

Who Am I? I grew up in Billings and a ranch outside Greycliff, MT. Like so many Montana kids, my youth was filled with family, hunting, fishing, baseball, and adventures around MT. My dad, Dale Vermillion, was a doctor at the Billings Clinic and Big Timber's Pioneer Medical Center. My mom, Margaret Vermillion, was a Spanish teacher at Billings Central and Billings West. They are both now retired at our family "ranch" in Greycliff.

I attended public schools in Billings, and then completed my education at the University of Montana's Law School. Throughout my youth, my two brothers and I, along with my Mom and Dad, spent all of our free time fishing and hunting. We were very blessed to grow up in a Montana. Eventually, much to my parent's surprise, we ended up creating a business that allowed us to turn our passion into a business.

Today, along with my two brothers, I own Sweetwater Travel. We formed our business in 1996 in Livingston. We have had most of our employees for several years, and we have shown that you can run a successful business that also supports its employees, their families, and the publicly owned resources that make it all possible.

I am married to Lynn Donaldson and now raise three kids under the age of 12 at our home in the Shields Valley. All three kids presently attend the Livingston public schools.

Montana is my home, and Park and Sweet Grass counties are the part of Montana where I have built my life. It is a wonderful place to live, to raise a family, and to operate a business. I look forward to putting this lifetime of Montana experience to work for the people of MT as a Senator in the Montana Senate.

Why Am I Running? I grew up in Montana, and I will feel forever fortunate that my parents decide to move to Montana in 1971. I was very fortunate to attend to quality public schools, have access to affordable healthcare, ample opportunity to hunt and fish on Montana's public lands, and a healthy business climate to start a business.

I have served as the Fish and Wildlife Commissioner for Southwestern MT for 12 years. Commissioner must keep an open dialog with our agricultural producers, our commercial outfitters, and, of course, our sportsmen. I have learned that clear, open communication is the key to creating long-term solutions that are effective. During my time as a commissioner, I have had to make some difficult decisions, but I have always strived to be as responsive as possible to the needs of the people of Southwestern MT.

Recent years, have shown that commitment to open, non-partisan, communication is something that is sorely missing from our current political discourse. I sincerely believe that we can solve our state's problems by working together and focusing on our common values. I am running for State Senate because I believe I can help forge these partnerships and become an effective advocate for Park and Sweet Grass Counties.

Affordable Access to Healthcare: I believe that all Montanans deserve affordable access to health care. We need to make sure that our families do not live in worry about how they are going to cover the expenses associated with getting sick. Our rural hospitals and clinics are one of the foundations of our communities. As your Senator, I will fight to make sure we do not turn back the clock on Medicaid expansion and that our medical service providers have the funds they need to stay open.

Quality Public Schools – Quality public schools are another bedrock of our communities. For too long, Montana has struggled to fund its school system. Each year, the legislature shifts more of the burden to local taxpayers. We cannot build a healthy economy without quality schools. I will support Governor Bullock's efforts to create all day pre-K, increase funding to schools to pay our teachers, and to perform the necessary maintenance at our schools in Park and Sweet Grass County.

Economic Development: Economic Security is a Family Value. I will fight to create new, high paying jobs while ensuring that existing businesses have the support they need to compete in the global marketplace. This means making sure the legislature passes an infrastructure bill that helps ranchers get their meat to market, local business with a level internet playing field that allows them to compete with companies around the world, and helps our thriving tourism industry.

Public Lands: Public lands must stay in public hands. Public lands are one of our greatest assets. They support our hunters, our anglers, and our agricultural producers. They are critical to our community's economic development. As your Senator, I will fight to improve public access for all Montanans.

Restore Budget Priorities to Support Our Local Communities: In recent months, social services of all types have been drastically cut here in Livingston and Big Timber. In the last few months, the Office of Public Assistance, the Mental Health Crisis Center, the Child and Family Services, and the Job Placement Center have all closed. While not all offices have been closed for the same reason, Montana's legislature passed a budget that has eviscerated our social safety net that is crucial to the health of our children, our families, our seniors, and our communities. As your Senator, I am committed to restoring our budget priorities so that we take care of our most vulnerable and invest in the future of Park and Sweet Grass counties.

Affordable Housing: Livingston is certainly feeling the over-flow from Bozeman's real estate boom. While everyone likes to see their property values increase, young families, seniors, and working families are finding that our housing is just getting too expensive for their incomes. Many of those families seek to rent housing, but, much like the real estate market, the rental market is very busy with rents and availability becoming very challenging. This not only creates economic and social instability in our communities but also limits our economic potential as employers struggle to find employees who can afford to work here. As your Senator, I will work to support and create opportunities to increase affordability of housing for the residents of Sweet Grass and Park Counties.

