

THE LOCAL IMPACT BOOK



A nation that can fund a war instantly but debates healthcare and food assistance has a values problem, not a budgetary problem!

**APRIL 2026
HELENA, MT**

PART 1



Impact Book
Online PDF



Prepared By :

**A HANDFUL OF HELENA
FRIENDS WHO CARE**

Introduction

This booklet came together quickly, on a bit of a whim, when three friends saw a need and decided to act. Over the course of two weeks, we gathered information, reached out to groups and organizations, and asked a few trusted friends to help review and edit along the way. It isn't perfect (far from it), but it was created with intention and a shared belief that informed communities are stronger communities.

Many of the issues facing Montanans today may seem unrelated at first glance. But again and again, they trace back to the same source: **powerful money and special interests** that shape the narrative and keep people divided. When we are busy blaming our neighbors, we are less likely to notice who is actually benefiting.

History shows that fear and division are often used to convince ordinary people that someone different from them is the problem. In reality, most of us want the same basic things: stable communities, safe families, and the chance to live our lives with dignity. We are not enemies; we are neighbors.

Montanans have a long tradition of independence, fairness, and looking out for one another. This booklet is meant to inform, connect, and encourage action. We hope it helps you discover organizations doing important work and offers ideas for how you can get involved locally.

This is **Part 1** of what we hope will become a larger series. There are more issues to discuss and many more groups and businesses we'd like to highlight. Producing these booklets takes significant volunteer time and personal expense, but we believe the effort is worthwhile. If you'd like to help support future editions, please consider contacting us using the QR code below.

Most importantly, we encourage you to do something that moves positive change forward. It doesn't have to be perfect, it just has to be sincere. Support the organizations highlighted here, amplify their work, or start something of your own. Share the truth and refrain from gatekeeping. Real change happens when communities connect, take action together, and focus on meaningful change leaving egos behind.

The Impact Book



Contact Us



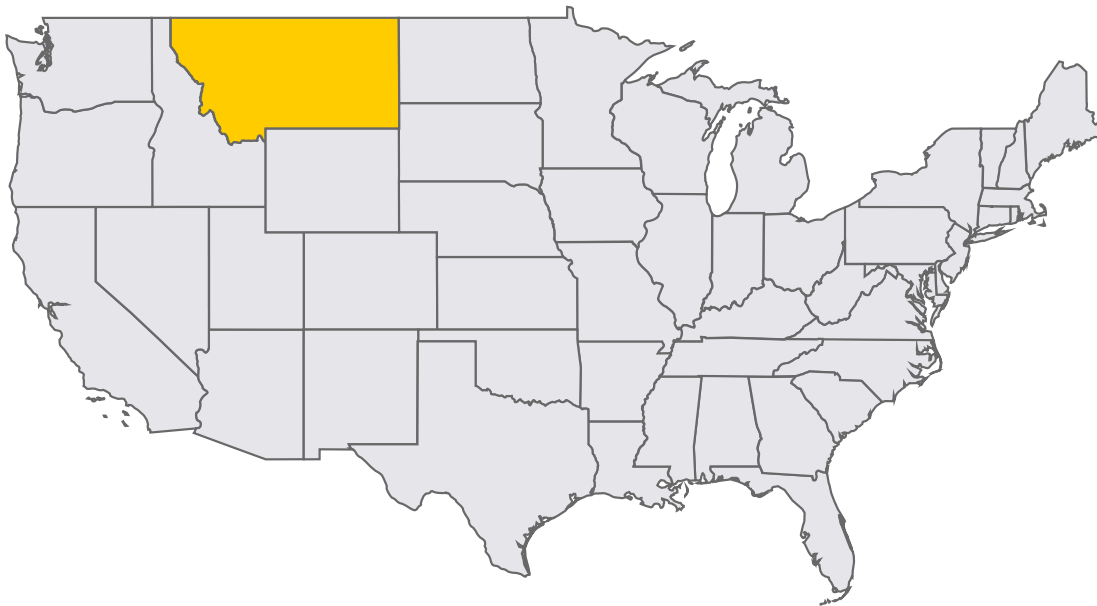
Waking Giant



Events Calendar

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You can expect to see another edition in the future with information on other topics that affect us.



A generous supporter of the Montana Immigrant Fund is the band, **Les Duck**. Support them on Spotify, Apple Music and Instagram or when they play in Montana.

What can I do?

Register and vote

RUN FOR OFFICE

- School board, sheriff, city and county offices, state legislature

Join groups that activate their members

- Friends of the Third Branch
- Wild Montana
- Catalyst
- Waking Giant

Use 5 Calls app or 5calls.org

- Call daily or weekly (set an alarm on your phone)

Sponsor a postcard/post-it/call drive

- Pick a topic, get your friends together, write card/post-its
 - Can be either positive or negative messages
 - Write to congressionals, the white house, the supreme court
 - Write to the governor, state legislature, department heads
 - Write to your mayor, city managers, city or county commissioners
 - Write to post office box holders in Montana communities
 - example: send 100 postcards to Conrad Montana explaining cuts to Medicaid could mean the end of their hospital and nursing home (info is available all over online)
 - Ask your state and local officials how they plan to backfill FEMA, rural healthcare, etc.
- *Every card matters. It can't be one of 1000 if you don't write it!

Start a group

- Coffee and Cards or Coffee and Calls
- Wine and Words
- Conversations with congressionals – turn the staffers against them if you can't get to your representative

Connect your group to others for increased range

- simply join multiple groups and bring that info back to your group

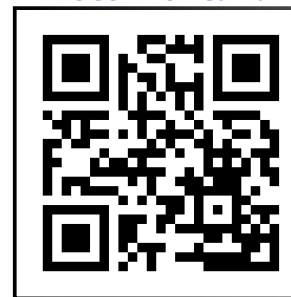
Join or start a rapid response group

- Counter Nazis
- Counter ICE
- Legislative action
- Pop-up protests

Information flyers

- Print and post around town
- Put flyer on car windshields
- Add a QR code to direct people to additional info
 - Potentially changes their algorithm
 - Exposes people to new sources of info
 - Stick to non-biased sources so you don't scare people away

Vote Montana



Registration Application,
Registration Status, Election
Forms, Ballot Measures

5 Calls



**Be relentless. In this fight, every
little thing is EVERYTHING!**

Volunteer

- Rural fire departments
- Non-profits

Donate/Sponsor

- GoFundMe accounts for immigrants taken by ICE
- Food Share and mini pantries around town
- Non-profits
- Small groups that you know

Join a tenant union

- Prickly Pear Housing Alliance (Helena)

Unionize your workplace (contact AFL-CIO MT)

Attend commission meetings (city and county), school board meetings

- Push to reduce cooperation with ICE
- Thwart book bans
- Advocate for progressive policies
- Ask how they will backfill FEMA, address healthcare cuts, etc.

