



Big Sky 55+
P.O. 1462
Helena, MT 59624

© 2025 Big Sky 55+ 2

bigskyfiftyfive.org/join-now

Become a member and sign up
for important updates.

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
BILLINGS, MT
PERMIT #88

Welcome Sofie!



Sofie Wright is Big Sky 55+’s new Operations Associate. She joined the staff in June 2025 having recently graduated from Carroll College with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and International Relations. Sofie helps Big Sky 55+ with research, social media, and internal operations. She is excited to start her career post-college with Big Sky 55+, after working as an intern during

the 2025 Montana Legislative Session. Working with community members is exactly what she wants to do. Sofie lives in Helena and enjoys working at the Myrna Loy in her free time, creating art, and taking care of her many plants.

69TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION OVERVIEW AND SCORECARD

How did your legislator vote in Helena?

Visit our website to see the scorecard featuring 12 of our high-priority bills from the session along with how each legislator voted on those bills.

Please take the time to **thank those who earned a high mark from us** this session. Your local legislators need to hear positive feedback!

House of Representatives BIG SKY 55+ 2025 SCORECARD											
LEGISLATOR	NAME	DATE	YES	NO	ABSENT	OTHER	MARK	MARK	MARK	MARK	MARK
1	Alfred E. Smith	Helena	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2	James Bond	Bozeman	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
3	Becky Derrico	Billings	0	4	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4	Barbara Archer	Billings	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
5	Barbara Archer	Columbia Falls	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
6	Barbara Archer	Helena	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
7	Barbara Archer	Helena	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
8	Barbara Archer	Helena	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
9	Barbara Archer	Helena	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
10	Barbara Archer	Helena	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
11	Barbara Archer	Helena	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
12	Barbara Archer	Helena	4	0	0	0	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



BIG SKY 55+ BOARD MEMBERS

CHAIR

Terry Minow, *Boulder*

VICE CHAIR

Jon Ellingson, *Missoula*

TREASURER

Pat Sweeney, *Billings*

SECRETARY

Pam Carroll, *Great Falls*

Barbara Archer, *Billings*

Bill Bronson, *Great Falls*

Margie MacDonald, *Billings*

Elizabeth Marum, *Belgrade*

Sanna Porte, *Helena*

Sharon Stewart Peregoy,
Crow Nation

Dennis Taylor, *Helena*

BIG SKY 55+ STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Trent Bolger

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Lila Cleminshaw

POLITICAL DIRECTOR

Faith Scow

BILLINGS ORGANIZER

Kristen Stewart

GREAT FALLS ORGANIZER

Dale Moore

OPERATIONS ASSOCIATE

Sofie Wright



Social Security Tour Recap THAT'S A WRAP!

This past month, Alex Lawson of Social Security Works, joined Big Sky 55+ to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the signing of the Social Security Act. We stopped in 10 towns and met with hundreds of Montanans. Thank



you to Big Sky 55+ staff, board, volunteers, Alex, and YOU for making the Social Security 90th Birthday Tour a huge success.

Although there were hundreds of other events planned for Social Security’s Birthday, Alex chose to celebrate with us here in Montana because Montana has long been a

leader in taking care of our older people. We inked the 1923 Old Age Pension Act 12 years before the Federal bill, and Sen. Lee Metcalf introduced and fought for what became Medicare, a full ten years before the creation of Medicare and Medicaid. Also, Alex likes us. He loves the grit of Montanans because we get things done.

For generations, we’ve rolled up our sleeves with a Montana spirit that says, “No Copper King is

going to beat us,” and that is what we need now. All of the folks we met on the tour – ranchers in Lewistown, farmers in Fort Benton, folks in Polson afraid of losing their hospital, liberal-leaning Missoulians and Bozemanites, hard scrabble folks in Great Falls, Anaconda, and Billings everyone took what was essentially a load of bad news from Alex and answered with, “What can we do about it?” Just like the New Dealers of the past, who took a terrible situation and made the world more just, not only for them but for future generations.

Beneficial programs that were put in place during the past 90 years are under attack, and we must protect them. However, we must also think about tomorrow. Social Security, the WPA, the National Labor Relations Board, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the 40-hour workweek, the national minimum wage (intended as a living wage), Glass-Steagall banking regulations, and major investments in infrastructure were all not only gifts to the folks living when these programs were created, but also gifts to future generations. Whether in the 1910s, 1930s, or today, these programs were meant to ensure that normal, everyday people could share in the vast wealth created in this country, rather than have it concentrated at the very top, for the top 1%. *Continued ...*

SOCIAL SECURITY 90TH BIRTHDAY TOUR STOPS:

Lewistown

Fort Benton

Have

Great Falls

Kalispell

Polson

Missoula

Anaconda

Bozeman

Billings



Continued ...
The question for us is: are we going to allow a future where corporations and billionaires control nearly every aspect of our system and bend it to benefit their interests, or are we going to ensure that the system benefits all of us and our children? If the answer is us and our children, we need to organize. Bringing cake can only get us so far.

