

Brian Schweitzer

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Brian David Schweitzer (born September 4, 1955) is an American politician from the U.S. state of Montana. Schweitzer is a Democrat and the current governor of Montana, serving since January 2005. Schweitzer currently has one of the highest gubernatorial approval ratings in the nation, with polls regularly showing a rating of around 70 percent.^[1]

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Early life

Schweitzer was born in Havre, Montana, the fourth of six children of Adam and Kay Schweitzer. His mother was Irish American and his father a descendant of ethnic Germans from Russia.^[2] Schweitzer earned his Bachelor of Science degree in international agronomy from Colorado State University in 1978 and a Master of Science in soil science from Montana State University in 1980.

Upon finishing school, Schweitzer worked as an irrigation developer on projects in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. He spent several years working in Libya^[3] and Saudi Arabia and speaks Arabic.^[4] He returned to Montana in 1986 to launch a ranching and irrigation business in Whitefish.

Bill Clinton appointed Schweitzer to the United States Department of Agriculture as a member of the Montana USDA Farm Service Agency committee, where he worked for seven years. While working for the USDA, he was appointed to the Montana Rural Development Board (1996) and the National Drought Task Force (1999).

Political career

Brian Schweitzer



23rd Governor of Montana

Incumbent

Assumed office

January 3, 2005

Lieutenant John Bohlinger

Preceded by Judy Martz

Born September 4, 1955
Havre, Montana

Political party Democratic

Spouse Nancy H. Schweitzer

Residence Whitefish, Montana

Alma mater Colorado State University, Montana
State University

Profession Rancher, Agribusiness

Religion Roman Catholic

Website www.brianschweitzer.com
(http://www.brianschweitzer.com/)



Schweitzer speaking on the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

In 2000, Schweitzer ran for U.S. Senate against the Republican incumbent Conrad Burns, losing by the surprisingly small margin of 51 to 47 percent. When incumbent Governor Judy Martz announced she would not run for re-election in 2004, Schweitzer announced his candidacy. His running mate was John Bohlinger, a Republican state senator. He won the general election by a margin of 50 to 46 percent over Montana Secretary of State Bob Brown. Both while campaigning and as governor, Schweitzer became known for an easygoing and folksy public persona. The governor's dog, a Border Collie named Jag, regularly accompanies him on work days at the Capitol, as well as some other official occasions.^[5]

Schweitzer's reputation led him to be mentioned by some political pundits in the liberal blogosphere as being among the top candidates for Vice President under Democratic nominee Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential election.^[6] Schweitzer gave a speech on American energy independence at the 2008 Democratic National Convention that was widely acclaimed.^{[7][8][9]}

Political positions

In March 2005, Schweitzer suggested that Montana's National Guard troops be recalled from service in Iraq to assist firefighting during Montana's wildfire season. He has also gained national attention lately for his focus on converting Montana's vast coal reserves into fuel, which he has said is one way to wean America off of foreign oil. Schweitzer has been interviewed by *60 Minutes* (first aired on February 26, 2006),^[10] and Charlie Rose (March 7, 2007) regarding his work in this field.

Schweitzer is against gun control^[5] and a vehement critic of the REAL ID legislation.^[11] In August of 2008, Schweitzer was given an important speaking slot at the 2008 Democratic National Convention.

Governorship

As Governor, Schweitzer is an active member of the Democratic Governors Association. He is currently serving as DGA Vice Chairman, and previously served as Finance Chairman, and Recruitment Chairman for the organization.

Governor Schweitzer has cut more taxes for more Montanans than any other time in the state's history and he increased fees by over \$350 million for all Montanans according to Legislative services. According to a report by the Tax Foundation, Montana has the 9th lowest in state and local tax burden in the nation.

Governor Schweitzer was given the largest surplus in the history of Montana when he first took office in 2005. During his first legislative session the Governor was responsible for raising taxes on Montana's small business by over \$240 million when he signed SB48 Titled "Stop class 8 property tax reduction" ^[12]

While nationally the average of state and local taxes paid jumped to 11% in 2007, Montana residents haven't seen any increase in state and local tax burden over the same period and in fact we gave Montana homeowners a \$400 tax rebate.

Montana's electrical generation capacity^[13] has increased more during our the Schweitzer Administration than the previous 16 years combined and is one of only two states in the country to have increased our oil production – we've had a 50% increase since we took office.

And with Montana's new clean and green energy tax incentives, the state is poised to continue to grow this important sector of our economy - producing American energy, lowering prices and weaning ourselves from our addiction to foreign oil. We've already added more than \$1 billion in wind power projects ^[14] and there are many more to come.

Montana has increased the number of children on the Children's Health Insurance Program by more than 3,000 and are now providing quality healthcare to more than 16,000 kids - giving the future a healthy start in life.

