We the People of Montana

Will protect the foundation of our democracy

We are fiercely proud of our Constitution, written by Montanans to serve Montanans. For more than half a century, it has faithfully protected our freedoms, rights, and people.

Love it and keep it, for this and future generations.

In 1972, one-hundred Montanans gathered at the Montana State Capitol to write a new constitution. They represented every corner of the state and all walks of life – ranchers, teachers, homemakers, and even a beekeeper from Lewistown. These delegates were elected by their communities, and the one thing they all had in common was that none of them were politicians. They shared a common desire to replace the dominance of the Copper Kings – the rule of the wealthy few – with a new era of grassroots democracy.

Our constitution broke a stranglehold of corruption in our state. Before the new constitution, Montanans had limited access to government and few opportunities to participate in the decisions that impact our lives. Government meetings were often held in secret, with decisions made behind closed doors. The results were often disastrous for our land, air, water, and people.

Over 54 days, the authors of our constitution debated, drafted, and unanimously signed a document to, in the words of Convention President Leo Graybill Jr., “help Montana move into the future with confidence and vision.” The document they created – our Montana State Constitution – does just that. It has been lifted up globally as a textbook model of citizen democracy in action.

Of all the states in the US, only one has amended its constitution fewer times than Montana. While our lawmakers may change after every election, the constitution provides a stable foundation that all of our laws must follow.
Protecting our Rights, Freedoms, and Traditions

Our constitution preserves the things that make Montana special. This landmark document guarantees Montanans at least 17 more rights than can be found in the federal Constitution, including:

- **Right to a clean and healthful environment:** Our constitution helps us preserve the quality of our land and water for future generations.
- **Government accountability, transparency, and the “right to know”:** Because of our constitution, government meetings and documents are open to the public, and we are guaranteed a voice in state decisions.
- **Recognition of Native American culture and history:** Our constitution provides the foundation for the preservation of Native American languages and Indian Education for All.
- **Nonpartisan redistricting/fair elections:** The constitution protects our democracy by making Montana one of the hardest states to gerrymander, having a nonpartisan commission draw our legislative districts.
- **Right to privacy:** Our constitution prevents the government from infringing on individual privacy “without showing a compelling state interest.”
- **Checks and balances for fair, impartial courts:** The constitution provides the foundation for our state legal system, including vital checks and balances between the branches of government. It also protects the rights of individual Montanans within that system, including due process, access to justice, a fair and speedy trial, and the rights for citizens to sue government.

When it comes to our constitution, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. These rights and freedoms work together, providing the foundation that allows us to self-govern and helps our communities and economy to thrive.

**If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!**

Now, half a century after ratification, there is a reckless extremist movement to rewrite our constitution. It’s being led by politicians and special interest lobbyists who want to eviscerate our right to a clean and healthful environment, undermine our independent courts, and even scrap the constitution entirely and start over. One politician has gone so far as to disparage the document as “a socialist rag.”

We cannot allow our rights to be dismantled. Once we lose them, we may never get them back.

**Take Action!**

- Contact your legislator and tell them to protect our constitution as it is currently written.
- Learn more and sign our petition at NorthernPlains.org/Constitution.