Skills training

- First aid or wilderness first aid
- Stop the Bleed (often offered through the hospital)
- Mental health first aid

Skill development

- Learn basic carpentry, plumbing, electrical skills
- Learn basic repair skills (sewing, tear aid, bicycle repair)
- Learn automotive skills (changing tire, jump starting, battery replacement)

Create a mutual aid network

- Start with the people you trust most to be there if the going gets rough
- Gather your friends, determine and share/teach skill-sets, invite people to join with you
- Commit to helping each other, get together once in a while to build relationships
- Reach out to other networks to strengthen both networks

Starve the systems

- Boycott corporations, support businesses that are on the honorable side of history
- Pay with cash not credit (millions of dollars are spent on transaction fees rather than goods and services and your spending habits can be tracked)
- Barter

Educate yourself and others

- Read history, listen to historians' podcasts and YouTube channels, read their Substacks
- Visit museums
- Travel

Befriend those around you

- Talk to people, your neighbors, the people in line, the person running the register – offer a smile and some grace
- Listen to other people's stories
- Ask questions

Join the Democratic Party

- Push for progress
- Hold office within the party
- Run for office

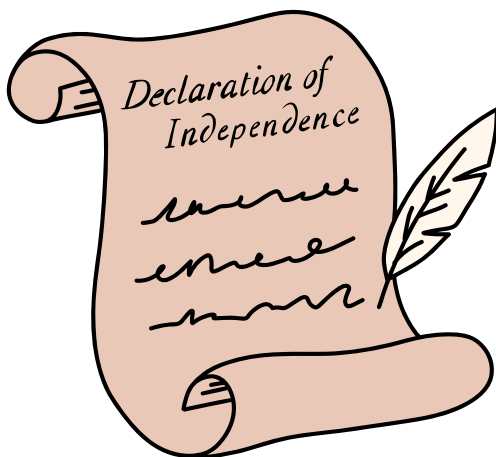
Find and make beauty

- Make and/or support the arts
- Display art and culture
- Photograph sunrise and sunsets
- Use art to point out the lack of beauty; mock the regime and the heartless

History

Throughout our history, the United States has chosen to erase the contributions of women, indigenous, black, queer, and immigrant people and cultures. Our history is taught as a series of dates and the heroics of white men. By leaving out the contributions of so many, we set ourselves up to consider that no one else made substantial contributions.

Did you know about the enslaved Black man who escaped, stole a confederate ship, and sailed north, not only to freedom but to fight in the Civil War for the freedom of all enslaved people? Or that the Mercury astronauts would not launch without a Black woman checking all the calculations? Or that a woman founded pediatric cardiology and a Black man without any professional education created the procedure to cure cyanotic heart disease (blue baby syndrome)? Or that without a transgendered woman we would not have microchips that led to personal computers and cell phones? Or that native people and their languages are credited with code talking that was never broken during WWII? Or that democracy existed in North America for generations before the United States constitution?



YouTube Channel



Crash Course
Black American
History



LGBTQ+ scientists
in history



Crash Course
Native American
History

We encourage you to explore history in a way that fills in the gaps of an education system that promoted a very simplified version of the facts. Celebrate learning about cultures and people that you were previously unaware of, and recognize the contributions of all those who came before us to ensure the opportunity for every person in the future to reach their full potential.

In our struggle for democracy and self determination, we must never leave anyone behind again. If the history we were taught has shown us one repeating theme, it is that when we do not lift everyone up, we can be manipulated by unwarranted prejudices to fight each other, rather than those who try to reduce our potential for their own wealth and power.

Judiciary

Partisan elections for judges lead to less blind justice and more “pay to play” with outcomes that favor donors. Yale Law School lecturer and defense lawyer Stephen Bright said “courts have a responsibility to protect a defendant’s constitutional rights without political pressure,” but partisan elections inject politics and create judges influenced by political parties and large donors, as data from states with partisan judicial elections show. This cannot happen in Montana!



ABOUT FRIENDS of the THIRD BRANCH

OUR MISSION

To inform Montanans about developments that impact their courts, their judges, and protect Montana’s Constitutional system ensuring governmental checks and balances.

Donate

To protect the independence of courts, **Friends of the Third Branch** works in three areas:

- **Public Education.** We simplify complex legal and legislative issues so everyone can understand the attacks on our courts, how changes to our judicial system could harm people’s lives, and how people can help.
- **Legislative Analysis.** Whether in a legislative session or during the interim, we track bills and other actions that affect the independence of the courts and provide nonpartisan analysis of their potential impacts. We have helped defeat constitutional amendments and other legislative actions that could undermine the courts and the judicial process.
- **Civic Engagement.** We provide tools and information so lawyers and citizens can engage directly with lawmakers and administrative officials to support a court system free from politics.



MONTANANS FOR NONPARTISAN COURTS

YES ON CI-132



Constitutional Initiative 132 defends Montana’s long tradition of nonpartisan courts. Montana has been electing judges via nonpartisan elections since 1935. CI-132 protects our long-standing tradition of selecting judges based on the person, not the political party. CI-132 helps ensure that judges are accountable to the citizens of Montana, not politicians, party bosses, or political donors.



Equal Justice Initiative

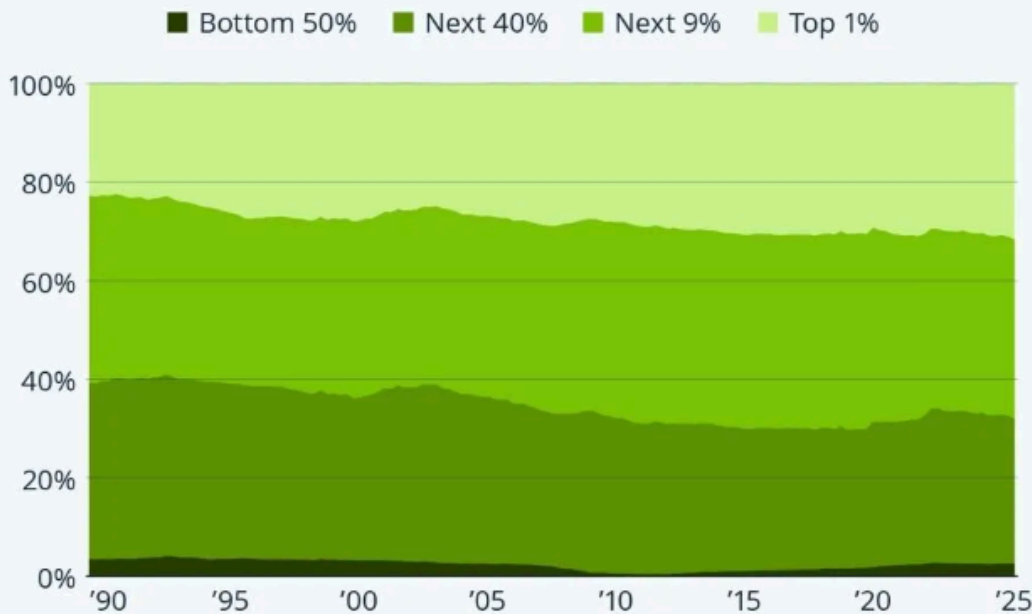
Wealth Inequality



Forbes Article

Wealth Of The 1% Reaches Decade-High In The U.S.

