

August 29th

Kevin Kuns for HD58
443 Golden Drive
Montrose, CO 81401

Candidate Kuns,

Restore the Balance is a 501(c)4 organization that educates the public about the danger political extremism poses to a healthy democracy. We urge citizens to learn about candidates running for public office and to support those who best put public interest first and work to bring citizens together.

To help citizens learn about candidates, we have created a questionnaire for you and your opponent running for Colorado State House, District 58,

We will share your responses, question by question, along with those of your opponent with our 2,300 members and supporters. We will also share them with various media outlets which we believe will help citizens in the district make the best decision about whom to support.

You will notice that we have also provided you with a set of seven political principles we believe should guide political conduct in Western Colorado. Please review them carefully. Some of our questions will be about these seven principles.

Please have your answers completed and sent to Restorethebalance@outlook.com by Tuesday, September 13 at 6PM. Please meet the deadline. We want voters to learn about your views. It would be a disservice for the public to see only your opponent's answers and not yours.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please send them to my attention at restorethebalance@outlook.com

Steven Mandell
Restore the Balance

Restore the Balance

Seven political principles to guide political conduct

We must do more than simply be against extremism. We must embrace an alternative set of political principles. We believe these seven principles should guide us.

- **We believe** that political parties should vigorously compete over values, principles, and ideas, but also find common ground to solve problems and pass needed legislation. Gridlock is not an option.
- **We believe** facts, supported by irrefutable evidence, are the basis for what to believe and how to act. No civilization can endure when its citizens believe there is no such thing as objective facts or truths.
- **We believe** that no one has a monopoly on the best public policy proposals. That means the ability to listen to and understand both sides of a debate are a prerequisite to finding practical solutions.
- **We believe** public interest must come before party interest. This means putting what is right ahead of loyalty to a party or an individual party leader.
- **We believe** that problem-solving is more important than fund-raising. Extremists line their pockets then use the funds to amplify division instead of producing solutions.
- **We believe** citizens should be free to run for office or volunteer to support the candidate of their choice without being threatened or harassed. Extremism uses intimidation because it cannot stand up to independent, open-minded thinking. Instead, it relies on the mentality of the mob.
- **We believe** it is time to expect citizens to embrace individual responsibility. Extremists always talk about “freedom,” but never mention the responsibility to the community that comes with it.

Colorado State House District 58
Kevin Kuns (D)

By now, you have read and considered the seven political principles we feel should guide political conduct in Western Colorado.

1. Do you believe that political extremism poses a threat specifically in Western Colorado? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why not.

Just two of the many examples of extremism I have witnessed. In 2020 voter intimidation happened in Montrose County, in front of the courthouse, multiple times until I had to call the county clerk's office, unacceptable in this country. Also, I have had to be at 3 special audits called by a small group of the local GOP, that still believes the "big lie" that Trump won in 2020 and that Tina Peters election was stolen in the 2022 Colorado Primary. All Audits only ONE vote changed. What should we expect when the elected president of the United States, a week after his inauguration, comes out saying that if he loses in 4 years the election is rigged and he keeps saying it day after day, this is the consequence of words and biased media.

2. Do you endorse each of the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Western Colorado? If you endorse them all, please explain how you will work to execute these principles. If there are one or more principles you do not endorse, please identify them, and explain why

I endorse all 7 principles to their core.

The last 5 years of divisive political partisanship tribalism is destroying this country, our democracy, and republic. There seems to be zero consequences any more for the action or the lack there of, from our elected officials. This country needs to get back to a political landscape where our elected officials build coalitions across the aisle, where they collaborate, get consensus, and come up with legislation that will be beneficial to all families whether they are left, right, or center.

'PEOPLE OVER PARTY' I will do the right think for my constituents every time. If that offends someone in my party so, be it, my integrity will not waiver. If that means I get primaried or fired, I'm in.

3. We believe that public interest must come before party loyalty. It is important our elected officials have the courage to stand up for what is right even when their party puts pressure on them to "go along."

- a. Is there any current policy of your party you disagree with? If yes, what are you doing to bring about change?

As much as I know the student debt relief helped cut our daughter's college loan debt in half and others, moving forward we need to be proactive not reactive. We need to hold accountable the predatory student loan companies that are handing out free money like candy. These lenders need to go back to the way it was when I was in college; loans are for tuition, books, and some housing relief that must be properly documented, not for vacations, car loans, and other frivolous spending. I would pursue a student loan regulatory oversight commission to oversee all college loan entities operating in Colorado.

- b. In the past, have you disagreed with a policy or piece of legislation your party has endorsed or supported? How did you stand up to get your point of view across? What actions did you take?

