMBENT

See <a href="https://guides.vote">guides.vote</a> for online guides with links and sources.	<a href="https://busseformontana.com">busseformontana.com</a>	<a href="https://gregformontana.com">gregformontana.com</a>
<p><b>ABORTION</b> Ban or legal?</p>	<p><b>Legal.</b> Is “an <a href="#">unapologetic defender</a> of the freedom of health care and reproductive choice.” The right to choose is guaranteed in the Montana <a href="#">Constitution</a> “as a matter of privacy.” Individual state bans are “radical and oppressive,” and ending Roe v. Wade was “<a href="#">disastrous</a>.”</p>	<p><b>Ban.</b> In 2023 <a href="#">signed</a> four bills restricting abortion access, including a ban on the most common abortion procedure after 15 weeks; <a href="#">said</a> he was giving “a voice to the voiceless.” “<a href="#">All life</a> is precious and must be protected.” <a href="#">Criticized</a> a 2024 Montana Supreme Court decision that minors don’t need their parents’ permission to get an abortion.</p>
<p><b>CLIMATE CHANGE</b> Should climate change be a top priority?</p>	<p><b>Yes.</b> “The <a href="#">reality</a> of the climate crisis isn’t debatable.” “<a href="#">We will</a> address the crisis with clarity and urgency.” <a href="#">Involving stakeholders</a> from across the political spectrum “will ensure economic stability, good-paying jobs, and innovation that will build up communities.”</p>	<p><b>No.</b> In 2023 <a href="#">signed</a> a bill that bars the state from considering climate impacts as part of environmental reviews. <a href="#">Withdrawn</a> Montana from the U.S. Climate Alliance, a coalition of states committed to fighting climate change. The climate <a href="#">solution</a> is unleashing American innovation, not government mandates.</p>
<p><b>CRIMINAL JUSTICE</b> How to ensure effectiveness and fairness in law enforcement?</p>	<p>“Law enforcement agencies are <a href="#">understaffed</a>.” On the opioid crisis, <a href="#">first step</a>: “supporting local law enforcement.” No position found on fairness.</p>	<p>Supports “cracking down on <a href="#">criminals</a>,” addressing the <a href="#">drug and mental health</a> epidemic, and <a href="#">increasing resources</a> for law enforcement. No position found on fairness.</p>
<p><b>EDUCATION</b> Use public funding for private and/or for-profit schools?</p>	<p><b>No.</b> Opposes “using taxpayer money to fund private and religious charter schools—which <a href="#">threatens</a>... rural communities.” Public schools must be “<a href="#">fully funded</a> and taxpayer \$ should NEVER... create one path for rich kids and a lesser path for everyone else.” <a href="#">Opposes</a> public money for private schools without public oversight.</p>	<p><b>Yes.</b> <a href="#">Signed</a> a bill increasing <a href="#">state tax credits</a> for donations to scholarships for private-school students. <a href="#">Signed</a> a bill that lets parents <a href="#">propose new schools</a> exempt from state curriculum and safety rules and from hiring certified teachers. <a href="#">Signed</a> a bill that <a href="#">allows</a> special-needs parents to be reimbursed for private school with taxpayer money.</p>
<p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b> Loosen or tighten environmental regulations?</p>	<p><b>Tighten.</b> Would <a href="#">rebuild</a> the MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Opposes “any effort to <a href="#">limit access</a>” to public lands or “transfer management of federal public lands to states.”</p>	<p><b>Mixed.</b> Secured funds that led to <a href="#">\$50 million from the EPA</a> “to improve the resilience of our forests, agriculture industry, and waterways.” <a href="#">Opposed</a> a federal effort to prohibit new coal leases in Montana until 2038.</p>
<p><b>GUN LAWS</b> Loosen or tighten gun regulation?</p>	<p><b>Mostly tighten.</b> After 25 years working for a major gun manufacturer, <a href="#">broke</a> with the industry. A hunter and sports shooter, he <a href="#">supports</a> background checks and red-flag laws. <a href="#">Opposes</a> an assault weapons ban and opposes carrying high-powered weapons to make a political statement.</p>	<p><b>Loosen.</b> <a href="#">Signed</a> a “constitutional carry” <a href="#">bill</a>, allowing concealed firearms in public settings without a permit. <a href="#">Signed</a> a bill prohibiting state <a href="#">enforcement</a> of any federal gun-control measure. Gun control <a href="#">measures</a> don’t stop criminals; they “step on the rights of law-abiding citizens.”</p>

