

## **MONTANA SENATE REPUBLICAN DEFECTORS INSURRECTION & THE- CITIZENS RIGHT TO KNOW** (Please consider forwarding this)



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*When a Legislator is elected as an “R” or “D”, and promises the voters they will essentially adhere to that party’s values, beliefs, and principles - what do we do when they then completely violate our trust and join forces with the opposite party? What are YOU willing to do about that collapse?*

Some people in Montana are at least vaguely aware of the fact that **nine elected Senate Republican legislators** joined with the *Senate Minority Leader*, Pat Flowers, Democrat from Belgrade, to cause what can **only be called an insurrection**. **All voters in Montana deserve to know about this.**

There are a lot of pieces to this puzzle I am writing about and finding all those pieces at this point may be impossible. There are even stealth-ish issues with the Executive Branch. I will do my best to be factual and fair.

### **The Preamble:**

These nine Senators violated the trust of the people that elected them in a move that they knew would **radically change** the working of the 2025 Montana Senate. This is **not some minor disagreement** about how to vote on a particular bill, **this was a transformational change** in several committees and ultimately, **which party would control the Senate** – in significant ways. Understand please that this also

affects the Montana House. EVERY bill passes through both chambers so ultimately, **every bill passes through the Senate.**

These nine have wholly demonstrated that **integrity, keeping their word to voters, and honesty mean NOTHING** to them! This is a complete breach of integrity that may well affect what happens in Montana for at least, the next couple of years.

If you are a responsible Montana citizen, I am asking you take immediate action to let **Senators Ellsworth, Gillespie, Hunter, Kassmier, Lammers, Loge, McKamey, Temple, and Vance** that they have betrayed **your trust** and they have no future in leadership in Montana. This is not vengeance; this is about **protecting the future of Montana.** Contact information for these nine is below. You may not change their minds, but you DO NEED to serve them notice that you are watching – put a rock in their shoe. This may be forgiven, but it **MUST NOT be forgotten.**

**In an attached Op-Ed from Senate Pro-Tempore Ken Bogner, (1)** we see a clear statement of what the Republican caucus in the senate intended to do for the good of all Montanans. In a display of blatant self-interest, these nine have upended that purpose.

### **What Happened and who/how was this orchestrated?**

On the first day of the Legislature, Senator *Minority* leader Flowers, fundamentally **broke long-standing Senate etiquette of “no-surprises”** – by not informing Senate *Majority* leader Tom McGillvray in advance of his plan.

On the Senate floor, Flowers and the nine, proceeded with their plan to change the rules and the makeup of critical Senate Committees.

This was a planned insurrection by joining hands with **one disgruntled Republican Senator, Jason Ellsworth**, who was able to manipulate **eight other Republican Senators** to join in a scheme to capture the control of the Senate.

The Republicans theoretically enjoy a majority of 32 to 18. But, with this reversal, the nine joined forces with the 18 Democrats to change the **structure of many of**

**the key Senate Committees as I will demonstrate below. The count may now often be 23Rs to 27D-Rs.**

Jason Ellsworth, from Hamilton, had run for President of the Senate and lost. For Ellsworth, **this is all about vengeance.** Talk to any honest person who knows him and they will tell you that he is known in the halls of the legislature as an **egotistical guy who is all about power** and will do anything to get it.

It is not rhetoric to suggest that this individual has serious mental issues and many Legislators (who must go unnamed at the moment) have clearly said so. Do a Google search of him about his [financial dealings](#) and you will see [repeated questions](#) about [reckless driving and abstraction of a peace officer](#) – he felt he was above the law and shouldn't be ticketed - and even [domestic abuse](#). I will leave that to you to investigate. From my sources, my bottom-line conclusion is that this is a man who believes in NOTHING in terms of principles, it's **all about power**.

### **Manipulating the Manipulator?**

There may well be another major stealth-ish player behind all of this, but it is hard to find all the facts. **Governor Greg Gianforte, has clearly had his fingers on all of this. From his unprecedented endorsement** of some 50 Republican Legislators in the Primary Election to the present-day. Legislators like Matthew Regier - former Speaker of the House and now President of the Senate - who were noticeably left out of his endorsements. Governor Gianforte knows Regier and others will respectfully stand their ground. Matt and others are kind, but do not march to the governor's drumbeat.