Distribution of total U.S. net worth 1989-2025 (in percent)



Percent of aggregate, not seasonally adjusted

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis



statista

Wealth inequality is the unequal distribution of assets—such as property, stocks, and cash minus debts—among a population, resulting in a significant, often growing gap between the ultra-wealthy and the rest of society. In the U.S., the top 1% holds over 30% of total wealth, while the bottom 50% owns just 2.5%, often fueled by capital gains, tax policies, and stagnant wages.



Consumer Price Index

The average cost of a set of goods.

In 2009, the last time minimum wage was raised, the goods analyzed cost \$211.933. In 2026 those goods cost \$326.588, an increase of about 54%. For a federal minimum wage worker, they would have to work over 2 additional 8 hour days to pay for these increases.

Productivity vs Wage Growth

Increases in productivity have long been associated with increases in compensation for employees. For several decades beginning in the 1940s, productivity had risen in tandem with employees' compensation. However, since the 1970s, productivity and compensation have steadily diverged.



Bureau of Labor Statistics



CEO World
Magazine

CEOs vs. Workers: Diverging Paths Since 1978

Perhaps the most revealing comparison comes from juxtaposing executive pay with worker compensation:

- Typical worker pay (1978–2024): Grew just 26%.
- CEO realized compensation (1978–2024): Surged 1,094%.
- Productivity growth (1978–2024): 80.5%, far higher than worker pay but still dwarfed by CEO pay growth.

This divergence has reshaped the income distribution in corporate America, fueling debates around fairness, labor relations, and the responsibilities of leadership in an era of widening inequality. It has macroeconomic and political dimensions:

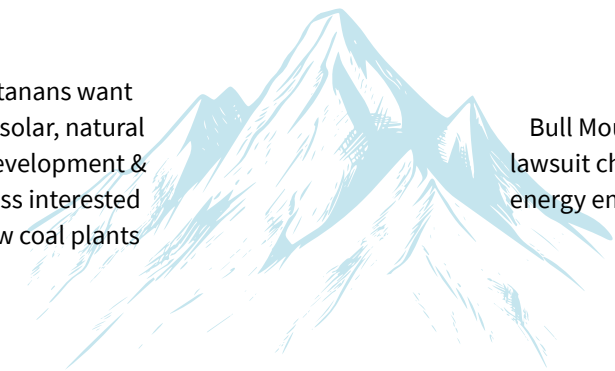
- **Wealth Concentration:** Extreme executive pay contributes to wealth inequality, reshaping consumer demand and social mobility.
- **Political Scrutiny:** Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle increasingly spotlight pay ratios as symbols of inequality. Some propose higher taxes on excessive compensation or linking corporate tax rates to pay ratios.
- **Social Cohesion:** Worker dissatisfaction, union activity, and public skepticism of corporate leadership often intensify when pay disparities widen.

Environment

Montanans know that our way of life depends on healthy land, clean water, and a stable climate, but powerful corporate interests treat our home as a sacrifice zone for short-term profit. From mining companies to fossil fuel corporations and speculative developers, the same players driving inequality and division are also polluting our rivers, draining our aquifers, and putting our communities at risk from drought, fire, and extreme weather. They spend big money to convince us that environmental protections kill jobs, when in reality, outdoor recreation, agriculture, and restoration work are some of the most reliable sources of good local jobs we have. When we are fighting each other over false “environment vs. economy” choices, we are less likely to notice who is actually cashing in on degraded land and poisoned water.



Montanans want more solar, natural gas development & are less interested in new coal plants



Bull Mountains lawsuit challenges energy emergency



YouTube Short

In Montana, we are already living with the consequences. Longer fire seasons, smoky summers, low snowpack, and shrinking streamflows threaten ranchers, recreation workers, and small businesses alike. Corporations push for weaker safeguards so they can cut corners on cleanup, offload their costs onto downstream communities, and walk away when the boom ends. They use front groups and slick PR campaigns to make it look like “grassroots support,” but the funding and strategy trace back to the same billionaire networks that are attacking workers, public schools, and democracy itself. Meanwhile, ordinary Montanans are the ones who sandbag during floods, evacuate during fires, and pay higher insurance premiums when things go wrong.

The good news is that Montanans have a long tradition of standing up for the land and water we share. From stopping cyanide heap-leach mines to passing our strong constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment, people here have proven that when we stand together, we can beat the lobbyists and lawyers. Local groups, tribal nations, landowners, and everyday neighbors are organizing to defend clean water, hold polluters accountable, and invest in renewable energy and restoration work that create real jobs rather than boom-and-bust promises. Every comment letter, public meeting, and conservation easement is part of the same fight to keep decisions in the hands of the people who live here, not the corporations that see Montana as a line item on a balance sheet.

MEIC

Montana Environmental Information Center



Clean Air



Clean Water



Clean Energy



Climate Action

The Montana Environmental Information Center is a non-partisan, non-profit environmental advocate dedicated to ensuring livability for Montanans now and in the future by working for clean air, clean water, and a livable climate.

Sign up for MEIC's Action Alerts:

- ✓ Clear, easy ways to make your voice heard when Montana's environment is under threat
- ✓ Know when it's time to fight back against corporate polluters, unchecked data center expansion, utility greed, and more
- ✓ Public engagement opportunities in your community
- ✓ Invites to parties, panels, and webinar events



Take Action



www.meic.org

Food

1 in 7 residents of Helena struggles with hunger.

1 in 5 Helena children don't have enough to eat.

1 in 6 seniors wonder when their next meal might be.

There are over 400 school-aged kids in Helena who do not have secure housing. If you don't know where you will be spending the night, you don't know where your next meal is coming from either.

