

# Austin Knudsen

Montana's Attorney General



Dear Friend,

I'll get straight to the point: the Montana Supreme Court is a mess, and it's having disastrous consequences for our state. For decades, the Court has been controlled by the liberal trial lawyers and their Democrat allies, but now we have a chance to change that.

First, let's look at some the recent conduct of the Montana Supreme Court:

- **Lobbying Against Accountability** - Leaked emails showed that members of the Supreme Court and other judges routinely took positions on bills during the 2021 legislative session. Coordinating with outside special interest groups behind the scenes, the Court and its taxpayer-funded employees involved themselves in dozens of bills being considered by the legislature. In some cases, members of the Court and their employees were actively lobbying against legislation, because it increased oversight and their accountability to the public.
- **Unethical Behavior & Conflict of Interest** - The Court blocked a legislative subpoena that sought to reveal documents relating to their involvement in lobbying and legislative matters. Despite the fact that the case was brought by the Court's own hand-picked employee and the dispute involved the emails of members of the Supreme Court, 6 of the 7 Justices ignored their duty to recuse themselves from the case in which they had a direct personal interest. And, wouldn't you know it, the Court ruled in its own favor to keep their emails from reaching the legislature or the public.
- **Overtuning Settled Law to Benefit Criminals** - Justices have taken an activist bent and legislating from the bench in ways that help criminals and showing a general disregard for the Legislature. First, they overturned a law that had been on the books for 24 years that required a mandatory 35% fine for possession or storage of dangerous drugs. Then, they went against legislative intent regarding restitution, making it harder for crime victims to be made whole by those who preyed on them.
- **Letting Criminals back on the Street** - The Court upended decades of precedent regarding "time served" for criminals who are awaiting trial, throwing chaos into the already over-taxed system. Their decision allows convicted criminals to *double* or even *triple* count time served against their final sentences, undermining the legislature's authority to determine punishment for crimes - and setting criminals loose before they've served their time.

- **Siding with Extreme Environmentalists** - The Court recently ruled in favor of radical environmental groups that are seeking to create a blueprint to shut down agriculture, economic development, and public access all across our state. These restrictions are so extreme that even liberals Brian Schweitzer and Steve Bullock said no - but the Supreme Court said yes, concocting a new legal theory to let the disastrous environmental Initiative move forward.

Thankfully, this fall we have a great opportunity to restore some balance to the court by replacing liberal activist Justice Ingrid Gustafson.

Because the Supreme Court gets so little attention from the media, you've likely never heard of Ingrid Gustafson. She was appointed by Democrat Governor Steve Bullock back in 2017 and is up for re-election this year.

Prior to her appointment to the Supreme Court, Gustafson was a District Court Judge in Billings where she earned the dubious distinction of being one of the most substituted judges in Montana history. She even tried to change the rules to make it more difficult for her to be removed from cases.

As District Court Judge, Gustafson went easy on criminals -- something she has also brought with her to the Supreme Court. When a man with four previous DUIs got behind the wheel with drugs and under the influence to ram a police car, she let him off with treatment. And when a child predator admitted to having sexually explicit online conversations with someone he thought was a 14-year old girl and arranged to meet her, Gustafson gave him a get-out-of-jail free card.

Fortunately, there is a great candidate running against Justice Gustafson - Dillon native and current Chairman of the Montana Public Service Commission James "Jim" Brown. **In addition to my support, Jim has earned the endorsements of Governor Gianforte, Senator Daines and Congressman Rosendale.**

I've known Jim for over a decade, and I can tell you, he is exactly the type of Justice we need on the Montana Supreme Court. Jim has a very straightforward platform: **preserve the rule of law, follow the Constitution, and protect our way of life.**

Jim is running a great campaign, but he needs all the help he can get, and we need all hands-on deck for this race.

**That's where your support of the Leadership in Action PAC comes in.**

The Democrats and their trial lawyer allies are going to do whatever they can to preserve the status quo and keep their tight grip on the Montana Supreme Court. In the last contested race for the Supreme Court, the Montana Democrat Party and their trial lawyer buddies spent nearly \$1,000,000 to support liberal Judge Dirk Sandefer.

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I will not stand idly by while the Democrats and their allies try to buy another spot on the Montana Supreme Court - that's why I'm all in on this race, and I need your help to ensure we have the resources to respond when the Democrat attack machine aims its guns on Jim Brown this fall.

**Please send in your contribution of \$500, \$250, \$100, \$50 or even \$25 in the next 10 days so that we can ensure Leadership In Action can help elect a candidate who will preserve the rule of law, follow the Constitution, and protect our way of life.**

I want you to know that your support makes a huge difference. None of this would be possible without the support of great folks like you. Working together, we can defend the Constitution, rein in government spending, and fight to keep our families and our communities safe.

You can reach me anytime at [Austin@AustinforMontana.com](mailto:Austin@AustinforMontana.com) - I look forward to seeing you soon as I travel across Montana.

Sincerely,



Austin Knudsen  
Montana's Attorney General

*P.S. You can find out more about all our efforts with Leadership In Action by visiting our website - [www.LIAPAC.ORG](http://www.LIAPAC.ORG)*