

Statement	Support
<p>Before ballots drop on October 9, Montanans need to know that Lieutenant Governor Mike Cooney has a proven track record of fiscal responsibility.</p>	<p>[Supported by subsequent statements]</p>
<p>Mike has repeatedly brought Democrats and Republicans together to balance the state budget,</p>	<p>As Senate President, Cooney helped pass a balanced budget with bipartisan cooperation after an impasse.</p> <p>“What surplus? 2007-09 budget out of balance,” Mike Dennison, Billings Gazette, 4/20/2007: With one week left at the Montana Legislature, the budget doesn't balance. Time to get out the hedge trimmers. ... Senate President Mike Cooney, D-Helena, said he fully expects the Legislature to start shaving down spending proposals that are still alive.</p> <p>"We understand that some of the budget bills are a little higher than what the governor has recommended," he said.</p> <p>Yet Democrats, who control the Senate, also believe the public has many pressing needs, and that much of the spending addresses those needs, in education, health care and corrections, Cooney said.</p> <p>“Special session, same Legislature,” Gwen Florio, Great Falls Tribune, 4/29/2007: With Friday’s exasperating end to one of the uglier legislative sessions in many people’s memories, focus now turns to the pending special session and a single question: How are these same people, who started off poles apart from Day 1 and marched defiantly to oppose ends of the known universe by Day 90, going to work things out? ... Although Cooney said he hadn’t contacted Republican Senate and House leaders as of Saturday, he hoped to talk with them during the break to lay the foundation for a compromise over the two issues that bedeviled the Legislature from the start: How much to increase spending on government programs, and how much money to return to residents in the form of tax breaks.”</p> <p>“Schweitzer Wins Budget Row,” Rich Saskal, The Bond Buyer, 5/18/2007: It took a special session, but Montana lawmakers were finally able to pass a budget for the 2007-2009 biennium.</p> <p>Lawmakers adjourned the regular session without a budget, which was the victim of a partisan divide between the Democratic-controlled Senate and the Republican-led House.</p> <p>In the end, several Republicans in the Senate broke ranks to pass a budget that largely followed the outline proposed at the beginning of the year by Democratic Gov. Brian Schweitzer.</p> <p>“Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney to announce run for governor Wednesday,” David McCumber, Montana Standard, 7/03/2019: He recalled that when he was president of the Senate, the House failed to pass a budget and Gov. Brian Schweitzer was forced to call legislators back to a special session to get the budget done.</p> <p>"I'm not taking credit, but I was part of the negotiating group that patched together that budget. We ended up with an even better budget than we had before."</p> <p>Bullock, with Cooney by his side, pushed for and passed a balanced budget that restored cuts while maintaining a surplus</p> <p>“Governor Bullock prioritizes Medicaid expansion in state budget draft,” Corin Cates-Carney, Montana Public Radio, 11/15/2018 Governor Steve Bullock announced his budget priorities for the upcoming 2019 legislative session, Thursday, November 15. Bullock was joined by Lt. Governor Mike Cooney (left) and Montana Budget Director Tom Livers (right). Governor Steve Bullock released his draft state budget and priorities for the upcoming legislative session Thursday.</p>

	<p>"Here's what's in Gov. Bullock's infrastructure plan. GOP legislators have their own ideas." Eric Dietrich, Montana Free Press, 2/04/2019: <i>Gov. Steve Bullock, flanked by Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney, left, introduces his budget for the upcoming biennium at the Capitol On Nov. 15, 2018.</i></p>  <p>"Gov. Steve Bullock signs 2-year, \$10.3B Montana budget," Associated Press, 5/13/2019: Gov. Steve Bullock has signed a two-year, \$10.3 billion state budget that restored many of the cuts made in 2017 amid a revenue slump.</p> <p>The spending plan the Democratic governor signed Monday leaves a \$210 million surplus in case of unexpected costs or another dip in tax collections.</p> <p>It also leaves \$61 million in a budget stabilization fund that was created to avoid the future revenue crunches.</p>
<p>and with the help of Bullock-Cooney administration, Montana has added 46,000 jobs since the peak of the recession.</p>	<p>Montana has added 46,000 jobs since July 2009. Montana 2019 Labor Day Report, MT Dept. of Labor & Industry, 9/03/2019: Since the recession ended in June 2009, Montana has added over \$6.3 billion in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), \$11.6 billion in real personal income, 46,000 jobs, and the state's unemployment rate has dropped by over three percentage points.</p> <p>During that time, Cooney has held leadership roles in the Dept. of Labor and the Governor's Office. "Bullock taps former lawmaker, secretary of state for lt. gov. job," Holly Michels, Billings Gazette, 12/30/2015: Cooney said he'll draw on his most recent experience as deputy commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry to focus on workforce development and the Main Street Montana project, created by Bullock in 2013 to promote Montana business.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Employment history:</p> <p>2015-present: Deputy Commissioner, Montana Department of Labor and Industries</p> <p>2006-2015: Division Administrator, Montana Department of Labor and Industries</p>
<p>And while Mike has always opposed a statewide sales tax,</p>	<p>Cooney said he would veto a sales tax as governor in 2000 "Gubernatorial candidates talk sales tax," Charles S. Johnson, Independent Record, 5/13/2000: All five major party candidates for governor say they oppose enacting a general sales tax, with three of them pledging to veto one if the Legislature enacts one while they are governor.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Berg asked: "Do you support a sales tax? Would you veto a sales tax?"</p> <p>...</p> <p>Democrat Mike Cooney, secretary of state: "As a legislator I voted against a sales tax. Montanans have spoken clearly on this issue and I've been listening. As governor, I'll continue to oppose the sales tax and will veto one should it come to my desk. Further, I'll look for ways to use our no sales tax status to bring 21st century jobs to Montana. The advent of e-commerce has changed the way many companies and states are looking at a sales tax. Not having a sales tax is a real advantage in the Internet age and I believe we should take full advantage of our status."</p>