Helena Food Share can help! How to get food in 3 easy steps:

1. **Visit the Grocery Share Market** – Come to the Market during regular operating hours. There are no age or income requirements to shop.
2. **Check in at the Welcome Desk** – On your first visit, a trained volunteer or staff member will help you complete a short intake form. All information is kept confidential. You will be asked to update your information once a year.
3. **Shop for Groceries** – You may shop for food once per week.
 - Weekly items may include produce, refrigerated and frozen foods, bread, sweets, and extras. Availability and limits depend on the food we have that week.

Once each month, you may add monthly items—such as canned and boxed foods, grains, frozen meat, and dairy—to your weekly shop. Monthly item limits are based on your household size.

Waking Giant members started several Little Free Pantries around town and additional pantries are planned. These pantries play an important role in filling in gaps for families who are food insecure. Churches and other groups are beginning to help with keeping the shelves stocked. If your organization -or you individually- would like to help with donations, storage, or distribution, please text Shellie at 406-475-9443.

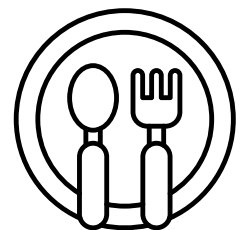
*Community
Stewardship in
Action!*



Helena Food
Share Kid Packs

In October 2025, Helena area Lutheran churches raised \$30,000 to pay for milk for an entire year of Helena Food Share Kid Packs!

"Kid Packs are a special pack of kid-friendly foods that provide a source of weekend nutrition during the school year for kids at risk of hunger due to circumstances in their homes."



IF AMERICA IS SO RICH, WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE GO HUNGRY?



America produces more food than we ever have before, but hunger is STILL a problem all across the nation. In Helena, 1 out of 7 people worry about where their next meal will come from.



Our food system is based on profits. Mega corporations that grow, raise, and distribute our food, create inefficient systems of overproduction, waste, access, and high prices.

It doesn't have to stay this way. Working people CAN speak up and demand a food system that puts people before profit.

Until then, these community-maintained pantries make sure our neighbors can eat. Because everyone deserves food, no matter what.



View a map of pantry locations



Give what you can to keep these pantries stocked and take what you need to leave plenty for others.

Learn more about food affordability and access here.



More resources available at Helena Food Share.



Housing

In 2024, 90% of families with income <\$20k and 60% of families with income between \$20–50k spent >30% of wages on housing. For financial stability, it is widely recommended to spend less than 28–30% of wages on housing. One of every three households are living paycheck to paycheck – meaning they are spending over 95% of their pay on necessities, per Bank of America Institute (USA Today, 11/2025). Meanwhile, PNC Bank’s annual Financial Wellness in the Workplace Report shows that 67% of workers now say they are living paycheck to paycheck (Newsweek 9/2025). These factors explain why so many people find themselves without stable housing.

	1968	2009	2025
Federal Minimum Wage	\$1.60	\$7.25	\$7.25
Average Housing Price	\$26,000	\$269,500	\$524,100
Annual Wage, full-time (2,080 hours)	\$3,328	\$15,080	\$15,080
Max 30% of wages recommended for housing	\$1,109	\$4,524	\$4,524
# of years wage / house cost	7.8 yrs	17.87 yrs	34.75 yrs
# of years of 30% of wages (does not include interest)	23.44 yrs	59.57 yrs	115.85 yrs

Poverty guidelines are often used to determine eligibility for food and housing programs. The poverty guideline in the lower 48 (\$15,960) is now MORE than a full-time, federal minimum wage earner (\$15,080). Montana’s minimum wage is tied to a conservative cost of living estimate and has risen to \$10.85 (\$22,568/ year or approximately \$1800/month after taxes) in 2026. Though Montana’s average cost of living ranks 33rd , our larger towns are among the most expensive in the country to live.



MT Housing Map



U.S. Treasury Dept

Montana was ranked the least affordable state in the nation in 2024 and 2025 due to wages relative to cost of living.



THE RENT IS TOO DAMN HIGH!

PRICKLY PEAR HOUSING ALLIANCE FORMED IN EARLY 2025 TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF ALL TENANTS IN HELENA.

WHO: RENTERS, HOMEOWNERS, UNHOUSED, NOT LANDLORDS OR PROPERTY MANAGERS.

WHAT: A TENANTS UNION IS A WAY TO BUILD COLLECTIVE POWER TO PROTECT THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE TO LOSING THEIR LIVING SPACE.

WHY: EMANCIPATE TENANTS FROM THE EXPLOITATION OF COMMODIFIED HOUSING.

WE'RE ORGANIZING TENANTS TO ADDRESS MATERIAL CONDITIONS IN THEIR HOMES OR THEIR BUILDINGS AND WORKING TO CREATE STRUCTURAL CHANGE.





RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

MONTANA LEGAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION

MLSA HAS A WEALTH OF INFORMATION ON
VARIOUS LEGAL TOPICS INCLUDING THEIR
MONTANA EVICTION INTERVENTION
PROGRAM



MONTPIRG

MONTANA PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH
GROUP HAS IN-DEPTH RESOURCES FOR
TENANTS



MONTANA 211 RESOURCES

A LIST OF VARIOUS RESOURCES IN
MONTANA



THE FRIENDSHIP CENTER

SERVING THOSE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING
IN LEWIS AND CLARK, BROADWATER, AND
JEFFERSON COUNTIES.



Healthcare

Medical debt contributes to 62% of all bankruptcies in the U.S.

Government Expenditures on Healthcare

Percentage of GDP	Country
16.69%	United States
10%	Norway
12.2%	Germany
10.4%	Australia
11.13%	United Kingdom
12.7%	Canada

YouTube Video



The Future of Rural Healthcare in Montana

Fact Check



Medicare for All Would Save the U.S. Trillions



Roosevelt Institute



The Commonwealth Fund

At the current cost of \$891M/day, if the Iran war continues for 4 months, we will spend enough money to cover the Medicaid cuts for an entire year. Meanwhile, \$1.2B of \$50B is coming to Montana to invest in changes to rural healthcare from the same Billionaires' Big Brutal bill that cut Medicaid. This is a one-time infusion of funds that will mask the impact to rural hospitals. It may extend the life of rural healthcare past the next election, but it does not address the root cause of the risks to rural healthcare: unstable, inconsistent funding and revenue. Rural hospitals and clinics are already closing or shifting away from primary care to strictly emergency care across the country and across Montana.

