

# MEA-MFT today

A publication for members of MEA-MFT



Steve Bullock for Governor



Melissa Romano for Supt. of Public Instruction



Dirk Sandefur for Montana Supreme Court

## It's all about the statewide & local races

The presidential race might get the headlines, but here in Montana, statewide and local legislative races are where the action really is.

The decisions that most directly affect us, our families, our jobs, and our quality of life take place right here in the state. That's why MEA-MFT gets involved in these elections.

MEA-MFT members, leaders, and staff are working around the clock to elect people who share our values.

We have interviewed the candidates, studied their records, and endorsed the candidates who will fight for the things that make

Montana a good place to work and raise a family.

This newsletter features our endorsed candidates. They are the ones who support families, public schools and services, public lands, the middle class, and workers' rights. Please support them with your vote!

**Our top three priorities:** All elections are important. When push

comes to shove, though, the three races that have the most direct impact on our members and the important work they do are for governor, superintendent of public instruction, and Montana Supreme Court justice.

MEA-MFT strongly supports Steve Bullock, Melissa Romano, and Dirk Sandefur. More inside this issue. 🗨️

## You can't afford to miss the MEA-MFT Educators' Conference Oct. 20-21, Helena

Your fellow MEA-MFT members are hard at work to bring you nearly 500 top-quality workshops and keynote addresses! Read all about our conference on p. 3. 🗨️



Educators get ready to expand their horizons at the 2015 Educators' Conference.

# Our Point of View

BY ERIC FEAVER  
MEA-MFT PRESIDENT



revenue vouchers for a wide range of kids to enroll in private and sectarian schools. The governor vetoed HB 322. And she supported HB 596 to create a parallel universe of publicly funded but privately operated charter schools across Montana. The bill died in committee.

In 2015 and previous sessions, Arntzen has voted to weaponize k-12 public schools and college campuses. She has voted to bastardize the meaning of teacher tenure and end defined benefit pensions in the Teachers' and Public Employees' Retirement Systems. She has voted to require the election of the Montana board of public education and end election-day registration – a legislative referendum the people rejected in the 2014 general election.

It gets no better. Arntzen has voted to authorize anyone to teach, supported so-called "right-to-work," and opposed state employee pay plans. In 2015 she voted to close the Montana Developmental Center... a vote consistent with her 2011 vote to defund the Montana State Veterans Home.

Back in 2005, in a special legislative session convened expressly to meet Montana's constitutional obligation to adequately fund public education, Arntzen voted NO on the absolutely necessary k-12 school funding bill that featured first-time-ever funding of the quality educator payment, Indian Education for All, Indian achievement, and at-risk students.

So many bad votes, hard to pick the worst one, but what can be said about her 2009 vote asserting Montana's right to secede from the union?

**Elsie Arntzen's record matters.** If ever to serve as our superintendent of public instruction, she will promote outcomes similar to the legislative votes she has cast.

Elsie Arntzen is no Melissa Romano. Vote Romano! 🗳️



Melissa Romano



Elsie Arntzen

steps of distinguished predecessors Nancy Keenan, Linda McCulloch, and Denise Juneau?

### It matters to us!

There are two candidates for Montana superintendent of public instruction: Democrat Melissa Romano and

Republican Elsie Arntzen.

**Romano, an award-winning classroom teacher,** believes as we believe in things that matter. She will competently follow in the footsteps of her last three predecessors. MEA-MFT has endorsed her candidacy.

**As for Arntzen,** she has a legislative record unbecoming of anyone who teaches or has taught in our public schools. Go here: [bit.ly/1PoSiZG](http://bit.ly/1PoSiZG) just to see how deplorable her voting record really is.

But to summarize: In the 2015 legislative session, Senator Elsie Arntzen voted NOT to fund Governor Steve Bullock's Early Edge proposal. She opposed state funding of 19-year-olds in high school and opposed raising the mandatory school enrollment age to 18.

Worse, she voted for SB 410, the first public school income tax credit privatization bill to pass any legislature and slither into law without the governor's signature. SB 410 is now in heavy litigation.

In addition, Arntzen voted for HB 322 to provide local and state

## Does it matter?

(Fall 2015 • Reprised Fall 2016)

Does it matter if the next superintendent of public instruction...

- Is an accomplished, award-winning classroom teacher?
- Believes in and advocates for public education?
- Thinks teachers should be licensed and endorsed?
- Opposes tuition tax credits, pay vouchers, and charter schools – all intended to privatize and outsource our public schools?
- Believes teacher tenure – due process and just cause – must be maintained as it has been for over 100 years?
- Affirms our public schools must be gun free and safe?
- Believes early childhood education is the next best step toward quality education for all Montana kids?
- Believes that after a life-time career, teachers have more than earned a life-long supporting pension?
- Proactively follows in the foot-



You can't  
afford to  
miss this.