I strongly disagree with the DNC and the DCCC policies to leave rural America behind. My party has ceded its rural foothold in this country. Coming from a ranching & farming family heritage in Wyoming, it breaks my heart to watch the national party since 2009 switch its focus to only Urban America. I will fight tirelessly to let every ranching & farming family know that I respect, admire, and have empathy for what they do every day to feed Coloradans. I will help bring innovation and incentives to those families to strengthen their critical small business model.

4. Can you provide some examples of how you worked with members of the opposing party to craft legislation as an office holder or in developing your policies as a candidate? Please be specific.

In 2019 the city of Montrose had on the ballot public safety amendment 2A. The city needed a new police station, more officers, and updated equipment to ensure public safety as Montrose will continue to grow. The Central Committee of the Montrose Republican Party, including our HD 58 Rep. came out as firm NO on 2A. As the chair of The Montrose Dems, I collaborated with other republicans and the local GOP women's group to campaign for a YES vote. Behind the scenes I managed both a texting and phone banking campaign and 2A won by 67 votes. Next month a new "state of the art" police station will open that will provide critical public safety to a community that will continue to grow.

5. There is much concern about mass shootings taking place across the country. Congress has passed by bi-partisan legislation on the subject.
 - a. Do you support the legislation that was passed this year? Why or why not? **YES!**

I was excited to see the first substantial common-sense legislation to get passed in almost 30 years. Sadly, however it was a water downed version of what America needs. The power of the NRA and the Gun lobbyist is still influencing the decision makers in DC, until that changes will still see guns be more important than the lives of innocent folks in this country.

- b. What other changes you would like to see in gun legislation?

States are going to have to take the lead. We can't wait for another 10 years or more for the federal government.

A longer waiting period for all gun purchases so more thorough background checks can be performed.

A 21-age restriction on all guns except for hunting rifles and long barreled shotguns.

Strengthen the red-flag bill.

Close all loopholes in online and gun show sales

6. The legitimacy of 2020 election has become a point of contention between 2022 election candidates. Do you agree that the 2020 election results were legitimate? If you do not feel that President Joe Biden was fairly elected, why do you feel that way and what factual evidence supports your belief?

64 court cases were filed by Trump and supporters in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, finding no significant evidence of election fraud in any of those cases.

The main reason there was a point of contention and insane conspiracy theories was the sitting president of the United States was on every media outlet in the county chanting 'Stop the Steal', starting on election day 2020.

I have personally been involved with 2 audits on all ballots from Montrose County for the 2020 election, The first time Trump got 2 more votes Biden 1, both were human error in ballot curing, second time no change. These were not scheduled audits; these were asked for by the local GOP Tina Peter's faction.

7. **What are the three biggest issues facing citizens in Western Colorado? Briefly describe your proposed solutions to two of these three issues**

Water Number one, however, all the water in the world will not address these 2 critical issues/priorities

Public Education

Well, it has happened. Since 1992 when TABOR was voted into the Colorado constitution, funding for public education has been falling every year since. Colorado is now ranked 50th in average pay to public school teachers.

We just dropped below Mississippi and Oklahoma. We need a new tax policy in Colorado that is not irrational and illogical.

With my business background, I can appreciate a balanced budget, or "budget stabilization" (BS), as it is called in the Colorado Constitution. Unfortunately, the BS factor in Colorado has come at the expense of public education.

In 2021, \$561 million was taken from public education to balance the budget. In the last ten years, \$12 billion has been taken away from public education. This is unacceptable. As Coloradans, we deserve better for our children. I will work hard to serve on the Budget Committee, managing our \$36 billion annual budget while leaving public education out of future cuts.

Mental Health:

A recent report from a western slope county law enforcement stated that 40-50% of returning inmates are on or should be on anti-psychotic drugs. Instead of burdening law enforcement, we need mental health professionals to help these

folks get the services they need to be productive citizens. We need more funding for co-responder programs, where both law enforcement and mental health professionals show up at the scene of a situation involving domestic violence, suicide, or substance abuse. These situations can be defused by co-responding teamwork and getting that individual to a place (other than jail) where they can get the help they need.

The City of Montrose Police Department and the Gunnison County Sheriff's Office are already implementing effective corresponded programs.

Teen Suicide

On the western slope, we continue to see teen suicide rates climb every year. Montrose County only has four mental health professionals for all the children in the school district. Once again, unacceptable. Our children today are experiencing teen PTSD (anxiety and depression) brought on by social media bullying, two years of COVID, and no apparent end in sight to school shootings.

I will fight for more funding for organizations like Peer Kindness and CASA and find ways to expand collaboration between like-minded organizations focused on teen suicide and bullying.