

## Republican Rep. Daines enters US Senate race



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**BOZEMAN — U.S. Rep. Steve Daines, ending months of speculation about when and if he would jump into Montana's potentially pivotal U.S. Senate race, officially launched his campaign Wednesday, saying it's time for Republicans to take control of the Senate.**

**Speaking to a room packed with some 200 supporters at the Bozeman Holiday Inn, Daines made it clear he'll frame the race as one that could determine whether Republicans become the majority in the Senate in 2014.**

**"The American people fired Nancy Pelosi as (Democratic) speaker of the House in 2010; it's time we did the same thing to (Democratic Senate Majority Leader) Harry Reid in 2014," he said. "This (current) Senate speaks for President Obama, and not for the people of Montana."**

**Daines, 51, a former executive for a Bozeman software development firm, became Montana's only U.S. House representative less than 11 months ago.**

**Now, he's gunning to become the state's next U.S. senator, succeeding retiring Democrat Max Baucus, who is not running for re-election.**

**Daines is the fifth person to declare himself a candidate in the race, one of several nationwide where Republicans feel they have a good chance to win a Democratic seat and narrow or erase the 55-45 majority Democrats currently hold.**

**His announcement came on the same day that former Montana Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger, running as a Democrat, launched his campaign at a news conference 100 miles away in Helena.**

**Bohlinger is the third Democrat to join the fray, challenging current Lt. Gov. John Walsh and Dirk Adams, a rancher from Wilsall who's also an attorney and former banking executive.**

**Republican David Leaser, a political unknown from Kalispell, also is in the race.**

**Daines enters the race as a likely front-runner, with the advantage of statewide name recognition and a campaign fund of more than \$1 million. However, a poll released two weeks ago by Montana State University-Billings indicated that many Montanans are still unfamiliar with the new congressman.**

**Thirty-seven percent of those polled said they are undecided about Daines' job performance as a congressman and 39 percent said they approved. Only 24 percent said they disapproved.**

**Daines, who grew up in Bozeman and graduated from Montana State University, kicked off his announcement with a story about his great-great-grandmother, who emigrated to the United States from Norway and is buried east of Conrad.**

**"Her headstone has three words," Daines said. "It says, 'Saved by grace.' It doesn't say 'saved by her government.' I had a pretty smart great-great-grandmother."**

**Daines said he'll be a stalwart supporter of oil, gas, coal and timber development in Montana. The current, Democratically controlled Senate has been a "road block" to building the Keystone XL Pipeline to transport oil from Alberta and eastern Montana and has waged a "war on coal," he said.**

**"When you wage a war on coal, you're waging a war on American energy, a war on jobs and a war on American families," he said.**

**He also ripped into President Barack Obama's signature health-reform law, the Affordable Care Act, saying he has been steadfast in pushing for its repeal — and the current Senate has defended it.**

**"Obamacare is a failing law that Montanans don't want and the country cannot afford," he said. "President Obama promised and he said this: 'If you like your health care plan, you can keep it.'"**

**"Thousands of Montanans already have discovered that that is far from the truth. They are getting their health care plans canceled entirely. ... We can no longer afford a U.S. Senate that stands with President Obama instead of the people of Montana."**

**Daines voted with fellow U.S. House Republicans in early October to block any budget bill unless it defunded or repealed the ACA, helping lead to a 16-day partial shutdown of the federal government. However, on Oct. 16, Daines joined 86 fellow Republicans and all House Democrats in voting for a short-term budget and deficit deal that ended the shutdown.**

### Brief biography

**Name:** Steve Daines

**Office sought:** U.S. Senate.

**Political party:** Republican.

**Office salary:** \$174,000.

**Age:** 51.

**Birth date and place:** Aug. 20, 1962, in Van Nuys, Calif. His parents moved to Montana when Daines was 2 years old.

**Home:** Bozeman.

**Occupation:** Member of U.S. House.

**Family:** Wife, Cindy; two sons and two daughters.

**Education:** Graduated from Bozeman High School, 1980, and received bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Montana State University, 1984.

**Past employment:** Executive for RightNow Technologies, 2000-2012; his last assignment there was general manager/vice president of RightNow's Asia-Pacific business; worked for his parents' construction business in Bozeman; 1997-2000; worked in management for Procter & Gamble in Iowa City, Iowa, and southeast Asia, 1984-97.

**Military: None.**

**Political experience: President of MSU College Republicans. Elected as Montana delegate committed to President Ronald Reagan, to the 1984 Republican National Convention in Dallas where he was one of the youngest delegates. Helped on several Montana Republican campaigns, Founded the website GiveltBack.com in April 2007 to urge Gov. Brian Schweitzer to return the \$1 billion state surplus to taxpayers. Was state chairman of Republican Mike Huckabee's presidential campaign in 2007-2008. Was Republican nominee for lieutenant governor in 2008 on ticket headed by Roy Brown, but lost in general election. Won Montana's lone U.S. House seat in 2012.**

**Campaign website: [www.stevedaines.com](http://www.stevedaines.com) .**