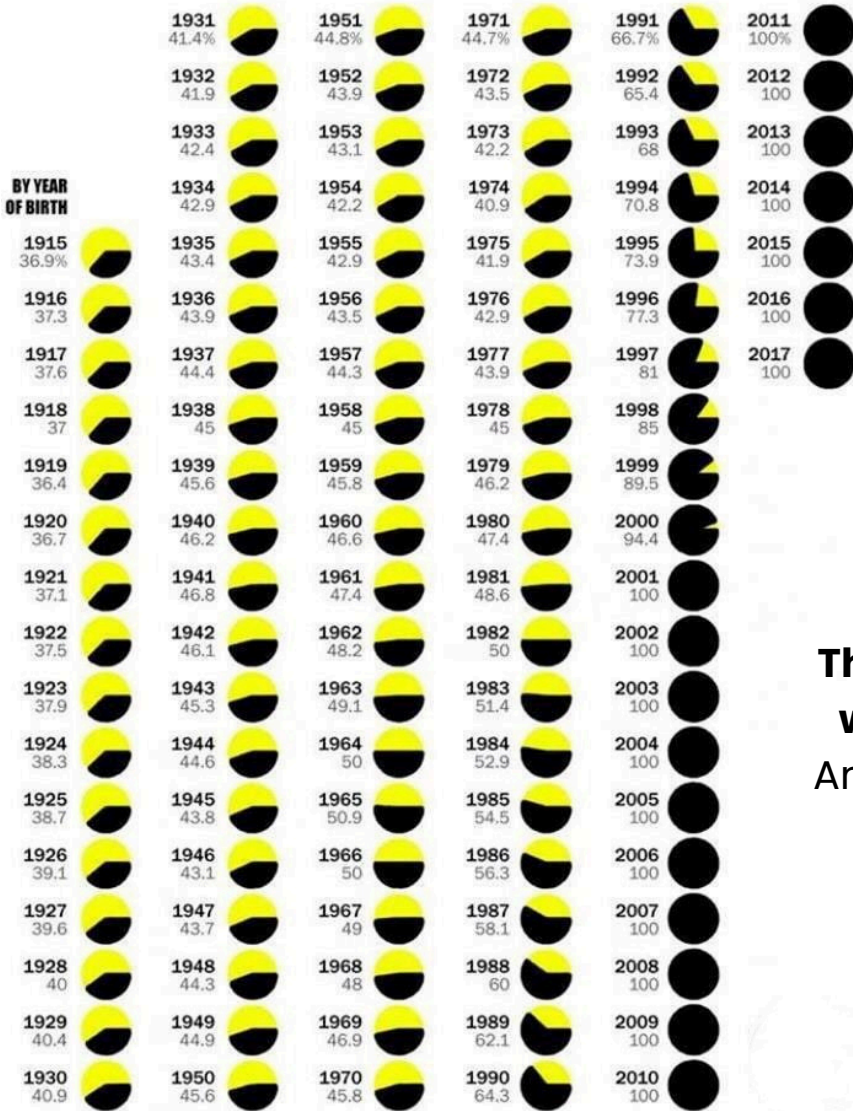
"Cuts" to Medicaid are a result of increased bureaucracy, time, and effort forcing people to give up on benefits that could help them. The majority of people on Medicaid already work, unless they cannot because they are children, students, or disabled. Georgia currently has work requirements for Medicaid. They spent \$54M in administrative costs, while only providing \$26M in medical assistance in the first few years. Meanwhile, glitches in the tech denied eligibility and there were not enough human staff to review complaints. Results in Arkansas, where work requirements were also implemented for approximately 9 months, found that the number of uninsured people rose while having no impact on employment. Despite all evidence pointing to work requirements increasing government spending and bureaucracy, reducing benefits, negatively impacting Montana's rural healthcare, and having no positive impact on employment, it is now nationwide, thanks to the Billionaires' Big Brutal bill.

Meanwhile, multiple studies found that Medicare for All would save tens of thousands of lives a year while reducing U.S. health care spending by hundreds of billions per year. The US spends approximately twice what its peer nations do on healthcare. Excess U.S. health spending was associated with factors such as administrative costs of insurance (~15% of the excess), administrative costs borne by providers (~15%), and prescription drugs (~10%). These excess costs are driven by private insurers, inconsistent coding and coverage between insurers, and basic corporate greed.

War

This graphic shows major military actions up to 2017, originally published by the **Washington Post**. Nearly 20 years after the United States' invasion of Afghanistan, the cost of its global war on terror stands at \$8 trillion and 900,000 deaths, per the Costs of War project at Brown University. That money could have funded the State Department and USAID for 127 years at the level requested by the President in 2024.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR LIFE THE U.S. HAS BEEN AT WAR



America's Wars



U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs

The United States has been at war for 59% of its existence.
Americans do not deserve this.
Entire generations do not deserve this.

Since January 2025, the Trump regime has threatened Panama, Cuba, and Greenland with military intervention or takeover. It has launched strikes on boats off the coast of Venezuela that posed no threat to the United States, including a "double tap" strike on a vessel that killed survivors at sea. It also conducted a military operation inside Venezuela to remove the country's leader and has since entered into a war with Iran.

The war in Iran has cost roughly \$890 million per day and has already resulted in significant loss of life, including approximately 150 young girls and staff killed in a strike on a school. An additional 87 naval personnel were killed when a U.S. attack sank an Iranian ship near Sri Lanka—nearly 2,000 miles from Iran—as it returned from a ceremonial event hosted by India.

Decisions to strike schools and unarmed vessels, and to act unilaterally without allied support, are damaging U.S. relationships and weakening global security.

Learn more about Palestine:

Books

The Hundred Years' War on Palestine - Rashid Khalidi
Perfect Victims and the Politics of Appeal - Mohammed el-Kurd
Men in the Sun and other Palestinian stories - Ghassan Kanafani
They Called Me a Lioness - Dena Takruri & Ahed Tamimi
Gaza Writes Back - Refaat Alareer, editor
If I Must Die - Refaat Alareer
Ten Myths about Israel - Ilan Pappé
The Butterfly's Burden - Mahmoud Darwish
Forest of Noise- Mosab Abu Toha
Palestine - Joe Sacco
The Message - Ta-Nehisi Coates
Bethlehem: A Celebration of Palestinian Food - Fadi Kattan
Palestine on a plate: Memories from my mother's kitchen - Joudie Kalla

Instagram Accounts

@anasjamal44
@wizard_bisan1
@aljazeeraenglish
@electronicintifada
@munther.isaac
@jewishvoiceforpeace
@veteransforpeace
@eye.on.palestine
@basem.in.sign
@btselem
@watermelonpictures

MT4Palestine online:

Website:

www.montana4palestine.org

Gmail: mt4palestine@gmail.com

Donations to families:
montana4palestine.org/donate

Instagram: @mt4palestine

Facebook: Montanans for Palestine



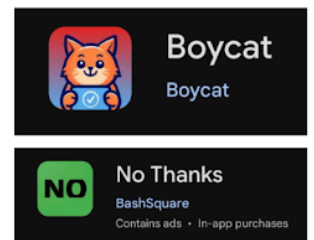
Films

Kids Under Fire
The Night Won't End
Gaza Fights for Freedom
Five Broken Cameras
Where Olive Trees Weep
No Other Land
The Encampments
Weaponising Water in Palestine
Spaces of Exception

MT4Palestine Mission Statement

Montana 4 Palestine builds community solidarity and power for the liberation of people resisting occupation, from Palestine to Turtle Island, through education, collective action, and community support.

