

Schoen Cooperman Research  
 2024 Public Service Commission Messaging Poll — Montana District 4  
 August 2024

<b>Screening Questions</b>
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**Sampling Plan**

- 1) **Main Sample** = 400 Likely Voters
- 2) **All Democrats** = All Democrats and Lean Democratic Independents from the Main Sample PLUS an oversample of 100 Democrats and Lean Democratic Independents

	<b><u>Main Sample</u></b>	<b><u>All Democrats</u></b>
<b>S1. What is your age?</b>		
18-29	10%	10%
30-39	15%	17%
40-49	16%	16%
50-64	25%	20%
65 or older	34%	37%
<b>S2. Are you registered to vote?</b>		
Yes	100%	100%
No <b>[END]</b>	--	--
<b>S3. How likely are you to vote in the November 2024 General Election in Montana?</b>		
Absolutely certain	85%	89%
Very likely	15%	11%
Possibly	--	--
Not very likely <b>[END]</b>	--	--
Not at all likely <b>[END]</b>	--	--
<b>S4. How likely are you to vote in the Montana Public Service Commissioner race in your district in November?</b>		
Absolutely certain	61%	64%
Very likely	24%	27%
Possibly	12%	8%
Not very likely	3%	1%
Not at all likely <b>[END]</b>	--	--

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**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

S5. Do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or a member of some other political party?

Republican	38%	--
Democrat	25%	77%
Independent	32%	20%
Some other political party	3%	1%
Not sure	2%	2%

S6. **[IF INDEPENDENT/OTHER/NOT SURE]** Okay, and do you usually lean toward one party?

Lean Republican	37%	--
Lean Democrat	29%	100%
Neither	29%	--
Not sure	5%	--

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**Candidate Ratings**

2) Next you will hear a short list of people and groups who have been in the news recently. After each, please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of them.

Favorability Ratings: Main Sample				
Candidate/Entity	TOTAL FAVORABLE	TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	Never Heard of	Rating
Donald Trump	57%	40%	--	+17
Greg Gianforte	53%	34%	8%	+19
NorthWestern Energy	52%	20%	8%	+32
Jon Tester	47%	48%	3%	-1
Tim Sheehy	46%	41%	5%	+5
The Montana PSC	43%	21%	5%	+22
Kamala Harris	37%	58%	--	-21
Montana Conservation Voters	36%	16%	26%	+20
Montana Ratepayers Association	18%	7%	46%	+11
Montana-Dakota Utilities	16%	9%	37%	+7
Jennifer Fielder	15%	13%	51%	+2
Elena Evans	13%	3%	60%	+10

Favorability Ratings: All Democrats				
Candidate/Entity	TOTAL FAVORABLE	TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	Never Heard of	Rating
Kamala Harris	92%	5%	1%	+87
Jon Tester	88%	11%	1%	+77
Montana Conservation Voters	55%	8%	22%	+47
The Montana PSC	37%	23%	8%	+14
NorthWestern Energy	33%	28%	10%	+5
Elena Evans	18%	3%	56%	+15
Montana Ratepayers Association	15%	3%	47%	+12
Montana-Dakota Utilities	14%	10%	37%	+4
Tim Sheehy	11%	76%	8%	-65
Greg Gianforte	6%	83%	5%	-77
Jennifer Fielder	5%	19%	55%	-14
Donald Trump	5%	92%	2%	-87

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	<u>Main Sample</u>	<u>All Democrats</u>
● Donald Trump		
TOTAL FAVORABLE	57%	5%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	40%	92%
Very favorable	43%	2%
Somewhat favorable	14%	3%
Somewhat unfavorable	4%	4%
Very unfavorable	36%	88%
Never heard of them	--	2%
Not sure	3%	1%
● Kamala Harris		
TOTAL FAVORABLE	37%	92%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	58%	5%
Very favorable	25%	69%
Somewhat favorable	12%	23%
Somewhat unfavorable	6%	2%
Very unfavorable	52%	3%
Never heard of them	--	1%
Not sure	5%	2%
● Greg Gianforte		
TOTAL FAVORABLE	53%	6%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	34%	83%
Very favorable	33%	--
Somewhat favorable	20%	6%
Somewhat unfavorable	5%	7%
Very unfavorable	29%	76%
Never heard of them	8%	5%
Not sure	5%	6%

