

#17

COMPLETE

Time Spent: Over a week  
Email: jadebahrmt@gmail.com

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Page 1: Introduction

**Q1** Please provide your name.

Jade Bahr

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**Q2** Why are you running for State Legislature?

For several reasons but mainly because of the neglect that is happening towards our most vulnerable citizens and because our Montana legislature needs a more accurate representation of the people according to race, class and gender.

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**Q3** What do you believe is the most important issue related to growing business in Billings and what are your suggestions for addressing that issue?

Inspiring more local economy. We now have online shopping and corporate interests that threaten local economic growth. I would like to see more efforts towards promoting local spending and more efforts towards making Billings a city our college grads want to stay and invest in. If we have more local business then we also create more opportunity for the secondary jobs that come along with that unlike corporate businesses who have that all in house.

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**Q4** In the 2017 Legislative Session, local option authority was supported by the Billings Chamber, City of Billings, Big Sky Economic Development, Downtown Billings Partnership, and numerous other organizations across the state. Under what conditions would you vote for a local option authority bill?

I agree that we need to be able to capture the tourist tax but the biggest question for me is how does it affect those of low-income the most. When you think about putting a tax on restaurant bills it still seems a bit unfair for those of less means because it makes it even more difficult to afford. They should get to enjoy leisurely a meal out on the town too. I would want the community to be supportive before getting behind it. More opportunities for discussions and education of the tax for the public would be ideal.

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**Q5** Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts are an important economic development tool for our community. How will you work to ensure one of local government's most useful funding mechanisms is preserved?

I would support legislation for TIF districts and I would work to inform the people in the districts of the importance behind this economic development tool and how it works.

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## Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

**Q6** In 2016, Yellowstone County hoteliers remitted \$3.5 million in facility use taxes to the state. That year our regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, which markets and promotes our area as a travel destination, received \$350,000 (just 10%) from the state to market and promote tourism in our area. Will you work with the Billings Chamber and lodging partners to ensure more money is returned to the areas generating lodging tax revenue? (Y/N) **Yes**

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**Q7** MSU Billings is an essential economic driver for our community and surrounding area. Not only does MSU Billings provide educational opportunity for Montanans, it also assists with workforce development, an increasingly important challenge facing our community. How will you help to ensure MSU Billings receives adequate funding for facility updates?

I would support legislation that helps to adequately fund our state universities. We can also look towards what new avenues for revenue that could help fund our college universities. Increasing the tuition at the schools is not the answer. I would work to find alternative routes for funding. Also, let's make Billings more of a city that people want to come to and stay in. Let's look to ways we can get out-of-state students to view Billings as vibrant and a place of opportunity.

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**Q8** The Billings Chamber, City of Billings, Big Sky Economic Development, Downtown Billings Partnership, and other community partners, are working with Hammes Co. on the development of One Big Sky Center, comprised of two development districts and anchored by a regional convention center. If a state funding source were identified and developed, under what conditions would you support the inclusion of state monies in the funding mix for a regional convention center in Billings?

I am in support of the One Big Sky center under the conditions that it is eco-friendly, that it includes local business and not just corporate, and that the housing aspect allows for people of all incomes. I would also like to see it be student friendly and a place with more art incorporated.

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**Q9** Sixteen percent of Billings workers are employed in the healthcare arena resulting in a total direct and indirect economic output of \$2.6 billion annually. Do you believe that cutting state reimbursement to hospitals, clinics and other healthcare providers is a way to address state budget shortfalls? (Y, N)

**No,**

You may provide additional context if appropriate.:

To have a healthy and thriving economy the people's health should be of concern. Poor health leads to poor productivity and more reliance on the system. People shouldn't have to fear a hospital bill and yet I know many that avoid getting healthcare because of the struggle to be able to afford it. I advocate to take measures that avoid having a stressed out and unhealthy community.

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**Q10** Throughout the legislative interim and November 2017 Special Session the re-evaluation of Montana's funding mechanisms was a topic of discussion. What are your thoughts on the need to identify new revenue sources to address a shifting economy and our infrastructure needs?

My thoughts are that we should be striving to identify new revenue sources. Around a million people live in Montana. New ideas for revenue are bound to be out there. The economy is ever changing and we need to be able to keep up with the technology and education available to give Montana the economic boost it needs. Capture the tourist tax and also be pay attention to the loop holes and tax breaks that corporations are taking advantage of in our state.

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## Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

**Q11** Billings, and the greater Yellowstone County area, has the largest legislative delegation in the state and there is great potential to work together toward regional specific initiatives. How do you plan to work with all members of the Yellowstone County area delegation for the betterment of our business community during the 2019 Legislative Session?

Working with other members of the Yellowstone County area delegation doesn't have to be hard. We have a common goal to have a thriving economy in Billings or at least I hope we do. Working with others means putting forth the effort to effectively communicate and collaborate. I plan to be actively working to build relationships for the betterment of our business community.

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Page 3: Finalizing Questionnaire

**Q12** If you have not sent the Billings Chamber a high-res image you would like us to use, please upload a photo here.

**Jade Bahr 8x10@300 copy.jpg(5MB)**

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