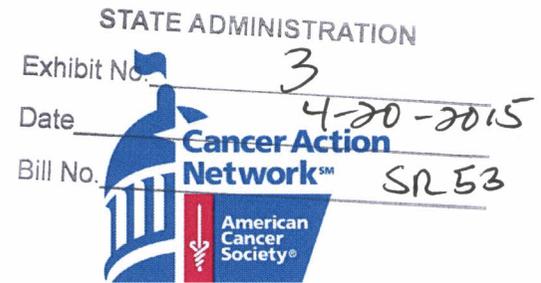


April 20, 2015

Senator Dee Brown, Chair

State Administration Committee
Montana State Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500



Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

For the record my name is Kristin Page-Nei. I am a resident of Ravalli county living in Florence. I am here representing the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. ACS CAN is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, and supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions that eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

Based on the American Cancer Society and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network's work with Jonathan Motl while he was in private practice we strongly believe that he would be an excellent choice as the commissioner of political practices and would be a great asset to the state of Montana in this appointment.

We don't normally weigh in during confirmation hearings. But, as a nonprofit organization that works on legislative policy to advance its mission, we understand how important it is to have someone with great integrity and in-depth knowledge of political practices appointed to this position.

We feel we can make this recommendation based on well over a 10 year working relationship with Mr. Motl. He has helped us craft citizen Initiatives and local ordinances. But most importantly he helped educate us on how to comply with campaign finance laws. Jon made sure we were filing the right reports on time and properly disclosing information about funds raised and spent on Initiative campaigns.

He was strong proponent of citizen involvement and would go the extra mile to make sure we and our coalition partners working on issue campaigns saw the rules of engagement not as barriers but as the boundaries that assure protection of the public's interest and the integrity of the political process.

I ask you pass SR 53 and confirm Jonathan Motl's appointment as our state's commissioner of political practices. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin Page-Nei".

Kristin Page-Nei

Montana Government Relations Director



Gazette opinion: Senators, Keep Motl as Montana's campaign watchdog



APRIL 17, 2015 7:00 AM

Montana is strengthening its clean campaign laws to require transparency from all groups that spend money to influence our elections.

Thanks to bipartisan majorities of senators and representatives who voted for the Disclose Act, local and national interest groups can be held more accountable for their involvement in our elections.

Sen. Duane Ankney, R-Colstrip, Senate Bill 289's leading sponsor, teamed up with Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock to promote

disclosure for independent groups that spend money on Montana elections, and to require reports that are more timely and accessible to the public. Ankney and Bullock might seem like an odd couple, but both have been the targets of negative advertising and groups that tried to avoid disclosing their funding sources.

As we cheer passage of the Disclose Act, we remind senators that they need to pass another bill to ensure that the new campaign law -- and all other Montana election laws -- are followed. The Senate needs to confirm Jonathan Motl, so he can continue serving as Montana's commissioner of political practices through the 2016 election cycle. Time is running out with the Legislature scheduled to adjourn on May 1.

Appointed by Bullock in June 2013, Motl closed his Helena law office and became the hardest working political practices commissioner Montana has ever had. He took the job when the small office had a backlog of complaints and was struggling to improve online campaign reporting access. Then the elections of 2014 brought a record number of complaints requiring more investigations.

Motl and the six other COPP employees whittled down the backlog and have addressed most of the 2014 complaints. In that year, Motl issued 121 decisions that resolved 141 formal complaints (some that had been pending since 2010), 12 advisory opinions and settled 33 sufficiency findings. Meanwhile, the dedicated staff worked to get thousands of campaign finance reports on line for citizens to review.

Motl isn't a politician; he's a good-government wonk who's been promoting clean political campaigns for 30 years while practicing law in Helena. He has been involved in citizens' initiative efforts, but not in running candidates' campaigns.

Although the Senate has confirmed numerous other appointments, a hearing on Motl wasn't scheduled till this week and will be held at 3 p.m. Monday.

We call on members of the Senate State Administration Committee to give Motl a fair hearing and vote to recommend his confirmation. We call on all senators who support clean campaigns to vote for this champion of good government to stay on as Montana's campaign cop.

Motl is an expert in Montana election law. In the past 22 months, he has proven that he can do the commissioner job superbly, being fair to all parties and effectively leading a small staff to efficiently handle their big responsibility: upholding state campaign laws.

Montana takes a step forward with the new law that shines a light on political spending. But the law won't be effective unless there's a savvy, honest commissioner of political practices to enforce it. Montanans need Motl.

Speak up for clean campaigns

The Senate State Administration Committee will conduct a hearing at 3 p.m. Monday in Helena on the confirmation of Jonathan Motl to continue as commissioner of political practices through Dec. 31, 2016. Members of the committee are: Chairwoman Dee Brown, R-Hungry Horse; Vice Chairman Roger Webb, R-Billings; Robyn Driscoll, D-Billings; Doug Kary, R-Billings; Jedediah Hinkle, R-Bozeman; Sue Malek, D- Missoula; and Lea Whitford, D-Cutbank. Send messages to them by phoning the Capitol at 406-444-4800  or sending an email through the link with this Gazette opinion at billingsgazette.com.