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	<u>Main Sample</u>	<u>All Democrats</u>
● Jon Tester		
TOTAL FAVORABLE	47%	88%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	48%	11%
Very favorable	34%	80%
Somewhat favorable	13%	8%
Somewhat unfavorable	14%	4%
Very unfavorable	34%	7%
Never heard of them	3%	1%
Not sure	2%	--
● Tim Sheehy		
TOTAL FAVORABLE	46%	11%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	41%	76%
Very favorable	26%	3%
Somewhat favorable	20%	8%
Somewhat unfavorable	10%	7%
Very unfavorable	31%	69%
Never heard of them	5%	8%
Not sure	8%	5%
● Jennifer Fielder		
TOTAL FAVORABLE	15%	5%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	13%	19%
Very favorable	7%	2%
Somewhat favorable	8%	3%
Somewhat unfavorable	3%	4%
Very unfavorable	10%	15%
Never heard of them	51%	55%
Not sure	21%	21%

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**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

- Elena Evans

TOTAL FAVORABLE	13%	18%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	3%	3%
Very favorable	4%	9%
Somewhat favorable	9%	9%
Somewhat unfavorable	2%	2%
Very unfavorable	1%	1%
Never heard of them	60%	56%
Not sure	24%	23%

- The Montana Public Service Commission

TOTAL FAVORABLE	43%	37%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	21%	23%
Very favorable	4%	1%
Somewhat favorable	39%	36%
Somewhat unfavorable	10%	13%
Very unfavorable	11%	10%
Never heard of them	5%	8%
Not sure	31%	32%

- NorthWestern Energy

TOTAL FAVORABLE	52%	33%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	20%	28%
Very favorable	16%	7%
Somewhat favorable	36%	26%
Somewhat unfavorable	15%	16%
Very unfavorable	5%	12%
Never heard of them	8%	10%
Not sure	20%	29%

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	<u>Main Sample</u>	<u>All Democrats</u>
● Montana-Dakota Utilities		
TOTAL FAVORABLE	16%	14%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	9%	10%
Very favorable	3%	2%
Somewhat favorable	13%	12%
Somewhat unfavorable	6%	7%
Very unfavorable	3%	3%
Never heard of them	37%	37%
Not sure	38%	39%
● Montana Conservation Voters		
TOTAL FAVORABLE	36%	55%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	16%	8%
Very favorable	16%	28%
Somewhat favorable	20%	27%
Somewhat unfavorable	10%	5%
Very unfavorable	6%	3%
Never heard of them	26%	22%
Not sure	22%	15%
● Montana Ratepayers Association		
TOTAL FAVORABLE	18%	15%
TOTAL UNFAVORABLE	7%	3%
Very favorable	4%	4%
Somewhat favorable	14%	11%
Somewhat unfavorable	4%	2%
Very unfavorable	3%	1%
Never heard of them	46%	47%
Not sure	29%	35%

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**Main Sample**    **All Democrats**

3) Do you think that Jennifer Fielder has done her job as Montana Public Service Commissioner well enough to deserve re-election, or is it time for her to be replaced by someone else?

Fielder has done her job well enough to deserve reelection	12%	8%
It is time for her to be replaced by someone else	20%	30%
Not sure	68%	62%



<b>Ballot Tests</b>
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**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

4) **[GENERIC PSC BALLOT]** In November, there will also be an election for Montana Public Service Commissioner in your district. The PSC is responsible for regulating the rates and services of water, natural gas, and electricity for the entire state. In Montana, there are 5 seats on the commission and they are elected by district. They also have authority over sources of energy, sustainability, and approval of new energy projects.

If the election for Public Service Commissioner in your district were held today and the only candidates are a Republican and an Independent, who would you vote for?

The Republican	33%	4%
The Independent	32%	71%
Not sure	35%	25%

5) Okay, now suppose you had a choice between Republican Jennifer Fielder and Independent Elena Evans for Public Service Commissioner. If the election were held today, who would you vote for?