There was a mixture for sure in these endorsements. But there were other mischiefs that Gianforte and Daines participated in, in primaries in U.S. Senate and House primaries that have been extremely problematic (see the [Four Horsemen of the Montana Republican Party](#). P. 1) If you are able to do Facebook, [see what Dr. Albert Olszewski said](#) (at 100 minutes) about former Congressman Matt Rosendale or the garbage that happened at the Gallatin and Yellowstone Lincoln-Reagan Dinners where certain candidates were denied time to present their case. Much, much more could be said about these issues.

### Discerning an Interesting Meeting:

Interestingly, just a few days ago, the Governor met with the leadership of the Senate and House. Often what happens is those meetings is respectfully not discussed outside to promote trust, but this one has blown up and become general knowledge such that the whole legislature is aware of it.

**Governor Gianforte was asked if there was any truth to the rumor that he had called some of the NINE DEFECTORS after their vote offering sympathy** for the heat they were taking. The question had to be repeated **four times** as Greg avoided answering directly. Finally, he was asked to answer YES or NO. Gianforte finally admitted that **there were some calls made** which he promptly attributed to his staff. **So, why this sympathy for defectors and what are the Administrations goals?** Think about this, it is my observation that Governor Gianforte believes in ONE BRANCH of governance – his!

#### Maybe It's Also About Greg's Pet Legislation – Medicaid Expansion?

**It is no secret in Helena that Gianforte is pushing to keep the 100 million-dollar Medicaid Expansion alive.** In his weekly report to his constituents in Miles City, Rep. Greg Kmetz. (HD36) states in his KOMET KORNER (p. 2 PDF attached) (2)

“It is my understanding that past president **Jason Ellsworth** and the **Governor** may have joined forces to influence eight other senators to oppose Mr. Speaker [Matt Regier], the new Senate President. Together, they pushed to **modify the senate rules** to allow them to change the composition of the Senate committees. **The new committee structure will ensure that the Governor's budget items and the proposed Medicaid Expansion—costing over 100 million—will easily now pass through the Senate.** With the *minority* party joining forces with these *9 republican* Senators, they easily have enough votes to win on every issue, as every House bill must pass through the Senate to become law, in this scenario, it's **game over**, they will win every time, they now own the 69th session of the Montana Legislature.”

Maybe Rep. Kmetz is wrong but this Gideon is a straight shooter that I have known for 40 years. Even if he doesn't have all of his ducks in a perfect row, there sure seems to be fire where there is smoke.

Be that as it may, let's be focused enough to **not let these other eight Republican Senators off the hook**. If they could so easily and quickly be manipulated concerning a complete take-down of the Senate, they have **no business in the legislature**. They set out to change the makeup of the committees, and they have been very successful thus far. Details of some of those results follow later.

### **More Information from the Montana Family Foundation:**

In his Legislative [radio update 01/09/25](#), (3) Jeff Laszloffy, CEO of the Montana Family Foundation called this a “**soft coup**” and explained, “in an attempt to get more powerful committee assignments, Flowers and the nine downgraded a new *Executive Review Committee* to “on call” - essentially illuminating it - and then reassigned the member **to more powerful committees** like Finance and Claims, or Business, Labor and Economics.”

The [next day](#) (01/10/25) (4) in his radio update, Jeff spoke about this more in detail and revealed the ring leader of this insurrection, Sen. Jason Ellsworth from Hamilton. Supporting what I have already said in part, Jeff said Ellsworth failed in an attempt to be President of the Senate. “**He and the nine hijacked the rules in an unprecedented move to get the necessary votes for control of the Senate and the Democrats were only too happy to join this**. They thus were able to do by this coup what they were **unable to accomplish at the ballot box**.”

In a Republican Caucus meeting (01/09/25) the nine held their ground while their colleagues and leadership **attempted to appeal to their sense of logic, duty, loyalty to the voters who elected** them and Senate traditions regarding protocol and how committees are assigned and finally the need to end the coup and get back to work. **Like good Democrats** always do, these nine Republicans walked in lock step and refused to budge.