ISSUES	BUSSE (D)	GIANFORTE (R)
<b>HEALTH CARE</b> Support Medicaid expansion?	<b>Yes.</b> “Folding more Montanans into Medicaid coverage was a <a href="#">bipartisan solution</a> that has... [helped] countless people.” Both parties “fought hard for Medicaid expansion, and I promise to <a href="#">protect</a> it.... We’ll keep health care accessible, no matter where you live.” Work requirements are <a href="#">unnecessary</a> .	<b>No.</b> Medicaid “ <a href="#">should be</a> a temporary program for most people to help them get back on their feet,” “for those who truly need it.” By June 2024 the state health department had <a href="#">disenrolled</a> 135,000+ people after lifting Covid-era rules. “Adults with no dependents [should] <a href="#">work to receive benefits</a> .”
<b>IMMIGRATION</b> How to handle immigration?	<b>Unclear.</b> Says immigration is matter of federal policy: “The governor of Montana <a href="#">[can’t] impact</a> that federal law-making process directly.”	With nine Republican governors, offered a <a href="#">10-point plan</a> for securing the border. Said the state may need to <a href="#">step in</a> if the federal government fails to enforce immigration laws. In 2024, directed <a href="#">Montana National Guard</a> to help Texas with border security.
<b>LABOR</b> Make it easier or harder for unions to organize?	<b>Easier.</b> “Unions are <a href="#">essential</a> for... ensuring better pay and safe working conditions.” “Grow <a href="#">organized labor</a> .” “Union members are the <a href="#">heart and soul</a> of our communities.” Will <a href="#">veto</a> “so-called ‘right to work’” legislation, which allows employees in a unionized workplace to not pay union dues.	<b>Harder.</b> In Congress, <a href="#">voted against</a> the PRO Act, which would <a href="#">expand</a> workers’ rights to organize and collectively bargain and overrule state “right to work” laws. His 2020 gubernatorial campaign <a href="#">supported</a> right-to-work legislation.
<b>LGBTQ RIGHTS</b> Limit or expand LGBTQ rights?	<b>Expand.</b> It’s about decency: “We are <a href="#">not obsessed</a> with gender or sexuality.... We don’t live for drag or banned books... But we hate goddamned bullies and will stand up for knowledge & the marginalized.”	<b>Limit.</b> <a href="#">Signed</a> a bill <a href="#">banning</a> gender-affirming medical care for transgender minors. <a href="#">Asked</a> MT Board of Regents to restrict transgender athletes from participating in university sports. <a href="#">Signed</a> a bill <a href="#">defining</a> the word “sex” in state law as meaning only male or female.
<b>MARIJUANA</b> Ban or legalize recreational marijuana?	<b>Legalize.</b> “I am in support of alcohol and marijuana <a href="#">being legal</a> and regulated in similar manners.”	<b>Mostly ban.</b> <a href="#">Opposed</a> legalizing recreational marijuana. Later <a href="#">signed</a> a bill implementing a voter-approved recreational marijuana program, with a new substance-abuse prevention program.
<b>MINIMUM WAGE</b> Raise the state minimum from \$10.30 per hour?	<b>No position found.</b>	<b>Likely no.</b> In 2019, in Congress, <a href="#">opposed</a> a federal minimum wage hike. In 2020: “With a minimum wage <a href="#">increase</a> to \$15 an hour, Montana would <a href="#">lose more than 8,000 jobs</a> .”
<b>STUDENT FINANCIAL AID</b> Support lower interest on student loans and/or forgiving them?	<b>No.</b> On forgiving student loans, the policy <a href="#">will hurt Democrats</a> : “Non-college educated folks are going to take a lot of offense.” No position found on lower interest rates.	<b>Mixed.</b> On forgiveness: <a href="#">Montanans</a> who didn’t take out student loans “shouldn’t have to pay the student loans of others.” Wants <a href="#">lower interest rates</a> for student loans.
<b>TAXES</b> How to handle state taxation?	<a href="#">Lower</a> the residential tax rate by one third. <a href="#">Increase taxes</a> on wealthy Montanans & large corporations. “Will demand the Legislature adjust the property tax rate when <a href="#">home values</a> increase to prevent the burden falling on homeowners.” <a href="#">Opposes</a> a statewide sales tax. Is open to a <a href="#">homestead exemption</a> .	<a href="#">Signed</a> a \$1 billion tax package with short-term property and income tax rebates and ongoing state income tax cuts, including a cut to the top-bracket marginal tax rate. “We should move ahead with a <a href="#">homestead exemption</a> ” on primary residences. <a href="#">Opposes</a> a statewide sales tax.
<b>VOTING RULES</b> Make voting harder or easier?	<b>Easier.</b> “We will <a href="#">make it easier</a> for people to vote” and “do everything we can to increase the franchise, not reduce” it. “It’s not right to have <a href="#">armed people</a> scaring voters at polling places.”	<b>Harder.</b> In 2021 signed bills ending <a href="#">same-day voter registration</a> and creating new photo ID requirements. In 2024 the Montana Supreme Court ruled the laws <a href="#">unconstitutional</a> .

[guides.vote](#) is a nonpartisan effort to show where candidates stand. We do not support or oppose any political party or candidate. We have space for candidates polling 15% or more; use the QR code on the right for online versions, including links to credible sources and other candidates. [Vote411.org](#) offers guides to local races and how to vote. For campuses, see Campus Vote Project’s [state-specific guides](#) to student voting rules.

