MONTANA FIRST: VETERANS AGENDA

Seth's Service

The son of two public school teachers, Seth Bodnar learned early in life the importance of service, and at the age of 18 he chose to join the military. He graduated first in his class from West Point in 2001, received both the Rhodes and the Truman Scholarship, and earned a commission as an infantry officer.

Bodnar served with distinction as an officer in the US Army. In late 2003, he deployed to Iraq with the 101st Airborne Division, commanding a 40-man rifle platoon in Mosul. After returning from Iraq, he completed the rigorous selection and training to become a US Army Green Beret. He then served in the US Army's 1st Special Forces Group, commanding a Special Forces A-team on missions around the world. In 2008, he deployed again to Baghdad, Iraq, where he served as Special Assistant to the Commanding General, a role that gave him direct exposure to strategic-level military decision-making at the highest levels.

Seth is a graduate of the US Army's Ranger School, the Special Forces Qualification Course, Airborne school, Air Assault school, SERE Level-C, and the Combat Diver's Qualification Course. He also earned two master's degrees from Oxford University. He received stellar reviews on every Officer Evaluation Report, was awarded the Bronze Star, and was promoted early to the rank of major. He left active duty in 2011 and continues to serve in the US Army Reserve.

After active duty military service, Seth joined General Electric, where he led businesses serving the global rail industry. He went on to serve as the 19th President of the University of Montana, where he led the institution to be named the #1 Military Friendly University among Tier-1 research institutions in the United States, a recognition of UM's sustained commitment to veteran students and military families under Seth's leadership.

Why an Independent Senator?

In a narrowly divided Senate, an independent Senator from Montana carries leverage that no junior member of either party caucus can match. Seth Bodnar will not arrive in Washington owing favors to party bosses or partisan ideological caucuses. He will owe one thing: his honest

judgment on behalf of Montana. On issues affecting Montana's veterans, where partisan theater has substituted for serious solutions, that independence is not a luxury: it is a requirement.

VETERANS: SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

Montana is home to one of the largest veteran populations per capita in the nation. Montana's veterans are among the most capable, disciplined, and mission-driven people this state has ever produced. The men and women who have served this country bring back something rare: the discipline and courage to put their lives on the line in service to something greater than themselves and the knowledge of what it means to be part of a community where the person next to you has your back without question. That is not just a personal virtue; it is a civic resource. Every veteran who transitions successfully into a career of purpose—in business, in public service, in education, in healthcare, in agriculture—is a force multiplier for the communities they return home to.

Montana and this country made a promise to every person who put on a uniform. We promised that if they served, we would be there when they came home: with healthcare, with support, and with a path forward. That obligation does not expire. It does not have a waiting list. And it does not get balanced against a Washington budget target.

Right now, this country is breaking its promise to our veterans. VA Montana had nearly 9 percent of its workforce cut from late 2024 to December 2025. Montana has one of the highest veteran suicide rates in the nation—53.9 per 100,000, compared to a national rate of 35.2. We are losing approximately 17–18 veterans a day nationally. None of that is inevitable. It is the result of decisions made in Washington that do not have our veterans' best interests at heart.

Seth Bodnar has a different vision for how we treat our men and women who served, and it starts with fighting every day to ensure the promises this country made to its veterans are kept. As Montana's Independent voice in the U.S. Senate, Seth will:

Purpose, Community, and Civilian Leadership

- **Champion programs that help veterans launch small businesses**, with particular support for veteran entrepreneurs in Montana's rural communities where locally-owned businesses are the backbone of civic life.
- **Expand employer incentive programs** that support businesses, including Montana's small businesses and agricultural operations, that actively recruit, hire, and retain veterans, recognizing that a veteran in a civilian leadership role is a force multiplier for any organization.

- **Invest in veteran pathways** into public safety, emergency medicine, education, and healthcare, where the skills, composure, and team-orientation developed in military service translate directly and immediately into community benefit.
- **Protect and strengthen the GI Bill,** ensuring that every Montana veteran can build a civilian career in a trade, a university, or a business, on their own terms.

Healthcare and Rural Access

- **Defend and fully fund VA healthcare**, with particular focus on rural access points critical to Montana veterans spread across the state. Support mobile VA clinic funding to bring care directly to Montana's most remote veteran communities and invest in telehealth infrastructure specifically designed for Montana's geography, ensuring that distance is never a barrier to accessing earned healthcare benefits.
- **End the hiring crisis and reverse politically driven staffing cuts** across Montana. By the end of 2025 VA Montana had nearly 9 percent of its total workforce slashed by Washington. Meanwhile, the VA hired the fewest number of new employees since 2005. Seth will fight for streamlined VA hiring authority and Montana-specific recruitment incentives as well as to restore positions that have been cut by political DC bureaucrats.
- **Support VA partnerships with local hospitals,** like the Billings Clinic, to recruit and train the next generation of doctors to work at the VA in rural areas.
- **Expand the Community Care Network** so that Montana veterans in rural counties can see local providers when VA facilities are not within reach, without bureaucratic delay. Current wait times where new patients are waiting weeks or even months for primary and specialty care appointments make this a necessity.
- **Champion PACT Act implementation and oversight**, holding the VA accountable for timely processing of toxic exposure claims for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other hazardous materials.

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

- **Expand veteran mental health services**, including peer support programs, community-based counseling, and outreach specifically designed for veterans least likely to ask for help.
- **Streamline and incentivize hiring more mental health professionals** at Montana clinics as well as restore the mental health staffing that has been cut in Montana by political bureaucrats in DC. Those cuts included three psychologists. Additionally, Montana veterans have reported being forced to wait up to six months for an appointment with a psychiatrist. That is unacceptable.
- **Expand research into treatment-resistant PTSD**, including evidence-based emerging therapies that have shown promise for veterans who have not responded to conventional treatment.

Expanding Access for All Veterans

- **Ensure the VA meets the needs of women veterans**, including access to military sexual trauma (MST) treatment, maternity care, and VA services that women veterans historically cannot utilize due to systemic gaps.
- **Preserve and strengthen the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (VASH) program** in the face of proposed restructuring of VA homelessness programs. HUD-VASH is one of a number of programs that have been instrumental in the nearly 50% reduction in veteran homelessness since 2010.