On May 3, 2006, Schweitzer granted posthumous pardons to 78 persons convicted of sedition during World War I for making comments that were critical of the war. These were the first posthumous pardons in Montana history, but the convictions had become notorious in recent years because Montana's sedition law had been one of the broadest and harshest of its time: one man went to prison for calling food rationing "a joke," while others were targeted because they refused to physically kiss a U.S. flag or to buy Liberty Bonds. At a public ceremony attended by family members of the pardon recipients, Schweitzer said, "[i]n times when our country is pushed to our limits, those are the times when it is most important to remember individual rights."^{[15][16]}

Controversy

Schweitzer speaking to the trial attorneys in July stated

"And the advantage is, ya know, when you got a Governor of a state on your side WHOA! You can turn some dials, and we did."

This was picked up by the New York Times [2] (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/12/us>



Governor Brian Schweitzer campaigning in Billings, Montana for Jon Tester in September 2006

/12montana.html?_r=1&ref=todayspaper&oref=slogin) , Greatfalls Tribune[3] (<http://www.greatfallstribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080911/NEWS01/809110303>) , and the Billings Gazette [4] (<http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2008/09/11/news/state/18-electionfraud.txt>) and others papers around the state.

Schweitzer, in July 2007 spoke in front of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure regarding HR2421 the "Clean Water Act". His statements define him as favoring regulation for all forms of water on your property.

"Other types of non-adjacent wetlands and waters in Montana that could be potentially affected by any limitation on the scope of jurisdictional waters include fens, wet meadows, seeps, slope wetlands, ponds and lakes....Passage of the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act is the best way to ensure that all of the water resources in Montana remain fully protected..."

You can see the full transcript of the Governors comments at the following link.[5] (http://www.house.gov/list/press/mt00_rehberg/052108_FedWaterGrab.html)

Family

Schweitzer married Nancy Hupp in 1982; they began a family after returning to Montana, and are the parents of three children: Ben, Khai, and Katrina. As the father of an autistic son (Ben), Schweitzer has spoken publicly about autism-related issues. In July 2008, he responded to controversial on-air remarks by conservative talk radio host Michael Savage, saying: "I'm very close to some autistic people and I can tell you who is a brat. That would be Michael Savage, not the autistic people of Montana."^[17]

Electoral history

Montana gubernatorial election 2004				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±%
Democratic	Brian Schweitzer	225,016	50.4	
Republican	Bob Brown	205,313	46.0	
Green	Robert Kelleher	8,393	1.9	
Libertarian	Stanley R. Jones	7,424	1.7	

Montana U.S. Senate election 2000				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±%
Republican	Conrad Burns	208,082	50.6	
Democratic	Brian Schweitzer	194,430	47.2	
Reform	Gary Lee	9,089	2.2	

References

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- [^] [1] (<http://energy.psyrk.us/MontanaElectricGenerationTables2007.pdf>)
- [^] http://www.commerce.mt.gov/energy/Includes/NewsArticles/2008Articles/071808_Giant_Shelby-Area_Wind_Farm_Gears_Up.pdf
- [^] "Montana governor to pardon 78 convicted during WWI" (http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-05-03-montana_x.htm) , USA Today.com, May 3, 2006.
- [^] "Pardons granted 88 Years After Crimes of Sedition" (<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/03/us/03pardon.html>) , NY Times.com, May 3, 2006.
- [^] "Schweitzer reacts to radio host's autism remarks", (<http://www.montanasnewsstation.com/global/story.asp?s=8718579&ClientType=Printable>) KRTV in Great Falls, Montana, July 22, 2008

External links

- Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer (<http://governor.mt.gov/>) **official state site**
 - biography (<http://governor.mt.gov/governor/govbio.asp>)
- Schweitzer - Bohlinger (<http://www.brianschweitzer.com/>) **official campaign site**
- National Governors Association - Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer (<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.29fab9fb4add37305ddcbbeb501010a0/?vgnnextoid=646e224971c81010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>) biography
- Follow the Money - Brian Schweitzer (<http://www.followthemoney.org/database/StateGlance/candidate.phtml?si=200426&c=401720>) 2004 campaign contributions
- On the Issues - Brian Schweitzer (http://www.ontheissues.org/Brian_Schweitzer.htm) issue positions and quotes
- Project Vote Smart - Governor Brian D. Schweitzer (MT) (http://www.vote-smart.org/bio.php?can_id=MMT96362) profile
- 2008 Montana Governor Race at 2008RaceTracker.com (<http://www.2008racetracker.com/page/MT-Gov>)
- Speech at the 2008 Democratic National Convention (<http://gallery.demconvention.com/Default.html?VideoID=422>)

Political offices		
Preceded by Judy Martz	Governor of Montana January 3, 2005–present	Succeeded by <i>Incumbent</i>
Party political offices		
Preceded by Jack Mudd	Democratic Party nominee for United States Senator from Montana (Class 1) 2000	Succeeded by Jon Tester
Preceded by Mark O'Keefe	Democratic Party nominee for Governor of Montana 2004, 2008	Succeeded by Current nominee
Order of precedence in the United States of America		
Preceded by Dick Cheney Vice President of the United States Lynne Cheney Second Lady of the United States (if present)	United States order of precedence In Montana	Succeeded by Mayors of Montana cities if present next fixed Nancy Pelosi Speaker of the United States House of Representatives
Preceded by Mike Rounds Governor of South Dakota	United States order of precedence Outside Montana	Succeeded by Christine Gregoire Governor of Washington

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