

Resolution of the Montana Republican Party Rebuking Republicans for Working With Progressive Out-of-State Billionaires

WHEREAS, the influx of tens of millions of progressive out-of-state dollars to influence Montana's elections and advance far-Left policies has raised grave concerns among Montanans;

WHEREAS, according to publicly available records, progressive out-of-state billionaires and political action committees (PACs) are funneling millions of dollars into Montana's Republican primary election campaigns and progressive ballot initiative campaigns through a multi-layered, deceptively designed, network of PACs and dark-money nonprofits;

WHEREAS, those primary and ballot initiative campaigns are managed by the political consulting firm in Helena called **Fireweed Campaigns Inc. of Helena ("Fireweed")**;

WHEREAS, **Fireweed** provides paid campaign services to numerous candidates who hold themselves out as Republicans and far-Left ballot initiatives, including 2024's **Abortion initiative** (CI-128), **Ranked-Choice Voting initiatives** (CI-126 & 127), and this year's **Judicial Elections initiative** (CI-132);

WHEREAS, in January 2026, **Fireweed** began billing Republican primary candidates for campaign management services – typically \$3,000 per month plus \$900 for compliance;

WHEREAS, public reports identify eleven (11) Republican primary candidates paying **Fireweed** for campaign management services:

1. **David Bedey**, SD 43 (Hamilton)
2. **Llew Jones**, SD 09 (Conrad)
3. **Kenneth Walsh**, HD 69 (Twin Bridges)
4. **Brad Barker**, HD 55 (Roberts)
5. **Michele Binkley**, HD 85 (Hamilton)
6. **Linda Reksten**, HD 13 (Polson)
7. **Shelley Vance**, SD 34 (Belgrade)
8. **Curtis Cochran**, HD 90, Mineral CC Chair (St. Regis)
9. **Susan Geise**, HD 17 and Republicans for Tester Co-Chair (Helena)
10. **Russell Nelson**, HD 67 (Belgrade)
11. **John Fitzpatrick**, HD 76 (Anaconda)

WHEREAS, during the same time, multiple members of **Fireweed's staff** made \$470 maximum contributions to the eleven (11) candidates listed above and six (6) additional Republican candidates (collectively, the "**Fireweed Candidates**"):

1. **George Nikolakakos**, SD 12, Cascade CC Finance Chair (Great Falls)
2. **Melissa Nikolakakos**, HD 20 (Great Falls)
3. **Valerie Moore**, HD 29 (Plentywood)
4. **Eric Albus**, SD 14 (Saco)
5. **Ed Buttrey**, SD 11 (Great Falls)
6. **Doug Martens**, SD 18 (Forsythe)

WHEREAS, **Conservatives4MT** is a Montana independent political committee which receives 78% of its funding from the same network of progressive and out-of-state PACs (\$330,000 out of \$422,000);

WHEREAS, **Conservatives4MT** spent roughly \$360,000 on mailers and digital ads supporting the same candidates **Fireweed** now manages, including Michelle Binkley, Brad Barker, David Bedey, Curtis Cochran, Llew Jones and others in the 2024 Republican primary election;

WHEREAS, the far-Left progressive ballot campaigns are connected to and coordinated with the 2024 Republican primary campaign operation;

WHEREAS, the progressive and out-of-state far-Left PAC infrastructure is expanding to include two (2) new PACs: **Big Sky Fiscal Guardians**, and **Treasure State Stewards** which were registered on the same day – March 12, 2026;

WHEREAS, **Conservatives4MT**, **Big Sky Fiscal Guardians**, and **Treasure State Stewards** share identical treasurers in these progressive and out-of-state, far-Left organizations: **Ross Fitzgerald**, Treasurer, and **Roger Hagan**, Deputy Treasurer;

WHEREAS, **Ted Kronebusch**, sits on the boards of both **Montanans for Election Reform Action Fund** and **Treasure State Stewards**, linking the ballot initiative apparatus directly to the new PAC infrastructure;

WHEREAS, the progressive and out-of-state far-Left PAC infrastructure includes elected officers of the Montana Republican Party ("**PAC Officers**");

1. **Ross Fitzgerald**, Chair of Teton County Central Committee
2. **Roger Hagan**, Precinct Committeeman Cascade County Central Committee
3. **Ted Kronebusch**, Chair of Pondera County Central Committee

WHEREAS, the millions of dollars being funneled into Montana by progressive and out-of-state far-Left organizations is being used for two purposes: 1) to hand-pick Republican winners in primary elections, and 2) to fund far-Left initiatives.

