

Toeing no partisan line
We are
DOWN THE MIDDLE

Capping Montana's double digit property tax increases on homeowners would seem a no-brainer issue for legislative candidates. Not so. The focus of Republicans and Democrats alike is on protecting the cash flow to government and placating moneyed special interests. The bi-partisan Revenue Interim Committee unanimously opposed CI-121 the Cap Montana Property Tax initiative. Their members believe the legislature/lobbyist cabal is best left in charge of your money.

Their two main rationales for opposing CI-121 are that the Montana Constitution is no place for tax policy. In fact, Article 8 Sec. 3 of the Montana Constitution mandates residential taxation at appraised value. CI-121 simply amends that provision to cap the tax increases on established residences, then new residences, to a maximum of 2% per year. No amendment to the Constitution means no meaningful change.

Before the vote the committee had an informational panel discussion. Only opponents to CI-121 were on the "informational committee". An expert on public bonding testified that the only thing that worked was "unlimited taxing authority". No legislators challenged that concept.

Count on the legislature to fix sky rocketing property taxes? The laughter you hear is from the lobbyists opposing CI-121. The problem has been growing since 2012 and exploded since 2019 but the legislature refused to even address the problem in 2021. Why should we trust them now?

All presenters claimed scorched earth scenarios if residential taxes are not continuously doubled. Reducing spending was never discussed. Montana's families were mentioned only as cash cows for funding government.

There is a political action committee opposed to CI-121 Cap Mt. Property Taxes. Their members include unions, governmental entities, and liberal lobbyists that historically lobby against tax cuts and support more spending. They also include self described "pro business" groups which historically advocate for more spending and against tax cuts. Specifically, the Montana Chamber of Commerce (advocates for a general sales tax) and its members the Montana Bankers Assn., Montana Association of Realtors (they pledge to defeat CI-121 to protect their commissions), Montana Contractors Assn., and the Montana Farm Bureau. They have amassed a \$85,000 war chest and hired political consultants to keep property taxes skyrocketing.

The other thing they share is that they all have PACs, using fictitious names ie Realtors for Better Government, etc. that join with other PAC's, also with factious names, to fund the Super

PAC-Jobs For Montana which opposes social and fiscal conservative candidates running for the legislature, confronting or confronted by, liberal Republican candidates. We are talking tens of thousands of dollars in third party expenditures per targeted race. This protects the 'Conservative' Solutions Caucus which then shovels money and political power to their benefactors. Raise your hand if you believe they are building a war chest to defend Montana families.

CI-121 has \$919 in its war chest. We can't do this alone. Join the fight. Go to [Cap Property Taxes.com](http://CapPropertyTaxes.com)

Author, Senator Brad Molnar serves on the Tax Committee, served 8 years on the Public Service Commission and term limited from the Montana House.