2016  
MEA-MFT  
Educators'  
Conference  
OCTOBER 20-21  
HELENA

## Where else can you...

Rub shoulders with some of the world's top experts in your field...

Network with outstanding educators from all across Montana and the nation...

Choose from nearly 500 workshops and keynotes on every imaginable education topic...

Get the renewal units you need...

Celebrate the next Montana Teacher of the Year...

....all in one two-day period?

## Nowhere else!

The annual MEA-MFT Educators' Conference offers the best professional development you can get anywhere in the Pacific Northwest. MEA-MFT works with 21 Montana curriculum groups to present this one-of-a-kind conference.

### REGISTRATION & AGENDA:

Visit [mea-mft.org/educators\\_conference.aspx](http://mea-mft.org/educators_conference.aspx) and follow directions to log in to the conference. You'll see the conference offerings and build your itinerary as you log in. Your itinerary builder will even alert you if you have scheduling conflicts!

### PRE-REGISTER & SAVE!

Pre-registration saves you time and money. If you're an early-career MEA-MFT member, you might be eligible for a conference fee waiver, but only if you pre-register. Pre-register here: [mea-mft.org/educators\\_conference.aspx](http://mea-mft.org/educators_conference.aspx)

To get the reduced fee, pre-register by October 18. (Only credit card, debit card, or purchase orders accepted for payment.)

**QUESTIONS?** Contact Jami Wood at MEA-MFT: 800.398.0826 or [jwood@mea-mft.org](mailto:jwood@mea-mft.org).

Register & find info here:

[mea-mft.org/educators\\_conference.aspx](http://mea-mft.org/educators_conference.aspx)

## You name it, the Educators' Conference probably has it.

A few random samples of workshops & keynote addresses:

- What's So Funny About Math?
- Sign Language
- How Your Students' Projects can Teach the World
- Giants of Young Adult Literature
- Montana History Scavenger Hunt
- Flipping the Classroom
- Discovering Euclid with Geogebra
- Teaching Bio-Diversity with a BioBlitz
- Increasing Student Resilience
- Save the Brain! Learning after Concussive Injury
- AND HUNDREDS MORE.

### SPECIAL EVENT:

#### 2017 Montana Teacher of the Year Celebration

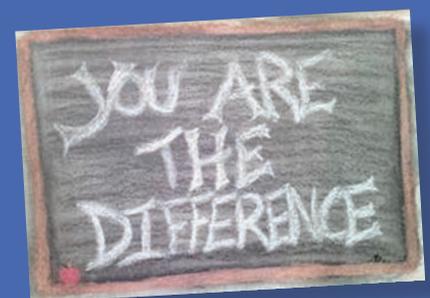
Thursday, October 20

4:30 - 6:00 p.m. Silent Auction

6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Dinner & Awards

Gateway Center, Helena

All conference participants invited!



# MEA-MFT's endorsed candidates for statewide office



Your fellow MEA-MFT members have interviewed the candidates and studied the records. We proudly endorse these candidates for statewide office in Montana:



**STEVE BULLOCK**  
Governor



**MELISSA ROMANO**  
Superintendent of  
Public Instruction



**DIRK SANDEFUR**  
Supreme Court



**DENISE JUNEAU**  
U.S. Congress



**JESSE LASLOVICH**  
State Auditor



**MONICA LINDEEN**  
Secretary of State



**TIM FOX**  
Attorney General

These candidates all strongly support public education, public services, educators, and public employees. They support our collective bargaining rights. They support our public lands. Please support them with your vote!



Trivial Pursuit in pursuit of a not-so-trivial goal: That's the game MEA-MFT members are playing in preparation for this fall's elections.

The brainstorm of Shauna Reichelt, MEA-MFT administrative assistant in our Billings office, the MEA-MFT trivia game is a way for members to check their voter status and see how easy it is to make sure they are on track to vote. "We were looking for ways to make

elections fun, and I thought it would be cool to make it into an interactive game," said Reichelt. "People are really enjoying it."

The game asks members basic questions about their voter status, and gives them the web site where they can easily check their answers. For example:

- What is your voter registration address?
- Are you registered to vote?
- Are you signed up to vote by mail?
- What are your house and senate legislative districts?