Republican Jennifer Fielder	28%	4%
Independent Elena Evans	29%	66%
There's a good chance I'll skip this race	4%	4%
Not sure	39%	26%

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**Fielder Messaging**

**Intro:** Next, we are going to share some arguments made against Public Service Commissioner Jennifer Fielder. After each, please share whether you think they are convincing reasons to vote for someone other than Fielder. **[RANDOMIZE MESSAGES]**

**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

6) **[INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLD CONTRAST]** Year after year, Public Service Commissioners like Jennifer Fielder make six-figure salaries while rubber-stamping massive rate hikes for everyday Montanans. Just this year, Fielder voted to allow NorthWestern Energy to raise rates by 28%, and also to allow Montana Dakota Utilities to raise electric rates by nearly \$100. Now, NorthWestern wants to increase rates another 2% on electricity and more than 9% on natural gas and they fully expect Fielder’s rubber-stamp. She is costing average households hundreds of extra dollars every year while the water, natural gas, and electricity corporations are making record profits.

TOTAL CONVINCING	72%	89%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	17%	2%
Very convincing reason	53%	81%
Somewhat convincing	19%	8%
Not very convincing	10%	1%
Not convincing at all	7%	1%
Not sure	11%	9%

7) **[4<sup>th</sup> MOST ENERGY EXPENSIVE STATE]** Montana is now the 4<sup>th</sup> most expensive state in the entire country for energy costs for the average household, with Montanans spending close to \$800 per month – almost \$10,000 per year – on energy. Jennifer Fielder has been a rubber-stamp for the water, natural gas, and electricity company executives who donated to her campaign.

TOTAL CONVINCING	55%	71%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	27%	18%
Very convincing reason	36%	64%
Somewhat convincing	19%	7%
Not very convincing	7%	3%
Not convincing at all	20%	15%
Not sure	18%	11%

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**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

8) **[HARMFUL TO LOCAL ECON/SMALL BUSINESS]** Year after year, Public Service Commissioners like Jennifer Fielder approve water, natural gas, and electricity corporations’ requests to raise rates with no consideration for the harm that high costs have on small businesses and our local economies. Instead, she works to protect corporate polluters and special interests like those that have given her thousands of dollars in campaign cash at the expense of everyone else. One of her donor’s oil companies was even forced to pay damages after destroying Montana ranches with “toxic ponds.”

TOTAL CONVINCING	61%	73%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	16%	6%
Very convincing reason	39%	64%
Somewhat convincing	22%	9%
Not very convincing	8%	2%
Not convincing at all	8%	4%
Not sure	23%	21%

9) **[SELLING PUBLIC LANDS]** In Montana, we are blessed with public lands where we can hunt, fish, and enjoy recreation spaces. Yet, politicians like Jennifer Fielder who are bought-and-paid-for by special interests push reckless land-grab policies and want to unconstitutionally take away our access to public lands, selling them off to the highest bidder. Simply put, Fielder’s goals are at best unconstitutional and fiscally reckless, and at worst would evict Montana families from their favorite hunting and fishing spots.

TOTAL CONVINCING	57%	79%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	26%	11%
Very convincing reason	38%	72%
Somewhat convincing	19%	7%
Not very convincing	9%	9%
Not convincing at all	17%	2%
Not sure	17%	10%

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**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

10) **SPLIT A. [UNIQUE ADDITION FROM APRIL OPPO—REBATE]** As a Public Service Commissioner, Jennifer Fielder sided with NorthWestern Energy and refused to support a \$9.1 million rebate intended for Montana customers who had overpaid for their energy while the company made record profits. The Independent Record has described Fielder as, “a stand-in for the oil industry” and a “profiteer” who’s “eager to sell out Montana.”

TOTAL CONVINCING	66%	87%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	19%	7%
Very convincing reason	54%	79%
Somewhat convincing	12%	8%
Not very convincing	8%	3%
Not convincing at all	11%	4%
Not sure	15%	6%

11) **SPLIT B. [UNIQUE ADDITION FROM JULY OPPO - EXTREMIST RECORD]** Jennifer Fielder is a dangerous extremist with connections to White Supremacist groups and January 6<sup>th</sup> rioters. She has called on supporters to gear up for “civil war” against her political opponents and was endorsed by the Oath Keepers, an extremist anti-government militia group, whose leaders have been convicted of sedition and conspiracy to violently attack the United States government.