### **Taking a Closer Look – The Devil is in the Details! What's changed?**

**Example one** - the *Finance & Claims Committee*, the **original** balance was 11 Rs and 6 Ds. **After** the insurrection, the count was 14 R's and 8 D's. No big change – right? **Wrong!** In the **new** *Finance & Claims Committee* there are FOUR of the NINE Republican defectors – Republican Senators **Ellsworth, Kassmier, Temple and Vance** Now, in so-called party line votes they could go from 14 R's to 8 D's to potentially 10R to 12D-R's (5) See the Senate Committees – **Original and Current** as PDF) **I will attempt to attach the Original Committee First. The dates on the PDFs are confusing.**

**Example two:** In the *Business, Labor and Economic Affairs* committee, the count went from 5 R's and 3 D's to 7 R's and 4 D's. BUT, in the NEW committee, there are now TWO Republican defectors and one Democrat that **have been added** – **Hunter, Loge, and Weber**. So, on so-called party line votes, you could easily have a 6 R-D's to 5 R's outcome.

**Example three:** The *Health and Human Services Sub-Committee* also changed from the original **4 R's and 3D's** to **5 R's and 4 D's**. Again, the difference is that now **defectors Russ Temple has been added on the committee**. So, the potential vote could easily become **5 R-D's to 4 R's**.

Now the threat is that with a possible 5R-D's to 4 R's vote in this committee, the Democrats win. Some have suggested that this committee is **where Medicaid Expansion will go and therefore taxpayer-funded abortions**.

**I have just demonstrated who the Democrats have taken control of three major, powerful committees:**

- *Senate Finance & Claims Committee*
- *Senate Business, Labor and Economic Affairs committee*
- *Senate Health and Human Services Sub-Committee*

**The naive** will suggest that these NINE, when push comes shove, they will **not vote with the Democrats**. I assure you **they have already taken so much heat and they are not budging**. Only the threat of getting primaried in the next election would concern them. None of them will be termed out, and most have been in the Legislature for a while and probably feel secure.

**But one thing remains in YOUR control.** Shaming these nine for abandoning the voters in **THEIR** communities. NOBODY likes that!

Democrats remain in complete control despite their 32-18 minority status in the Senate. Do you remember how we thought the Senate majority was solid and we were more concerned about the House of Representatives?

### **More Interesting Info and Articles:**

Friday, [January 10<sup>th</sup>, in the Missoula Current](#), (6 Daily Montanan) President of the Senate, Matt Regier R-Kalispell said “When you have, at the very beginning of session like this, a group that says, ‘**Hey, we’re not going to affirm the majority’s decisions, the voters’ decision that the majority Republicans made back in November,**’ it strains things,” Regier told reporters following a failed vote to take up a resolution on rules governing the body. “I mean the vote’s right there — going to the Democrats to buck the majority.”

Amendments and concessions were made by Republican leadership, but the nine remained loyal to the Minority Leader Pat Flowers. Regier demonstrated a desire to lead the Senate to its business stating “At some point you just say, ‘We’re going to move on with business, and I guess if you guys and the Democrats want to control the floor, that’s your prerogative,’” Regier said to the nine. You can read more at the above LINK

Another article I found interesting was in the Montana Sentinel. While they may be biased, at least they offer another perspective in their piece Jan 7th [Nine "Republican" Senators Cross The Aisle And Commit A RINOsurrection To Give Democrats De Facto Control Of The Montana Senate \(7\)](#)

Their message was much the same as the headliner was “Republicans hold a 32-18 majority in the Montana Senate. Still, recently, **nine Republicans betrayed their principles and their voters by siding with Democrats during critical Senate rules vote on day one** of the 2025 legislative session.” They go on to point out that the Senate *Committee on Committees* assigns members to legislative committees. But the NINE, joined the Democrats to **change that control from R to**

**D.** Fortunately, I saved the OLD list of Committees to compare it to the NEW list and **they are attached.**

Another question to ask is why the official vote record displays the names of eight of those who voted with Democrats but **does not display the name of the person who led the charge, Senator Jason Ellsworth.** The article states “Our sources in the Capitol informed us that Ellsworth led this effort in an attempt to exact "revenge" on the members of the Senate who instead elected Senator Matt Regier as President.”

Near the bottom of the article, you will see

**Montana Senate**  
**69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session**  
**2025 Regular Session**  
**VOTE Tabulation**

You will observe that the Y’s (Yes votes) include Ellis but **just below that name** is a **BLANK** where **Jason Ellsworth’s name should be** and is missing! It is right above Emrich who voted NO. This is just one of the unanswered questions this article points to.

**Lots more could be said** but by now, you get the point that the voters have been betrayed. Stay tuned, this battle is just beginning!