- Here’s what you can do:
- **Host a watch party** of Alex’s presentation. Access the video here: bigskyfiftyfive.org/social-security
 - **Ask your senior center** to host a watch party.
 - **Have conversations** with your friends, your neighbors, even folks you don’t agree with.

Because here’s the truth: Most people, no matter where they live or how they vote, **love Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, weekends, and the 40-hour workweek.** The people who don’t love these things are the people who fought against them in the first place...people who want to exploit us and those beneficial programs.

Celebrate, yes - but also act.

For now, take a moment to celebrate the monumental accomplishments of the New Dealers. **In another 90 years, someone will look back on this moment.** Will they celebrate what we built? Will they say Montanans once again led the way? I believe they will — if we act together, across fences and differences, the way we always have. Older adults have superpowers. Let’s use them. Use them to organize, to protect, and to elect champions who will fight for a future worthy of our children and grandchildren.



Are You
VOTE
READY?

1

Are you registered at your **correct address**?
Check out My Voter Page online at:
prodvoterportal.mt.gov

2

Watch the mail for your ballot! 2025 municipal election ballots will mail to voters October 15-20. If your ballot doesn't arrive in your mail by October 25, reach out to your county elections office.

3

Know how to contact your **county elections office**. They can help you learn:

- ✓ Where to register to vote
- ✓ Election dates in your area
- ✓ Where to drop off your mail ballot.

4

Return your ballot. Ballots can be returned in person at the elections office or by mail.
New this year: the voter’s birth year must be entered on a red line below the voter's signature.

For more resources on voting in Montana, please visit **www.voteinmt.org**

Having a hard time with your computer or cell phone? We are here to help you! Call: 406-542-VOTE (8683) Email: info@bigsky55.org

“

THE VOTE IS PRECIOUS.
IT IS THE MOST POWERFUL NON-VIOLENT
TOOL WE HAVE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY,
AND WE MUST USE IT.

”

- JOHN LEWIS

2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS

The candidates below have demonstrated a significant alignment with our platform, and they support policies that benefit our membership. We will continue to evaluate additional candidates and new endorsements will be posted to our website: bigskyfiftyfive.org/2025-municipal-election-endorsements

BILLINGS Mike Nelson, Mayor Mark Nicholson, Ward 1 Amy Aguirre, Ward 3 Andrew Lindley, Ward 4	GREAT FALLS Jasmine Taylor, Mayor Matt Pipinich, City Commission Casey Schreiner, City Commission	HELENA The Helena school bond measures, which Big Sky 55+ endorsed, both passed! Thank you to all who helped with the effort and especially, thank you to all who voted yes for Helena Schools!
WHITEFISH Nathan Dugan, City Council	KALISPELL Ryan Hunter, Mayor Kyle Waterman, Ward 3	

you

POWER
OUR WORK

What a year it’s been. We rallied, we celebrated, we sounded the alarm, we fought the Big Ugly Boondoggle, and stood strong through every day of the Legislature. Wherever we could, we followed the first rule of politics: Show up.

Together, we protected our courts, we secured a critical cost adjustment for nursing providers to help keep them afloat, and lowered residential property taxes. We are proud of the work we have accomplished, but there’s still much more work to do for the rest of this year and next.

And yes, it takes resources to keep showing up and doing good work.

If you receive our materials but have not yet become a paying member, now is the time to join us. If you are a member but have not yet paid your annual dues, **please make a donation of whatever amount you can afford** to help us continue empowering older adults to use their superpowers.

Use the enclosed envelope or visit our website to make your donation today.

Older adults have tremendous power to shape the future, and we urgently need to bring more voices into the fold. **Your donation will help us continue to grow solidarity, increase your power, and keep fighting for what matters.** Please consider a contribution today. Thank you for standing with us.

Trent Bolger
Executive Director, Big Sky 55+

A NEW WAY TO GIVE

Big Sky 55+ has set up a new online option to facilitate recurring donations directly from a bank account rather than a credit card. Donating monthly **allows us to budget for the future** and contributing directly from your bank account helps us **avoid credit card processing fees.**

We hope you will consider joining the growing number of people who are collectively making a huge impact by contributing small amounts monthly.

GO TO
BIGSKYFIFTYFIVE.ORG

CLICK
DONATE

CHOOSE
MONTHLY

SELECT
PAY WITH BANK
ACCOUNT