



Austin Knudsen Enters The Race For Montana Attorney General

By Corin Cates-Carney • May 20, 2019

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Former Speaker of the House [Austin Knudsen](#) announced Monday that he is seeking the Republican nomination for Montana's Attorney General race in 2020.

Knudsen served as a representative from Culbertson in the state Legislature from 2011 to 2017, serving as Speaker of the House during his last four years. He's the second Republican to enter the Attorney General race.

Knudsen announced his bid for the office on the "Montana Talks" radio show. He says he decided to run for the leadership of the state's Department of Justice because not enough has been done to repeal the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

"I've fought Obamacare, being in the Legislature. I think it's done vastly greater harm to the state of Montana than it's done good."



Former State Rep. Austin Knudsen has announced his candidacy for Attorney General in the 2020 race. Credit Mike Albans / Montana Public Radio

During the radio show, Knudsen criticized current Republican Attorney General Tim Fox and Chief Deputy Jon Bennion for not backing President Donald Trump's legal attempt to strike down the entirety of Obamacare.

In April the Montana Attorney General's Office filed a brief in federal court saying that if the law was completely stricken, it would mean Montanans could be deprived health coverage for pre-existing conditions.

Montana first implemented [Medicaid expansion](#), which was allowed under Obamacare in 2015. That was during Rep. Knudsen's first legislative session as Speaker of the House.

Knudsen also focused on the U.S. Constitution's Second Amendment during his campaign kickoff.

"It's very important to me. I'm a hunter. I'm a competitive shooter. I'm a very enthusiastic firearms hobbist and that's an important one to me," he said.

Current Chief Deputy [Attorney General Bennion is also running](#) as a Republican for the top DOJ position next year. Bennion has so far raised \$50,000 for the primary race.

Two Democrats have also announced bids for Attorney General in 2020, Missoula state [Rep. Kimberly Dudik](#) and Gov. Steve Bullock's Chief Legal Counsel Raph Graybill.