

TREASURE STATE 2020 POLL RESULTS: THE MONTANA GOVERNOR RACE

Tabular data and analysis provided by:

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Notes: The survey was in the field from September 14 – October 2, 2020. Rows in tables may not sum to 100% exactly due to rounding. The margin of error, adjusted for design effects due to weighting, is +/-3.9 percentage points. Percentages are for weighted respondents as explained in the methods documentation.

Table 1: Gubernatorial Vote among Likely and Active Registered Voters

Cooney	Gianforte	Other	Don't Know	Total Row Respondents
42%	47%	4%	7%	1,605

Based upon the margin of error in our sample, Congressman Greg Gianforte receives between 43 and 51 percent support from our respondents, with 47 percent as the average estimated level of support. Lt. Governor Mike Cooney receives support from between 38 and 46 (mean of 42) percent of respondents. The gap between the two candidates is within the poll's margin of error. Notable is that 7 percent of respondents indicate they don't know for whom they will vote, so there is still considerable voter uncertainty in this race. The Libertarian candidate's impact on the race is negligible, drawing less than 2 percent of the vote. This is the only statewide race we surveyed with a third-party candidate on the ballot other than the presidential race.

Table 2: Gubernatorial Vote by Party among Likely and Active Registered Voters

Party	Cooney	Gianforte	Other / Don't Know	Total Row Respondents
Democrat	95%	2%	3%	440
Republican	5%	88%	7%	697
Independent	52%	30%	18%	334
Other	48%	25%	27%	103

The story here is simple: independents have not made up their minds, and the massive lead among independents we see in the Senate race for Democrat Steve Bullock is "only" an advantage of 22 points for Mike Cooney. It is likely voters still don't know who Mike Cooney is, while Congressman Gianforte has spent considerably not only in this race but in three previous statewide races and is well known as a result. Note that Congressman Gianforte enjoys similar levels of slippage among Republican voters to what we

observe for Senator Daines (88 percent of Republican respondents report they will vote for him), while 95 percent of Democrats say they will vote for Mike Cooney—2 points less than the support Governor Bullock enjoys in the Senate race.

Table 3: Gubernatorial Vote by Gender among Likely and Active Registered Voters

Gender	Cooney	Gianforte	Other / Don't Know	Total Row Respondents
Female	43%	45%	12%	740
Male	41%	49%	10%	818

Interestingly, the gender gap observed in the Senate race is nearly absent in the governor’s race. Cooney and Gianforte draw roughly the same amount of support from women, while Gianforte enjoys an 8-point advantage among male respondents.

Table 4: Gubernatorial Vote by Age among Likely and Active Registered Voters

Age	Cooney	Gianforte	Other / Don't Know	Total Row Respondents
18-29	48%	36%	16%	202
30-39	50%	39%	11%	236
40-49	40%	45%	15%	230
50-59	37%	53%	10%	251
60-69	42%	51%	7%	330
70+	39%	54%	7%	356

Congressman Gianforte wins voters 40 and over, while Cooney enjoys double-digit support among voters under the age of 40. Cooney cannot win without a high voter turnout and levels of support among young voters similar to those enjoyed by Governor Bullock in the Senate race.

Table 5: Gubernatorial Vote by Education among Likely and Active Registered Voters

Education	Cooney	Gianforte	Other / Don't Know	Total Row Respondents
Less than high school	40%	60%	0%	55
High school/GED	39%	50%	11%	956
Associate/junior college	37%	48%	15%	194
Bachelor's degree	53%	39%	8%	307
Graduate degree	72%	24%	4%	46

As we've seen nationally, voters with at least a bachelor's degree favor the Democrat, Cooney, by substantial margins (14 points for those with a bachelor's degree and 48 points for those with a graduate or professional degree). But most Montanans do not have college degrees, and among those without a four-year degree, Gianforte dominates by double digits.

Table 6: Gubernatorial Vote by Presidential Vote among Likely and Active Registered Voters

Vote for President	Cooney	Gianforte	Other / Don't Know	Total Row Respondents
Trump	3%	88%	9%	816
Biden	90%	3%	7%	698
Other / Don't Know	28%	22%	50%	88

What is notable in this table is the fact that 7 percent of Biden voters and 9 percent of Trump voters tell us they don't know for whom they will vote or intend to vote for someone other than the two major-party candidates for governor. This suggests either voters don't know much about their options or don't like those options. It may be a little bit of both: Cooney is likely still unknown and Congressman Gianforte, as we saw in our 2018 survey, elicits strong reactions from voters.