Interested in boycotting, but not sure where to start? Check out these apps:



NAMI Montana

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Meetings

Family Support Group: Third Wednesday of each month at the NAMI Montana office- 130 Neill Ave. Suite B from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm. It is an in-person or zoom platform. Contact Byron at [406-422-5646](tel:406-422-5646) or Colleen at the NAMI Montana office at [406-443-7871](tel:406-443-7871) for more information.

NAMI Connection Peer Support Group: This group will meet from 6:00 p.m. -7:30 pm on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at the NAMI Montana office building- 130 Neill Ave. STE B. It is an in-person and zoom platform. For more information, contact Kim at [406-465-3066](tel:406-465-3066)



Family-to-Family Education Class: It is a free, comprehensive 8-week course designed specifically for family members of persons with major depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or a co-occurring disorder (both mental illness and substance abuse). Information on stigma; medication; coping skills; self-care; emotional support; communication; brain function; and problem-solving. (prior registration is required)- To be announced.

Private Prisons

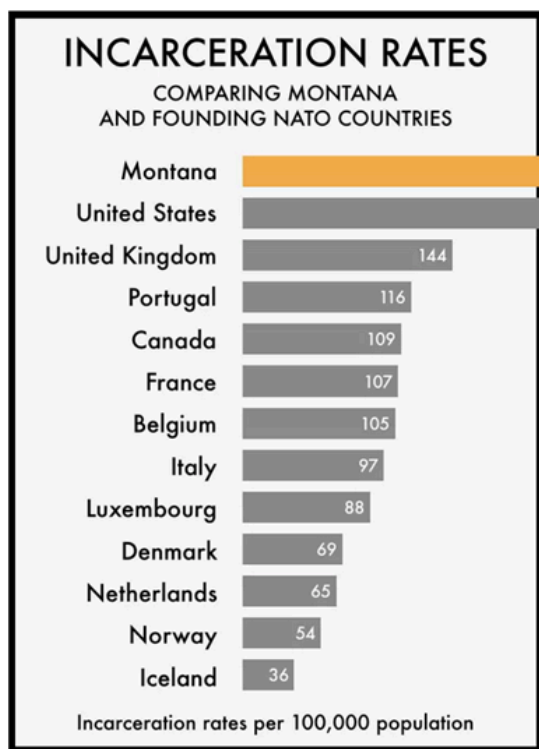
The Prison Industrial Complex is the system that governments and private agencies use to exploit incarcerated individuals for personal gain. Unlike traditional public prisons operated by government agencies, private prisons are managed by profit-driven entities. The prison industry is worth over \$80 billion and includes thousands of corporations.

The Prison Industry
Corporate Database



In fact, Montana has 3 contracts with CoreCivic, the second largest private corrections company in the U.S. with a reported revenue of \$2 billion in 2025; they also opened 9 new detention centers for ICE to use.

Justice should never be administered through the prism of profit.



Montana has an incarceration rate of 758 per 100,000 people (including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities), meaning that it locks up a higher percentage of its people than any independent democratic country on earth.



Montana Profile

Rather than trying to reduce that number, the legislature continues to invest in more prisons. In the 2025 legislative session, 2 bills allocated **\$436 million** towards the DOC, including \$250 million for a new women's prison (HB833).

It's a cycle that has to stop, the prison industry reaps financial benefits from the exploited labor of incarcerated individuals who often live in poor living conditions. They use that money to lobby at the state and federal levels for government contracts and to influence legislation favorable to their business model.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



IF YOU HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH ICE OR THE POLICE ON THE STREET, AT YOUR HOME, IN JAIL, AT WORK, OR WHILE DRIVING:

- **DO NOT ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS**
- **DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING WITHOUT SPEAKING TO AN ATTORNEY FIRST**
- **NEVER PLEAD GUILTY TO ANY CRIMINAL CHARGE WITHOUT TALKING TO AN ATTORNEY**

IF ICE COMES TO YOUR HOUSE:

- **DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR. Be aware:** ICE may lie to you about who they are.
- **TRY TO STAY CALM AND DO NOT LIE.** Just say "I do not want to answer any questions."
- If ICE enters your home, make sure to state that you do not consent to a search of your person or your belongings.

IF ICE STOPS YOU IN A STREET OR PUBLIC PLACE:

- **STAY CALM. DO NOT RUN.** If possible, take photos, video, and/or notes of the encounter.
- Ask if you are being arrested or detained, but do not answer any of their questions. If they say you are not being arrested, ask if you are free to leave.
- **DO NOT CARRY ANY DOCUMENTS FROM THE COUNTRY WHERE YOU WERE BORN.** Carry a local form of picture ID instead - a driver's license, school or work ID. Try to carry proof of your presence in the U.S. before February 2014 such as a phone, gas, or electric bill.

IF ICE ARRESTS YOU OR DETAINS YOU OR A LOVED ONE:

State that you want to speak to an attorney.

DO NOT ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS OR SIGN ANYTHING WITHOUT LEGAL REPRESENTATION!

Note: The content of this handout does not constitute legal advice. Please consult an immigration attorney for legal advice.

Montana Immigrant Fund

Donate today to help Montana's immigrant families impacted by immigration enforcement efforts. Through your donation, you'll be offering financial reinforcement that can help our neighbors afford legal representation, caring for their family's needs, fees associated with applying for status in the U.S., and more.



GoFundMe

Valley Bank

Acct# 330000255059



Helena Area Refugee Resettlement Team (HARRT)

HARRT is a community resource center dedicated to supporting immigrants and refugees as they establish themselves and integrate into the Helena community.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Transportation Assistance
- Community Event Participation
- ESL Instruction & Translation
 - Job Placement Support
 - Educational Tutoring
 - Child Programming

Upcoming Community Event

Eid Celebration
Helena Fairgrounds
Sunday, May 24
1:00 PM

Contact Information

Office: 406-422-1199
Email: Asa.harrt@gmail.com



www.WakingGiant.org

montana
book
co.

