

## **Juneau latest Montana Dem to reject US Senate run**

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**Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau said Monday that she will not run for the U.S. Senate, joining other top Democrats who have declined a bid at the office being vacated by U.S. Sen. Max Baucus.**

**Juneau's announcement follows decisions by former Gov. Brian Schweitzer, state Insurance Commissioner Monica Lindeen and political veteran Stephanie Schriock, who all declined a run.**

**"It has been very humbling to be considered for such a leadership role representing our great state, however, my decision not to run for Congress is the right one for me at this time," Juneau said in a statement. "I love serving as the superintendent of public instruction for the state of Montana and am proud of the progress I have made over the last four years."**

**Baucus' retirement announcement created the first battle for an open Senate seat in the state since the 1970s, but at this point there are no announced front-runners. And Democrats appear to be running low on recognizable options.**

**Lt. Gov. John Walsh, a former Montana National Guard commander who took office this year with Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock, has not ruled out a run for the office. But he also said he only started considering the possibility after Schweitzer bowed out early last month. Some Democrats hope that Supreme Court Justice Mike Wheat will run for the office.**

**And former Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger has said he could run as a Democrat or Independent. Bohlinger brought longtime Republican credentials to Schweitzer's ticket, a move that left him on the outs with other Republicans.**

**On the Republican side, U.S. Rep. Steve Daines is considered a likely candidate. His entry into the race could force two declared candidates \_ former state Sen. Corey Stapleton of Billings and state Rep. Champ Edmunds of Missoula \_ to consider instead running for the House seat Daines would vacate. A long list of Republicans is already forming for a potential House run if Daines runs for the Senate.**

**Democrats are still looking for candidates for that race, too. Baucus' state director, John Lewis, stepped down from that post last week to consider a run.**

**Juneau, though, also said she is not interested in a run for the House. She left open the possibility of other offices in a message to supporters.**

**"My choice not to run this election cycle does not mean I am done with public service. Don't get rid of your Team Juneau T-shirt just yet. There is more to come," Juneau said.**

**Montana State University political scientist David Parker said Democrats are in**

**"bad shape" as top-tier candidates continue to reject a Senate run. He said it is almost certain that Daines will run for the Senate, since it's open and a much better job than being in the House.**

**He said Democrats may not like the idea of running in President Barack Obama's final midterm election, which can be a hard time for the incumbent president's party. And with 15 months to Election Day, he said time is running out to mount what promises to be an expensive U.S. Senate battle.**

**"Someone has to throw together an apparatus fast and money fast," Parker said. "The longer the Democrats wait to find a candidate, the more likely the Republicans are going to pick up that seat."**