



MONTANANS

FOR ELECTION REFORM

About CI-126 & CI-127

What are CI-126 and CI-127? How do they change how Montanans vote?

CI-126 and CI-127 are two simple, common-sense citizen initiatives that give Montana voters more freedom, more choice, and more accountable leadership in their elections. The first, CI-126, opens Montana's primary election to allow voters the freedom to choose from all qualified candidates in the primary, regardless of party affiliation. Up to four candidates who receive the most votes in the primary will then appear on the general election ballot in November. CI-127 is a majority-winner initiative that requires candidates to receive at least 50% +1 votes in the general election. This ensures a majority of voters support the winning candidate.

This changes how Montanans vote in a critical but simple way: instead of being forced to choose one party's ballot when they vote in the primary, and therefore choosing from only a partial list of qualified candidates, voters are empowered to choose from all qualified candidates in a Primary election. All voters receive the same ballot and choose from the same list of qualified candidates. The majority-winner initiative then ensures that a majority of voters support the winning candidate in November, putting power back into the hands of voters.

Why do we have to change our constitution?

These citizen initiatives give Montanans the opportunity to decide if they think the current election system is working and, if not, to change our Constitution to put Montana voters back in charge of our elections. As with all citizen initiatives, the Legislature will be tasked with the implementation of these reforms within the parameters set by the Constitution.

Why do we need two ballot measures?

Montana's single-subject laws require that these election reforms be considered by voters separately, as CI-126 affects the Primary election and CI-127 affects the General election.

What if one initiative passes and not the other?

These two reforms work together to decrease political polarization and lead to more accountable elected officials. We expect Montanans to see the value in both and support reforms that give voters more choice in their elections while ensuring that every winning candidate earns support from a majority of voters. While the two initiatives, together, best allow our election system to align with the will of Montana voters, each reform has individual benefits

that increase competition, give independent-minded Montanans more freedom to choose the candidate they want, and ensure candidates earn broad-based support.

Which elected offices do these changes apply to?

CI-126 and CI-127 apply to all partisan state and federal constitutional offices: governor and lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction, state representative, state senator, U.S. senator, and U.S. representative. PSC commissioners and Clerk of the Supreme Court are statutory offices created by the Legislature, not referenced in the Montana Constitution. However, the legislature can choose to expand these reforms to apply to statutory offices by legislative action.

Do these measures benefit one party over the other?

No. These reforms are unlikely to alter the makeup of the Montana legislature and other elected offices, and the two major political parties will most likely win races at the same rate they do under the current system. But incentives for candidates change when the extremes of both parties have less power, and that can change the behavior of elected officials to better reflect the majority views of the public. These reforms shift the power away from partisan primaries towards a broader group of general election voters and ultimately ensures candidates always have majority support from their electorate.

Are these initiatives Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)?

CI-126 is an Open Primaries initiative that allows voters to pick for their top choice out of all qualified candidates, regardless of party affiliation, in Montana's June Primary election. The four candidates who receive the highest number of votes advance to the General election in November. CI-127 is a Majority-Winner initiative that, if passed, will require the Montana Legislature to determine a mechanism for the General election that ensures one candidate ultimately receives a 50% +1 majority from voters if none of the top four candidates initially earn a majority of votes in November. The two constitutionally-permissible options for majority-winner elections are a runoff system or an instant runoff system, both of which have been implemented in other states. CI-126 and CI-127 do not institute Ranked Choice Voting, and we believe the Legislature's role in implementing majority-winner General elections will be an important public discussion and opportunity for Montanans to weigh in again on which system is best for voters. Montana voters should contact their legislators to express support for the procedure they prefer. Regardless of which system the Legislature implements, open primaries and majority-winner elections together restore freedom, choice, and accountability to Montana elections, and we believe both reforms are critical to restoring Montana values to our politics.

Who is funding these initiatives?

CI-126 and CI-127 are Montana-made solutions to the challenges facing politics in our state. These citizen ballot initiatives were written and proposed by a bipartisan group of Montanans from across the state. Montanans for Election Reform has received funding from over 120 Montanans representing 24 of Montana's 56 counties, in addition to early funding from national groups that support election reform across the country. We continue to build a bipartisan, statewide coalition supporting these reforms to fix our broken system.



MONTANANS FOR ELECTION REFORM

Why We Need CI-126 & CI-127

CI-126 and CI-127 are simple, common-sense reforms that give Montana voters more freedom, more choice, and more accountable leadership in their elections.

These reforms are Montana solutions, led by Montanans, that uphold Montana values.

More **FREEDOM** and **INDEPENDENCE**

- Open primaries give every Montanan, regardless of their party affiliation, the freedom to vote for the candidate that they believe best represents them.
- Many Montana voters consider themselves Independent, but they aren't fully represented in our election process. Open primaries give Independent voters more freedom to choose the leaders they want.
- Independent-minded Montanans want to be able to vote for the person, not the party.
- Political parties have too much control over our elections. Open primaries give voters the chance to vote for the person, not the party.

More **CHOICE**

- These reforms empower voters by giving them more choice over who represents them.
- Voters, not special interests or party bosses, should decide elections, but too many candidates are chosen in back rooms before we even get to vote.
- Open primaries allow voters to choose from a larger group of candidates. More choice means more competition, forcing candidates to earn the votes of their constituents and increasing competition for our vote.
- People are tired of being forced to choose between two parties. These reforms give voters the chance to vote for who they think is the best person for the job, regardless of party affiliation.

More **ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP**

- Open primaries and majority-winner elections hold politicians accountable to their constituents, not political parties and special interests.
- Polarization and partisan gridlock don't represent Montana values. These measures are proven remedies to break these D.C. trends and restore Montana values to our politics.
- Greater competition in our elections means we can hold our politicians accountable.
- Majority-winner elections mean candidates must represent a majority of voters, not party extremists.