2027 Legislative Session

As Montana heads toward the 2027 legislative session, residents should pay close attention to proposals that could significantly reshape the state's tax system and shift more financial burden onto working families. At a recent event in Helena hosted by the Mountain States Policy Center, Gov. Greg Gianforte announced that one of his top priorities for the upcoming session will be pushing Montana toward a flat income tax. A statewide sales tax has also been his pet project since before he was elected governor.

Policy analysts warn that lower state revenue could eventually mean pressure to cut services such as public education, health programs, and community support systems. These are services that many rural and working-class Montanans rely on.

As lawmakers prepare for 2027, the debate will center on a key question:

Who benefits from Montana's tax policy changes and who pays the price?

For residents concerned about affordability and community services, the coming legislative session may shape the state's economic landscape for years to come. Staying informed and engaged will be essential. Keep reading for flat and sales tax information and what you can do. Knowledge is power!

The Mountain States Policy Center is often compared to the Heritage Foundation, but with a more regional focus. It is backed and run by ultra wealthy donors and promotes policies under the motto "Free Markets First." That priority places billionaire profit above the needs of families, communities, and even the state itself. When evaluating its policy recommendations, it's worth asking yourself the question above.

Follow the money.

Mountain States
Policy Center

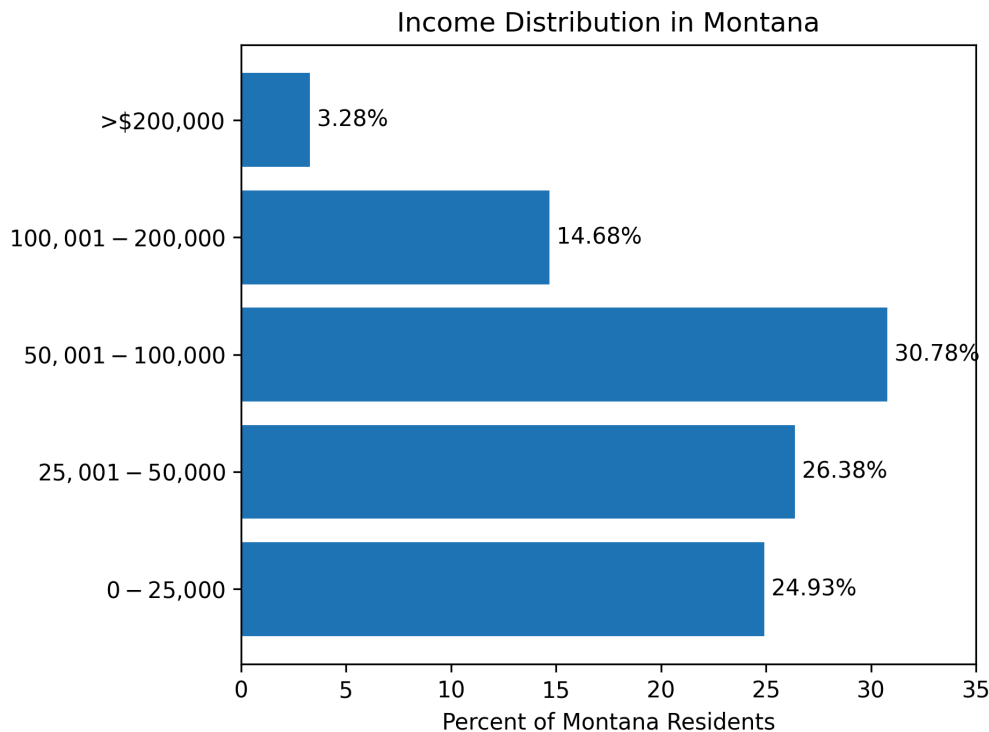


Tax Policy

Tax policies often touted as “fair” turn out to be regressive, either in practice or in effect. This means they impact those lower and middle income earners more. For instance, the **flat income tax** proposed by Gov. Gianforte will significantly decrease the tax burden for high income earners without reducing the tax burden for low income Montanans. Additionally, high-income earners often do not have to report a significant portion of their investment earnings as income. With no plan to replace the revenue lost by the tax decrease on high-income earners, you will feel the squeeze in one way or another, but the billionaire governor will not.

Annual Income	Current Policy	Proposed Policy
\$37,200	No change	No change
\$50,000	\$2,000	\$1,593
\$200,000	\$10,850	\$8,643
\$1,000,000	\$58,050	\$46,243

Lost tax revenue with no plan to make up that difference means more expensive or lost goods & services to you, which hurts the poor and middle class the most and in particular, hurts Montana children.



- Nearly 25% of Montanans earn less than \$25,000
- 51% of Montanans earn less than \$50,000
- Nearly 82% of Montana households earn under \$100,000
- Only 3.28% of Montanans earn more than \$200,000

A **sales tax** seems fair, “you buy more, you pay more,” until you consider that a sales tax increases the burden of taxes on the poor and middle income earners because it costs more to buy the necessities of life, leaving less for savings, education, emergencies, retirement, etc. There is nothing fair about people at the bottom shouldering any additional tax burdens. For additional information on tax policy watch this YouTube channel: Roughcut Media Network. This team has great, easy to understand content, including Shorts on different tax policies.

A sales tax hits families with lower & moderate incomes the hardest.

Regular Montana families spend a larger share of their incomes on basic goods and services that would be taxed, like car tires, winter coats, and school supplies.

Roughcut Media
YouTube Channel



A sales tax would be paid by everyday Montanans.

Out of state visitors would pay less than 12% of a statewide sales tax, leaving nearly 88% of the responsibility on Montanans.

Sales tax proposals are never about generating new revenue.

Sales tax proposals are coming on the heels of cutting income tax for the wealthy, a move that has cost the state millions in lost revenue. Any tax swap would shift tax responsibility onto low- and moderate-income families.

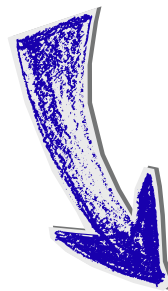
Contact your legislator and let them know that you oppose increasing costs on Montanans with a statewide sales tax.

We have better options that improve the fairness of our tax system, requiring the wealthiest pay more of their fair share.



Montana Budget &
Policy Center

Charts & Graphs



Say NO to Sales Tax!



