

THE MONTANA U.S. SENATE RACE, MSU-MTN POLL RESULTS

Tabular data and analysis provided by:

Dr. David C. W. Parker, Dr. Eric D. Raile, Dr. Sara Guenther, and Dr. Elizabeth A. Shanahan
Department of Political Science, Montana State University-Bozeman

Table 1: The Vote for the U.S. Senate among Registered Voters

Rosendale	Tester	Breckenridge	Other	Don't Know
43.1%	46.2%	2.6%	1.6%	6.5%

Senate Vote: Undecided Republicans and Independents Will be Key

Based on the margin of error in our sample, Senator Tester receives between 44.1 and 48.4 percent support from our respondents, with 46.2 percent as the average estimated level of support. This is a critical number, as Senator Tester has never received more than 50 percent of the vote. State Auditor Matt Rosendale receives the support of between 41.0 and 45.2 (mean of 43.1) percent of respondents, and Libertarian Rick Breckenridge receives between 1.9 and 3.3 percent. Democrats are united for Tester, and nearly none are undecided at this point. On the other hand, about 44 percent of the undecided (“don’t know”) voters identify as Republican, 27 percent are independents, and another 26 percent identify as some other (non-Democratic) party. The decisions those voters make will decide the election, as will turnout. For Tester to win, he will need a turnout similar to 2006 or 2012 among Democratic voters.

Table 2: Senate Vote by Party, Registered Voters

Party	Rosendale	Tester	Breckenridge	Other	Don't Know
Democrat	0.4%	98.0%	0.3%	0.3%	1.0%
Republican	82.7%	7.7%	1.6%	1.3%	6.7%
Independent	29.5%	57.3%	4.7%	1.9%	6.6%
Other	29.9%	44.9%	5.1%	5.0%	15.1%

Senator Tester receives near-universal support from voters identifying as Democrats, and independents favor him by a substantial margin. Nearly seven percent of Republican voters are undecided, and we would expect—given historical patterns, the Kavanaugh hearings, and the visits to Montana voters—that nearly all of those voters will move into Rosendale’s column by Election Day. In 2012, Senator Tester received the support of 95 percent of Democrats voting, while his opponent, Republican Congressman Denny Rehberg, received the support of 89 percent of Republican voters. As Republicans come home (though perhaps they have already), the race may tighten considerably.

That leaves two remaining questions. First, what will undecided independents do? And, will Democratic turnout look like 2006? If undecided independents move to Rosendale and Democrats do not turnout, it will be difficult for Tester to find enough votes to win.

Table 3: Senate by Gender, Registered Voters

Gender	Rosendale	Tester	Breckenridge	Other	Don't Know
Female	38.6%	51.7%	2.2%	1.4%	6.2%
Male	47.5%	41.6%	3.2%	1.7%	6.0%

As we have seen nationally with Democratic and Republican candidates, there is a substantial gender gap. Tester is favored by women by about 13 percentage points. However, Rosendale is favored by men by about six points.

Table 4: Senate by Gender-by-Marital-Status, Registered Voters

Gender, Marital Status	Rosendale	Tester	Breckenridge	Other	Don't Know
Female, married	44.9%	44.7%	1.4%	1.4%	7.5%
Female, not married	29.8%	61.7%	2.9%	1.4%	4.2%
Male, married	52.8%	38.0%	3.4%	0.5%	5.3%
Male, not married	38.3%	48.0%	2.4%	4.0%	7.4%

As this table demonstrates, married men and women tend to support Rosendale, while unmarried women and men tend to support Tester. This married-unmarried divide is larger for women than it is for men.

Table 5: Senate by Age, Registered Voters

Age	Rosendale	Tester	Breckenridge	Other	Don't Know
18-29	39.0%	46.7%	4.3%	2.8%	7.2%
30-39	34.0%	50.0%	3.0%	1.0%	12.0%
40-49	50.4%	36.2%	2.2%	1.5%	9.7%
50-59	47.7%	44.8%	2.5%	1.3%	3.8%
60-69	45.0%	48.2%	2.0%	1.3%	3.6%
70+	42.7%	48.7%	1.8%	1.7%	5.1%

Rosendale's support is concentrated among middle-aged voters, particularly between the ages of 40 and 49, while Tester has a clear lead among the youngest and oldest voters. It is notable that voters above the age of sixty indicate a preference for Tester. In 2012, Tester and Rehberg drew even among voters over the age of 65 according to exit polls.

Table 6: Senate by Education, Registered Voters

Education	Rosendale	Tester	Breckenridge	Other	Don't Know
Less than high school	48.5%	51.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
High school/GED	46.0%	38.8%	3.0%	2.8%	9.4%
Associate/junior college	52.1%	36.9%	3.8%	1.3%	5.9%
Bachelor's degree	31.5%	60.2%	1.1%	0.9%	6.3%
Graduate degree	27.5%	67.4%	2.0%	0.8%	2.3%

Traditionally, voters with a high school education or less have favored Democrats, but there has been a shift—particularly in rust belt states—of those voters to Republicans. The diploma divide is evident here. Voters with a bachelor's degree or more strongly favor Tester, while Rosendale sees greater support among those with a high school degree or equivalent and among those with an associate or junior college degree. However, those individuals who did not complete high school (in what is a smaller subsample) slightly favor Tester.

Table 7: Senate by Ideology, Registered Voters

Ideology	Rosendale	Tester	Breckenridge	Other	Don't Know
Extremely conservative	94.7%	4.1%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Conservative	84.7%	7.2%	3.1%	1.5%	3.5%
Slightly conservative	54.0%	31.7%	1.6%	3.0%	9.7%
Moderate	18.4%	61.9%	3.2%	2.2%	14.4%
Slightly liberal	1.6%	93.5%	3.6%	1.1%	0.2%
Liberal	1.1%	97.9%	0.6%	0.0%	0.4%
Extremely liberal	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

As one might expect, very conservative voters overwhelmingly favor Rosendale, while liberals—regardless of ideological intensity—are all in for Senator Tester. Moderates and slightly conservative voters exhibit relatively high levels of indecision in the Senate race at 14 and 10 percent undecided, respectively. Voters describing themselves as conservative or slightly conservative support Rosendale, but 32 percent of slightly conservative voters indicate they will vote for Tester. Moderates overwhelmingly support Tester.

Table 8: Senate by Trump Approval, Registered Voters

Trump Approval	Rosendale	Tester	Breckenridge	Other	Don't Know
Strongly approve	87.6%	5.7%	2.5%	0.8%	3.4%
Approve	65.9%	15.3%	2.5%	3.3%	13.0%
Disapprove	5.0%	66.3%	7.7%	7.0%	14.0%
Strongly disapprove	0.8%	97.2%	0.8%	0.1%	1.1%
Don't know	1.0%	32.4%	16.5%	3.9%	46.3%

Voters who strongly approve of President Trump will vote for State Auditor Rosendale. Among those who indicate they approve of the president, but not strongly, 13 percent are undecided in the Senate race. We suspect these voters will rally to Rosendale in the final weeks of the campaign.

* Note that rows in tables may not sum to 100.0% exactly due to rounding.