The fabulous prize? Everyone's a winner when MEA-MFT members are armed with the knowledge they need to vote for candidates who support public services and education, public employees, and public lands.

**Want to play?** Go to [sos.mt.gov](http://sos.mt.gov). Click on "My Voter Page" to test YOUR knowledge of your voting status. 🗳️



MEA-MFT member Nicole Peterson introduces Melissa Romano and Steve Bullock in Helena during the candidates' back-to-school tour. Hundreds of members have joined Romano and Bullock as they stopped around the state to talk about public education.

# Members stand with Romano and Bullock

MEA-MFT members across the state joined Governor Steve Bullock and Melissa Romano in a back-to-school tour this fall.

Romano is an MEA-MFT member and a fourth-grade teacher at Four Georgians School in Helena, running for state superintendent of schools. Governor Steve Bullock is running for re-election. MEA-MFT's Committee On Political Education (COPE) members interviewed both and unanimously endorsed them.

Romano and Bullock spoke of their strong support for public education, high standards, educators, and early childhood education. Their opponents, Elsie Arntzen and Greg Gianforte, have shown themselves to be outside the mainstream on education issues.

Both Gianforte and Arntzen support diverting public funds to private schools. Gianforte is a leading funder of the anti-public school movement in Montana.

"Montanans love their public schools," said Romano. "As a classroom teacher and a parent, I



MEA-MFT members, staff, and other supporters greet Romano and Bullock at the Helena back-to-school rally in September.

know I am entrusted with parents' most precious gifts: their children. I am humbled by that responsibility, and it is why I have decided to leave my beloved classroom to run for superintendent of public instruction, to help all Montana children." 🗨️

employees, and public lands in the Montana Legislature.

Find the endorsed candidates for your area on our web site: [mea-mft.org](http://mea-mft.org). Under "Breaking News," click on "Montana Legislative Candidate Endorsements by Area." 🗨️

## Legislative candidate endorsements

MEA-MFT members interviewed the candidates, studied their records, and recommended candidates who will support public services, public education, public

**MEA-MFT TODAY**  
 MEA-MFT Today published bimonthly September through July by MEA-MFT. Third Class Nonprofit Postage Paid at Billings, MT 59101. Permit No. 88

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Cover photo: John Lambing/Alamy  
Missouri River near Loma, MT



# Calling all members!

## Hundreds of members help with member-to-member contact

MEA-MFT has set the ambitious goal of talking one-on-one with all 18,000 of our members about this important election and our endorsed candidates.

It may seem like a daunting task, but MEA-MFT volunteers are up for the challenge. State employees, higher education faculty, Head Start, health care, and k-12 members are all helping with the effort.

"I really enjoy calling fellow MEA-MFT members," said super-volunteer and Helena member Jane Shawn. "Our members are great! They want to support the best candidates. They like hearing from fellow members."

Shawn calls regularly from MEA-MFT's Helena phone bank in support of candidates like Melissa Romano, Steve Bullock, Judge Dirk Sandefur, and Denise Juneau.

Volunteer phone banks operate regularly in Helena, Missoula, Great Falls, Bozeman, and Billings.

"I am impressed with the dedication of our members," said Bozeman member and MEA-MFT field organizer Danny Waldo. "They know how important this election is to their future and Montana's future."

Members are also sponsoring and attending fundraisers, knocking on doors for endorsed candidates, writ-

ing letters to the editor, and speaking out in their local unions, communities, and with friends.

"Montana is a small state, and one person's voice makes an impact," said Sanna Porte, MEA-MFT communications director.

"Our members are respected messengers in their communities. Nothing beats a personal endorsement of a candidate."

**You can take part!** To help elect champions of public services and public education, contact Terry Minow, [tminow@mea-mft.org](mailto:tminow@mea-mft.org) or 800.398.0826.

**THANK YOU to all our amazing volunteers!**



Jane Shawn



Colin O'Brien



Kim Stout



"One person's voice makes an impact."

Erika McMillin



## Denise Juneau: proven champion

Head Start to Harvard. Classroom teacher to Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction. Superintendent to member of congress. First Native American elected to statewide office in the United States. First Native American congresswoman.

It's an impressive path MEA-MFT member Denise Juneau is on, and MEA-MFT members are happy to help as she runs to serve Montana as our lone member of Congress.

MEA-MFT's Committee On Political Education (COPE) unanimously endorsed Juneau for Congress after a lengthy interview by the 35-member elected committee.

COPE members noted Juneau's strong leadership for Montana's public schools, her Graduation Matters Montana campaign that has boosted Montana graduation rates to record levels, and her excellent record on the Montana Land Board.