City, County, and State


City of Helena




City Commission Meeting Calendar




Helena Budget Calendar



MT Free Press




Lewis & Clark County



County Commission Meeting Calendar

Elections



2026 Primaries: June 2nd

The decision by Greg Gianforte’s administration to stop issuing protest permits on weekends at the Montana State Capitol should concern every Montanan who values the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Montanans are noticing a pattern. Too often, decisions that affect the public are made behind closed doors by elitists, with little notice and no meaningful input from the people they affect. Policies are changed quietly while ordinary residents are left out of the conversation. That is not how representative government is supposed to work.

The Capitol is often called the people’s house because it belongs to the public, not to any governor. Limiting protests to weekdays effectively shuts out thousands of working Montanans or those who don’t reside in the Queen City and can only participate on weekends and makes it harder for everyday people to take part in civic life.

It is also troubling that the policy appears to have changed without transparency or public input. When the Montana Department of Administration makes decisions affecting access to the Capitol grounds, Montanans deserve clear notice and accountability.

What Montanans can do

If Montanans believe the Capitol should remain open for public protest on weekends, they should make their voices impossible to ignore. Call and email the governor’s office and the Department of Administration. Ask for the written policy, the legal justification, and the communications that led to the change.

And most importantly, write letters.

Letters to state officials become part of the official record and must be preserved under Montana’s constitutional transparency laws, otherwise known as the Montana Sunshine Laws. Those records can later be requested by the public, creating accountability that phone calls and emails often do not.

Organize with friends, neighbors, and community groups. Send letters demanding answers. Then follow up with public records requests asking for all correspondence and documents related to your letters and to the policy itself. Every letter forces the issue into the public record.

Where to send letters



Governor Greg Gianforte
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Montana Department of Administration
Director’s Office
125 North Roberts Street
P.O. Box 200101
Helena, MT 59620

MOMS DEMAND ACTION

FOR GUN SENSE IN AMERICA

Moms Demand Action is a grassroots movement of Americans fighting for public safety measures that can protect people from gun violence. Gun violence is preventable! For more information use the email below or text **READY** to 644-33

Montana@momschapterleaders.org

Indivisible Helena is pro-democracy, always pledged to non-violence. We work to grow the resistance against the authoritarian regime by engaging with, educating, and giving courage to our community.



indivisiblehelena.org
indivisiblehelena@gmail.com

All who share a vision of a society based on true liberty, equality and justice are welcome here.

Our 1800+ members are engaged in rallies, public protests, and more. We connect with Montana Indivisible chapters and national Indivisible. We partner with other activist groups.



Photo: Bob Allen



Photo: Bob Allen

Saturday Protest



Every Saturday
Pop Up Protest

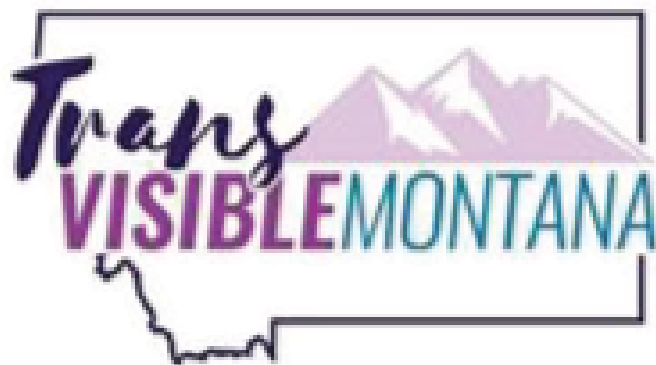
Noon to 1pm

Corner of 11th and N. Montana Ave

Join us to protest:

- Illegal undeclared war in Iran
- Trump ignoring the US Constitution
- Epstein files cover up
- Trump gutting Federal Agencies
- ICE invading and terrorizing our communities
- DOJ weaponized against Trump's enemies
- Unprecedented corruption
- General incompetence, lies, and more lies
- All of the above happening every day

Bring your own sign, or borrow one of ours



Our Work: TransVisible Montana promotes awareness, offers education, provides leadership skills & engages the challenges affecting transgender, nonbinary & two spirit Montanans. We prioritize & uplift transgender, nonbinary & two spirit people through social media, community training & consultation.



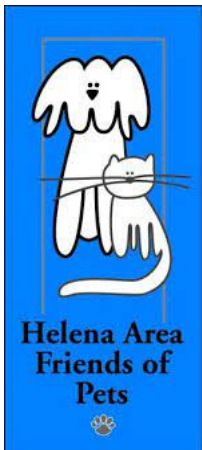
Pets

Many local families struggle to afford food, supplies, and medical care for their pets especially with the inevitable economic recession we are facing. When pets are surrendered due to financial hardship, it affects not only the animals but also the well-being of the family and our community. Animal Control, the Lewis & Clark Humane Society, and smaller local rescues can become overwhelmed with surrendered pets.

You can help!

Donate pet food at the collection bins near the doors at Safeway or Food Share. The Humane Society also has a large outdoor bin for feral cat food donations. If you're having trouble affording pet food, contact the **Lewis & Clark Humane Society** for referrals to assistance. You can also anonymously write down a request at a Free Little Pantry location. Most requests are rapidly fulfilled. Low-income households can reach out to the **Helena Area Friends of Pets** for financial help with spaying, neutering, and vaccinating their pets.

Together, we can ensure pets stay with the families who love them.



406-465-0009



helenapets.org

A volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit that has been supporting the community and its pets since 2004!



406-442-1660

LEWIS & CLARK
HUMANE SOCIETY

lchsmontana.org

Mission: To provide humane shelter and compassionate care for the lost, neglected, and surrendered animals of the greater Helena community while providing services and education to strengthen the human-animal bond.

Vision: Inspiring a compassionate community to end pet overpopulation and animal homelessness.



THANK YOU

Money may be power, but it's not the only power. We have the numbers! The wealthy do not exist without us. We do not need them to survive. If suddenly there were no billionaires, we wouldn't even notice. If suddenly there were no workers in factories, no one picking up the garbage at the curbside, no firemen, no nurses, no soldiers, no truck drivers, no teachers, no one harvesting/picking food - the entire system falls apart.

The ultra wealthy have spent the past 50 years ensuring wealth only flows to those who already have it. CEOs now make 600-1000x their average worker. The idea that these billionaires and their corporations need our help so we can have jobs is laughable. And the idea that anything other than the upward transfer of wealth has contributed to the shrinking middle class and increasing wealth inequality, is diabolical.

Do what you can to prepare for a nationwide general strike. The next one is upcoming on historic May Day (May 1st). Boycott companies that do not align with our values. Power is not simply given. We must force power to be transferred back to the people by exercising the power we have as a collective.

Be relentless. Thank you for standing up for yourself, your neighbors, the future, our state, and our country! **Solidarity is our strength. Solidarity forever.**

