

Biography

Senator Jon Tester is third-generation Montana farmer, a proud grandfather and a former school teacher who has deep roots in hard work, responsibility and accountability.

Jon and his wife Sharla still farm the same land near the town of Big Sandy, Mont. that was homesteaded by Jon's grandparents in 1912. Jon's parents believed public education and family agriculture are the cornerstones of democracy—and those values had a tremendous role in shaping Jon's leadership.

After earning a degree in music from the College of Great Falls, Jon took over the Tester farm in 1978. He also taught music at F.E. Miley Elementary and eventually was elected to the Big Sandy School Board. Fired up by the Montana Legislature's decision to deregulate Montana's power industry (resulting in higher power costs), Jon ran for and was elected to the Montana Senate in 1998.

In 2005, Jon's colleagues chose him to serve as Montana Senate President. The people of Montana elected Jon to the U.S. Senate in 2006 and again in 2012.

Jon believes in holding himself accountable to the highest standards possible, and he has improved transparency at all levels of government. In fact, Jon was the first senator to post his daily public schedule online.

In the U.S. Senate, Jon is an outspoken voice for rural America. He is an advocate for small businesses who has hosted numerous Small Business Opportunity Workshops across Montana to serve thousands of business owners and entrepreneurs. He is a champion of responsible energy development, sportsmen's issues, clean air and water, Indian nations, women's access to care, and quality health care for all of America's veterans—no matter where they live.

In the Senate, Jon serves on the Veterans' Affairs, Homeland Security, Indian Affairs, Banking and Appropriations Committees.

In addition to farming and teaching, Jon and Sharla for years ran a custom butcher shop. Jon still butchers his own meat and regularly hauls it to Washington with him in a carry-on suitcase.

That's because Jon Tester has deep roots in Montana. He always will.

