

Wyoming State Senate

Senators serve four-year terms in the upper house of the Wyoming legislature, without term limits. Stipends are \$150 per day during the legislative session or for committee meetings—the stipend includes travel days. Per Diem expenses are allowed at maximum rate of \$109, less when the meeting is in their community. There are three different Senate Districts in Albany County; SD 9 encompasses some of the county around Laramie. SD 10 includes another portion of Laramie and the rest of the county except a portion of western Albany County including the town of Rock River, which is part of SD 11 that includes Carbon County. Candidates are listed below grouped by district. Voters may call the Albany County Clerk at 307 721-2541 to request their district number, or find it on their “elections” web site. The Senator for SD 10, Glen Moniz (R) is not up for reelection this year. Voters only choose from the candidates for the District in which they live; candidates must live in the District also. No Republican filed for SD 9.

What experience, qualifications and interests do you have that would encourage voters to select you for this office?

Chris Rothfuss (D-SD 9): I have served in the WY Senate since 2011, including the past six years as Senate Minority Leader. I am a member of the Education Committee, the Minerals Business and Economic Development Committee and numerous other select committees and task forces. Outside of the legislature, I am a Visiting Assistant Professor for the UW Honors College and an advanced technology consultant. I received a BA in international studies and an MS in chemical engineering from the University of Wyoming; and an MS in applied physics and a PhD in chemical engineering from the University of Washington.
[www.linkedin.com/in/rothfuss/]

Larry Hicks (R-SD 11): Education: B.S. University of Wyoming, M.S. Montana State University, Doctoral work @ UW. Twenty-eight years’ experience in natural resource management working with federal, state, and local governmental agencies. Landowners on the management and regulation of natural resource in Wyoming. Served on local and national boards related to water, agriculture, and natural resources. Eight years in the Wyoming Senate, including Chairmen of the Agriculture-Public Lands and Water Resources, and Select Natural Resource Funding. Also served on Judiciary, Corporation- Election-Political Subdivision Committee and Select Water. Represent Wyoming Legislature on national committees for Agriculture, Water Resource and Infrastructure, and Environment.

Lee Ann Stephenson (D-SD 11): I graduated from the University of Wyoming with a bachelor degree in Administration of Justice in 1989. While living in Cheyenne, I worked for the Department of Family Services investigating child abuse. I was promoted to the DFS state office to provide training, rules, procedures, office audits for the child protection division, including work on legislation for child protection and welfare reform. I next moved to the Wyoming Attorney General's Office, as a program manager for domestic violence in the Division of Victim Services, also working with the legislature on laws concerning domestic violence. Retired in 2007, moved to Riverside.

What do you advocate for solving the problem of substandard prison facilities, overcrowding and lack of rehabilitation programs in Wyoming?

Chris Rothfuss (D-SD 9): We don't need more prison space, we need fewer prisoners. As the expression goes, "there are two types of people in prison: those we're afraid of, and those we're mad at." Sensible criminal justice reform legislation should be our first priority to reduce the number of prisoners that we're just mad at. In particular, we should pursue alternatives to incarceration and enhanced substance abuse / treatment programs, decriminalize marijuana possession, restore funding for prison rehabilitation programs, and reduce criminal sentences for many non-violent crimes. I strongly oppose prison privatization and exporting prisoners to other states.

Larry Hicks (R-SD 11): Wyoming does not have substandard prison! While we are currently getting close to capacity we still have shuttered space at the medium correctional facility in Torrington. Also, the Wyoming legislature has taken a hard look the last three years at criminal justice reform and sentencing guidelines. In the last session initial efforts were passed by the legislature to begin some of those reforms. Your statement is wrong, in studies conducted by PEW charitable trust Wyoming ranked as one of the best in the nation for low recidivism rates. That is only possible because of the successful programs delivered by the Department of Corrections.

Lee Ann Stephenson (D-SD 11): I would like to work with the legislature on criminal justice reform. Substance abuse, addiction and mental health is often the base causes for incarceration and our growing prison population. Treatment options need to be made available at each stage of involvement in the criminal justice system. Diversion and drug courts that include close supervision by the court hold promise.

What revenue enhancing measures, including but not limited to a state income tax, will you support in the 2019 Legislative session?

Chris Rothfuss (D-SD 9): We will not diversify the WY economy away from our reliance on the mineral industry without concurrently diversifying our state tax structure. Earlier this year, I sponsored 'Tax Reform 2020' legislation to assemble a Select Committee that would look ahead to a series of hypothetical future Wyoming, each with diversified economies, and propose an appropriately balanced, fair and equitable tax system. I also joined Rep. Connolly in co-sponsoring 'Comprehensive tax reform' legislation that would modernize nearly all of our state and local taxes while adding very progressive personal and corporate income taxes. Everything should be on the table.

Larry Hicks (R-SD 11): I will not support a state income tax!!! Your assumption is that we have a revenue problem instead of a spending problem! The revenue generating measure I do support are regulatory reforms, low tax policies that attract private sector business investment, pursuing value added economic strategies to our existing industries that provide both jobs and opportunities for Wyoming people.

Lee Ann Stephenson (D-SD 11): No one wants to pay more taxes. First, I want to make sure we have all the tools in place to make sure we are correctly collecting all the taxes currently legislated. Next, I would like to look at all the tax exemptions currently granted and evaluate if they should still be supported. I would like to work with the legislators in creative solutions, particularly in school financing. I do not feel we can cut school financing any further. I would like to focus finances on our students and teachers over building new school buildings.