WHEREAS, **Fireweed** and this network of progressive and out-of-state dark money organizations are utterly antithetical to Republican policies and principles;

WHEREAS, many of the **Fireweed Candidates** have histories of repeated and open attacks against the Montana Republican Party, and, in office, have acted in a manner hostile to Republican policies and principles;

WHEREAS, in the opinion of the MTGOP Executive Board, the **Fireweed Candidates** and **PAC Officers** have engaged in a coordinated scheme with progressive and out-of-state far-Left organizations designed to undermine the Montana Republican Party and its voters;

WHEREAS, the actions of the **Fireweed Candidates** and **PAC Officers** betray the principles of the Montana Republican Party and Montana Republican voters of each respective district who put their trust in them; and

WHEREAS, the **Fireweed Candidates** and **PAC Officers** continue to hold themselves out as Republicans, and as a result may be believed by some to be considered as speaking for Montana Republicans even though their actions prove otherwise.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that,

1. Montanans are gravely concerned about the influx of tens of millions of progressive, out-of-state dollars to influence Montana's elections and advance far-Left policies.
2. The **Fireweed Candidates** and **PAC Officers** have engaged in a coordinated scheme with progressive and out-of-state organizations designed to undermine the Montana Republican Party and its voters by receiving and/or directing funds of far-Left organizations.
3. The Chairman and Executive Committee of the Montana Republican Party rebuke the **Fireweed Candidates** and **PAC Officers** for betraying the Montana Republican Party and Montana Republican voters by coordinating with far-Left organizations to elect candidates in Republican primary elections who are antithetical to Republican policies and principles.
4. If the **Fireweed Candidates** and **PAC Officers** continue to coordinate with progressive organizations in the 2026 Republican primary, the Montana Republican Party will discuss taking further actions in order to protect the trust of the Montana Republican voters who desire accountability in government and honesty from their candidates.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, the Executive Committee of the Montana Republican Party, through its Chairman, shall:

1. Call upon the **Fireweed Candidates** to return any moneys received from **Fireweed** or other progressive and out-of-state organizations and to dissociate from those progressive organizations: **David Bedey**, SD 43 (Hamilton), **Llew Jones**, SD 09 (Conrad), **Kenneth Walsh**, HD 69 (Twin Bridges), **Brad Barker**, HD 55 (Roberts), **Michele Binkley**, HD 85 (Hamilton), **Linda Reksten**, HD 13 (Polson), **Shelley Vance**, SD 34 (Belgrade), **Curtis Cochran**, HD 90, Mineral CC Chair (St. Regis), **Susan Geise**, HD 17 and Republicans for Tester Co-Chair (Helena), **Russell Nelson**, HD 67 (Belgrade), **John Fitzpatrick**, HD 76 (Anaconda), **George Nikolakakos**, SD 12, Cascade CC Finance Chair (Great Falls), **Melissa Nikolakakos**, HD 20 (Great Falls), **Valerie Moore**, HD 29 (Plentywood), **Eric Albus**, SD 14 (Saco), **Ed Buttrey**, SD 11 (Great Falls), **Doug Martens**, SD 18 (Forsythe)
2. Call upon the **PAC Officers** to immediately resign from the PAC infrastructure and disavow those progressive organizations: **Ross Fitzgerald**, Chair of Teton County Central Committee, **Roger Hagan**, Precinct Committeeman Cascade County Central Committee, and **Ted Kronebusch**, Chair of Pondera County Central Committee.
3. Allow the **Fireweed Candidates** and **PAC Officers** an opportunity to respond to the Montana Republican Party in writing via email explaining their actions and confirming dissociation from these progressive and out-of-state far-Left organizations within (10) days of publication of this Resolution, as a show of good faith and trust.

– Chairman Art Wittich and the Montana Republican Party Executive Board Members: Stacy Zinn, Lola Sheldon-Galloway, Ed Walker, Bill Lussenheide, Tanner Smith, Debbie Churchill, Bruce Williams, Shane Eaton, Marla Davis, Paul Fielder, and Tracy Sharp.