	<p>Cooney has voted against legislative proposals for a statewide sales tax SB 470, Montana Legislature, Introduced 3/06/2003: Short Title: 4% sales and use tax; property tax reduction; individual income tax relief</p> <p>SB 470, Vote #993, 4/1/2003: Motion: DO PASS ... Nays: ... Cooney</p> <p>SB 512, Introduced 3/15/2005: Short Title: General sales tax with property tax relief</p> <p>SB 512, Vote #1078, 4/2/2005: Motion: 2ND RDG - DO PASS ... Nays: ... Cooney</p> <p>SB 512, Vote #1079, 4/2/2005: Motion: INDEF POSTPONE ... Yeas: ... Cooney</p> <p>Cooney has proposed a ballot measure to ban a statewide sales tax "Mike Cooney Launches "Montanans Against a Sales Tax" Constitutional Initiative," Cooney for Montana, 8/10/2020: Today Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney, Democratic candidate for governor and his running mate, Casey Schreiner, launched "Montanans Against a Sales Tax," a Constitutional Initiative proposal to permanently prohibit the legislature from instituting a statewide sales tax. The measure would appear on the 2022 ballot.</p>
<p>New Jersey multimillionaire Greg Gianforte</p>	<p>"Tax returns: Republican Gianforte made \$184M over 10 years," Matthew Brown, Great Falls Tribune, 7/01/2020: Montana Republican gubernatorial candidate Greg Gianforte reported income of \$184 million and paid \$30.5 million in state and federal taxes over a 10-year period ending in 2018, according to tax returns released by his campaign Wednesday. ... Wednesday's tax return release, combined with returns that Gianforte previously released during a failed bid for governor four years ago, indicate his income totaled more than \$243 million since 2005. ... Gianforte was raised in Wayne, Pennsylvania, and attended school in New Jersey. He moved to Montana in 1995 and founded RightNow Technologies two years later.</p>
<p>has repeatedly pushed for a statewide sales tax</p>	<p>"Democrats say Gianforte supported tax," Matt Volz, Great Falls Tribune, 9/30/2016: Republican gubernatorial candidate Greg Gianforte once called replacing Montana's income and capital gains taxes with a sales tax an "ideal solution" that would draw high-tech businesses to the state, according to a 2002 audio clip released by the state Democratic Party leader Thursday. ... Gianforte, in testimony before then-Gov. Judy Martz's Income Tax Advisory Council in 2002, said Montana's tax structure was hindering it from being a worldwide competitor in the technology industry because executives would not want to move to a state where they would pay high taxes.</p> <p>"The best solution, because our competition's at zero income tax rate and zero capital gains, would be to replace the current income and capital gains rate with a sales tax," Gianforte said. "I know that there are a few political issues and constitutional issues, but I didn't think I'd be fair in coming here and not saying that I believe that is the ideal solution." ... When pressed on whether he made the statement in 2002, he said, "I'm sure the record shows" what Gianforte said back then, adding he probably said "that I would not be opposed to it" (i.e. replacing other taxes with a sales tax).</p> <p>[Audio of Gianforte's Testimony; Relevant Clip at 7:16]</p>

and has been captured on video telling Montanans, "The fairest tax is the one you pay and I don't."	"2.10.16 Culbertson Fair Tax Clip," Montana Videos 2016, YouTube.com, 9/29/2016
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