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A People of Vision

A Confederation of the Salish,
Pend d' Oreille
and Kootenai Tribes

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27 September 2024

Tim Sheehy: Side-stepping responsibility for his words

Montanans deserve a Senator that respects all of us, not one that uses damaging punchlines that divide us.

Senatorial candidate Tim Sheehy's disrespectful comments about Native people send a dangerous message — that he is okay using negative and tired stereotypes about Montana Indians in an attempt to get elected.

On August 29, the *Char-Koosta News* published a shocking investigative report revealing the remarks made by Mr. Sheehy at campaign events in Shelby and Hamilton last November. Sheehy, a recent Montana transplant, was recorded saying he ropes and brands with Crow members, and that it's "a great way to bond with all the Indians while they're drunk at 8:00 A.M." He further claimed to have had "Coors Light cans flying by your head" while riding in the Crow parade. The *Char-Koosta* also reported that in separate events in Superior and Helena, Sheehy said Crow tribal members called him 'white boy,' and threw Coors cans at his head at their rodeo. Mr. Sheehy shared these damaging stereotypes to his largely white audiences as representations of who we are as Indian people, apparently thinking he could elicit some laughs about his experiences in tribal communities. We aren't laughing.

CSKT's Tribal Council stands in solidarity with the Crow Tribe who were on the receiving end of Sheehy's remarks. Our elders have described his words as hateful and we listened. Sheehy said nothing of the many great achievements in our communities, of ever-increasing numbers of Indian people making their way through college to earn advanced degrees, to learn our languages and culture, and support our communities. Our community battles high suicide rates especially among our young people who should have their heritage honored, not disparaged by someone who wants to represent us all in the U.S. Senate.

Has Sheehy responded to any media questions regarding his words? He told one Fox news reporter that the audio clips were chopped up to make him sound evil. What he neglected to say was any sort of condemnation for those sentiments that came out of his mouth. Does he wish to be a friend to the Native populations he's asking to represent? Does this ex-Navy Seal realize the harm he has inflicted upon the many Indian veterans in our communities?

We have listened to the full audio of Sheehy's speeches that were recently released by the Char-Koosta News after their reporting was questioned, and Sheehy's hateful rhetoric is just as unacceptable as it was before.

Montana has come a long way since the Lewis and Clark party encountered the Native peoples. Sheehy shows us we still have a long journey ahead to heal these divisions. This Council looks forward to hearing what you say next about your words. Your silence so far has already told us volumes. And for those affected by these hateful, racist, and discriminatory words, we encourage you to step forward and make your vote count.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Dolson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Michael Dolson, Chairman
Tribal Council