TOTAL CONVINCING	50%	80%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	33%	11%
Very convincing reason	43%	75%
Somewhat convincing	7%	5%
Not very convincing	13%	7%
Not convincing at all	20%	4%
Not sure	17%	9%

12) **[BALLOT RETEST]** Based on this information, who would you vote for if the general election for Public Service Commission were held today?

Independent Elena Evans	40%	78%
Republican Jennifer Fielder	19%	2%
There’s a good chance I’ll skip this race	4%	3%
Not sure	37%	17%

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<b>Evans Messaging</b>
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**Intro:** Next, we are going to share some arguments made in support of Independent Elena Evans. After each, please share whether you think they are convincing reasons to vote for Evans. **[RANDOMIZE MESSAGES]**

**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

13)**[NON-PARTISAN]** Elena Evans is an accomplished geologist with expertise in energy policy, and a devoted public servant with the independence to do what is right. Unlike her opponent who only works for her special interest donors, Evans will buck party politics in favor of common-sense solutions, stand up to greedy corporations, fight to lower costs for ratepayers, and protect public lands.

TOTAL CONVINCING	72%	92%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	15%	2%
Very convincing reason	52%	81%
Somewhat convincing	20%	11%
Not very convincing	6%	1%
Not convincing at all	9%	1%
Not sure	13%	6%

14)**[LOWERING COSTS]** Because water, natural gas, and electricity bills keep getting more expensive for regular Montanans, Elena Evans will make bringing costs down priority number one. She supports innovation and ending the current commission’s outdated electricity policies. In fact, Evans supports giving homeowners the opportunity to earn money by selling unused energy back to the electricity companies for a discount.

TOTAL CONVINCING	66%	85%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	23%	8%
Very convincing reason	35%	66%
Somewhat convincing	31%	19%
Not very convincing	6%	5%
Not convincing at all	17%	3%
Not sure	11%	7%

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**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

15) **[STRONGER INFRASTRUCTURE]** It's becoming more and more common that our decades-old energy grid is wiped out by extreme weather, especially severe storms and excessive heat causing power outages and rolling blackouts. We should be able to rely on our energy grid to keep our lights on, houses warm, and lives on track. Elena Evans will prioritize replacing the weak energy grid we have now with stronger infrastructure that we can rely on and brings us closer to energy independence.

TOTAL CONVINCING	69%	80%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	15%	12%
Very convincing	48%	66%
Somewhat convincing	21%	14%
Not very convincing	9%	4%
Not convincing at all	7%	8%
Not sure	16%	8%

16) **[SMALL BUSINESSES AND JOBS]** Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. The renewable energy industry is one of the fastest growing in the country and has massive potential in Montana. If elected to the Public Service Commission, Elena Evans will provide incentives to help families and individuals start small businesses in the energy space, create new jobs, increase Montana's energy production, and ensure our energy freedom.

TOTAL CONVINCING	65%	94%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	25%	--
Very convincing	49%	80%
Somewhat convincing	16%	14%
Not very convincing	12%	--
Not convincing at all	13%	--
Not sure	10%	6%

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**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

17)**[END CORRUPTION]** For the past decade in which Republicans have held every seat on the Public Service Commission, they have let NorthWestern Energy have a monopoly over our natural gas and electricity prices, raising rates year after year without any real oversight. This has had widespread consequences, even for Montanans who aren't their customers, since all goods and services are more expensive due to rising energy costs. Elena Evans will work to hold corporations like NorthWestern Energy accountable and prioritize lowering costs for Montana consumers over special interests.

TOTAL CONVINCING	60%	85%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	31%	2%
Very convincing	31%	68%
Somewhat convincing	29%	17%
Not very convincing	8%	--
Not convincing at all	23%	2%
Not sure	9%	13%

18)**[CONSTITUTION / PUBLIC LANDS]** The Montana Constitution gives every Montanan the right to a clean and healthful environment. It is crucial that we protect our clean air and clean water for the health, safety, wellbeing, and enjoyment of our children and future generations. But, year after year, our public lands are under attack by powerful corporate interests and extremists on the PSC. Elena Evans will stand up to special interests, uphold the Montana Constitution, and protect our access to our public lands so we can continue to hunt, fish, and spend time outdoors with our families. These reasons are why Montana Conservation Voters have proudly endorsed Evans this year.