**Who are these 9 “Republicans”?**

Contact them and let them know what you think of them handing the Senate to Democrats and making Pat Flowers the de facto Senate President:

Jason Ellsworth - [Jason.Ellsworth@legmt.gov](mailto:Jason.Ellsworth@legmt.gov) 406-360-0009 Hamilton, the clear ring leader, 4th term in the Seante

Bruce Gillespie - [Bruce.Gillespie@legmt.gov](mailto:Bruce.Gillespie@legmt.gov) 406-949-4453 from Ethridge, 4<sup>th</sup> term in the Senate

Gregg Hunter - [Gregg.Hunter@legmt.gov](mailto:Gregg.Hunter@legmt.gov) 406-219-7590 Glasgow, 1<sup>st</sup> term in the



## Legislature

Josh Kassmier - [Josh.Kassmier@legmt.gov](mailto:Josh.Kassmier@legmt.gov) 406-781-5386 Fort Benton, 3 terms in the House, 1<sup>st</sup> in the Senate. Or at [JKASSMIER@LIVE.COM](mailto:JKASSMIER@LIVE.COM)

Gayle Lammers - [Gayle.Lammers@legmt.gov](mailto:Gayle.Lammers@legmt.gov) - 406-679-0020 Hardin, appointed to the House, 1<sup>st</sup> term in the Senate or at [LAMMERSFORMT@GMAIL.COM](mailto:LAMMERSFORMT@GMAIL.COM)

Denley Loge - [Denley.Loge@legmt.gov](mailto:Denley.Loge@legmt.gov) - 406-544-5220 St. Regis, 4 terms in the House, 1<sup>st</sup> in the Senate or at [DENLEYLOGEHD14@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DENLEYLOGEHD14@GMAIL.COM)

Wendy McKamey - [Wendy.McKamey@legmt.gov](mailto:Wendy.McKamey@legmt.gov) - 406-868-5006 Great Falls, 4 terms in the House, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Senate

Russ Tempel - [Russ.Tempel@legmt.gov](mailto:Russ.Tempel@legmt.gov) - 406-265-0990 Chester, 4<sup>th</sup> term in the Senate?

Shelley Vance - [Shelley.Vance@legmt.gov](mailto:Shelley.Vance@legmt.gov) - 406-587-8608 Belgrade, 2<sup>nd</sup> term Senate

### Endnotes:

- (1) Op-Ed Senate Pro-Tempo Kenneth Bogner, *Montana Senate Republicans Aiming for Historic Legislative Session*. (Also attached)  
[https://missoulian.com/opinion/column/montana-senate-republicans-aiming-for-historic-legislative-session-sen-ken-bogner/article\\_c83e8228-cec0-11ef-8e64-1f524b3e05b7.html](https://missoulian.com/opinion/column/montana-senate-republicans-aiming-for-historic-legislative-session-sen-ken-bogner/article_c83e8228-cec0-11ef-8e64-1f524b3e05b7.html)
- (2) The KOMET KORNER – Weekly Report of Mt Legislative Session Jan. 12, 2025 PDF attached.
- (3) Montana Family Foundation Radio Update [radio update 01/09/25](#),
- (4) Montana Family Foundation Radio Update [next day](#) (01/10/25)
- (5) See the Senate Committees – Original and Current as PDF)
- (6) [January 10<sup>th</sup>, in the Missoula Current, \(Daily Montanan\)](#)
- (7) [Nine "Republican" Senators Cross The Aisle And Commit A RINOsurrection To Give Democrats De Facto Control Of The Montana Senate](#)

**Extra Note From Senator Bogner posted on Facebook** I will attempt to briefly tell you what he said if you don't have Facebook

Bogner posted three updates;

First, day he talks about how the minority leader led a motion to adopt rules that had not been talked about. The Democrats proposed rule changes and nine Republicans voted with them to pass those rules.

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/905073085067747>

**Second**, day 5 He explains how the NINE separated initially and divided the Caucus. He was hopeful that they would listen to reason and come back. There was discussion, concessions were suggested, but the nine still voted with Democrats. This is not just about rules, it's about power.

**Third** he outlines how the ring leader of the nine legislators, Jason Ellsworth, during his term as former President of the Senate, has been exposed that during his last days of his Presidency, he awarded a no-bid contract of \$170K to a long-time friend to do a job that staffers can already do.

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/590206657126006>