**"Denise went toe-to-toe with**

**the federal government** over the ridiculous requirements of No Child Left Behind," said MEA-MFT President Eric Feaver.

"She wasn't at all intimidated by U.S. Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan and the power of the federal government," Feaver said. "Thanks to Denise, Montana didn't go down the dangerous path of charter schools and other punitive policies that have hurt the rest of the nation's schools."

MEA-MFT secretary-treasurer and state employee Kevin Bock said, "Denise speaks out for public services as well as education. She knows our union represents all kinds of employees and that we are all important to Montana's future. She's the first to say we do work that matters!"

Bock cited Juneau's position on privatization of public lands, saying, "Denise would never let our public lands fall into private hands. I don't think we can count on her opponent

(incumbent Congressman Ryan Zinke) to protect our rights."

Juneau enjoys widespread popularity among MEA-MFT members. "Denise is a proven champion of everything this union stands for," said MEA-MFT Political Director Terry Minow.

"Our members have great influence in their communities. By speaking up for Denise and all our endorsed candidates, MEA-MFT members will have a huge and positive effect on this election." 🗣️

## I-181: Too dangerous

Initiative 181 (I-181) will appear on this fall's ballot. It's a measure that sounds good at first, but a closer look clearly shows it will create more problems than it solves.

MEA-MFT recommends a NO vote. **Here's why:**

I-181 would siphon millions of dollars out of Montana's budget to support bonding for private health care research on brain injuries. This is a fiscally dangerous way to fund private research.

Montana has huge infrastructure needs: repairs on our crumbling schools, bridges, and water systems.

Many of our public buildings are outdated and falling apart. Some don't even have water sprinklers in case of a fire.

We need to prioritize those needs first. If I-181 passes, it would force the legislature to spend \$20 million a year for research instead of fixing the public facilities that need to be fixed.

Medical and pharmaceutical companies make billions in profits. They, not the taxpayers of Montana, should fund the research.

I-181 is a hidden tax, with no guarantee the money will stay in Montana. Please vote NO. 🗳️



Judge Dirk Sandefur of Great Falls and his family.

## Sandefur for justice

Quick, name one of the most important races in Montana that flies under the radar of most voters.

If you answered Supreme Court justice, congratulations. You are exceptionally well informed.

The race for Montana Supreme Court doesn't draw a lot of attention in a year filled with top ticket races for president, governor, and congress.

But this race has everything to do with how we Montanans live our lives. It deserves your careful attention and informed vote.

The contested race for the Supreme Court is one of MEA-MFT's top priorities. MEA-MFT's Committee On Political Education (COPE) interviewed both candidates. COPE voted unanimously to support Great

Falls District Judge Dirk Sandefur.

Sandefur is a third-generation Montanan from a Great Falls working family. He worked as a police officer before going to law school. He has served as a public defender and a

county prosecutor, as well as district judge. He has been endorsed by every living former Montana Supreme Court justice.

Sandefur's opponent is supported by the out-of-state RSLC Judicial Fairness PAC, a dark money corporate group funded by global insurance companies, pharmaceutical conglomerates, and global natural resource industry conglomerates.

None of these groups has Montanans' interests at heart.

**"We can't let dark money groups buy Montana's Supreme Court,"** said Terry Minow, MEA-MFT's political director. "The state Supreme Court is what decides what is constitutional, what the law means. We need justices who are nonpartisan, impartial, and fair. That's why we're working so hard to help elect Dirk Sandefur." 🗨️

## MEA-MFT Regional Meetings

All MEA-MFT members invited!

Talk to your local president for more information

Missoula	Sept. 26	5:30 P.M.	Missoula Children's Theatre, 200 N. Adams
Kalispell	Sept. 27	6:00 P.M.	Kalispell Labor Temple, 347 2nd Ave. W.
Helena	Sept. 29	5:30 P.M.	Great Northern Hotel, Iron Horse Rm.
Great Falls	Oct. 1	10:30 A.M.	GFEA Conf. Rm., 511 13th Ave. S.
Butte	Oct. 3	6:00 P.M.	Carpenters Union Hall, 156 W. Granite
Bozeman	Oct. 4	6:00 P.M.	Bozeman Library
Billings	Oct. 8	10:00 A.M.	Billings EA, 510 N. 29th St.
Havre	Oct. 11	6:30 P.M.	MSU-Northern SUB
Wolf Point	Oct. 12	6:30 P.M.	Elks Dining Room
Miles City	Oct. 15	5:30 P.M.	Rib and Chop House