TOTAL CONVINCING	72%	92%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	19%	7%
Very convincing	47%	83%
Somewhat convincing	25%	9%
Not very convincing	7%	3%
Not convincing at all	12%	4%
Not sure	9%	1%

19)**[BALLOT RETEST]** Based on this information, who would you vote for if the general election for Public Service Commission were held today?

Independent Elena Evans	48%	84%
Republican Jennifer Fielder	19%	2%
There's a good chance I'll skip this race	3%	2%
Not sure	30%	12%

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**Additional Fielder Messaging**

**Intro:** Next, we are going to share an argument made in support of Republican Jennifer Fielder. After, please share whether you think it is a convincing reason to vote for Fielder.

**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

20)**[FIELDER POSITIVE]** Jennifer Fielder is the current Vice President of the Public Service Commission and formerly a popular, award-winning State Senator nationally recognized as a defender of liberty and true conservative values. By handling a wide range of highly complex regulatory cases, she netted millions of dollars in savings to Montana water, natural gas, and electricity customers. Under Fielder’s leadership, the PSC is a model of good governance.

TOTAL CONVINCING	45%	20%
TOTAL NOT CONVINCING	39%	69%
Very convincing reason	25%	10%
Somewhat convincing	20%	10%
Not very convincing	15%	25%
Not convincing at all	24%	44%
Not sure	16%	11%



**Additional Evans Messagings**

**Intro:** Next, we are going to share an argument that has been made against Independent Elena Evans, followed by a rebuttal. After both are read, please share which argument you think is more convincing.

**Main Sample**

**All Democrats**

21) **Attack:** Elena Evans is a left-wing liberal who is pretending to be an Independent in order to win votes. In reality, she supports the same type of extreme climate policies as Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and liberal Democrats. At a time when Montanans are struggling with high inflation due to Democrat policies, Evans supports new regulations on businesses and excessive spending on unproven renewable energy sources.

**Response:** Elena Evans is a trained geologist with expertise in energy policy and the independence to do what is right. Unlike her opponent, a political extremist who is bought-and-paid-for by special interests, Evans is not a politician and doesn't engage in party politics. Evans will buck party politics and corporate greed in favor of common-sense solutions that will lower costs for ratepayers and protect our public lands.

TOTAL ATTACK	29%	14%
TOTAL RESPONSE	43%	67%
The attack is much more convincing	21%	10%
The attack is somewhat more convincing	8%	4%
The response is somewhat more convincing	16%	20%
The response is much more convincing	27%	47%
Not sure	28%	19%

22) **[BALLOT RETEST]** Based on this information, who would you vote for if the general election for Public Service Commission were held today?

Independent Elena Evans	39%	82%
Republican Jennifer Fielder	26%	3%
There's a good chance I'll skip this race	5%	2%
Not sure	30%	13%

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<b>Demographics</b>
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	<u><b>Main Sample</b></u>	<u><b>All Democrats</b></u>
<b>23)What is your gender?</b>		
Man	48%	43%
Woman	52%	57%
<b>24)What is your racial or ethnic background?</b>		
White or Caucasian	85%	86%
Black or African-American	1%	1%
Hispanic	3%	1%
Asian	3%	1%
Other	3%	8%
Refused	5%	3%
<b>25)What is the highest level of education you have completed?</b>		
Some high school or less	4%	1%
High school graduate	18%	16%
Some college	25%	18%
College graduate	24%	32%
Some graduate school	3%	4%
Graduate degree	18%	27%
Technical school	5%	1%
Refused	3%	1%
<b>26)Do you consider yourself conservative, moderate, or liberal?</b>		
Conservative	46%	4%
Moderate	27%	32%
Somewhat liberal	11%	28%
Very liberal	10%	29%
Not sure	6%	7%
<b>27)Which of the following ranges best describes your annual income?</b>		
Less than \$25,000	11%	15%
\$25,000 to \$50,000	18%	18%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	15%	13%
\$75,000 to \$100,000	15%	13%
\$100,000 to \$150,000	12%	15%
More than \$150,000	11%	7%
Not sure	18%	19%