

Biography of

# Attorney General Austin Knudsen

## State of Montana

Before the United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Homeland Security

**“Havoc in the Heartland: How Secretary Mayorkas’ Failed Leadership Has Impacted the States”**

January 10, 2024

Austin Knudsen grew up just outside of Culbertson, in the northeast corner of Montana, where his family has farmed and ranched for five generations. After graduating from Montana State University, Austin earned his law degree from the University of Montana prior to opening a private practice where he handled a wide range of legal cases. During this time, he served four terms in the State House of Representatives, including two as Speaker of the House.

In 2018, Austin was elected County Attorney for Roosevelt County Attorney, three-quarters of which is within the boundaries of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. While serving as the county prosecutor, he encountered the illegal drug epidemic and its resulting violence first-hand and worked closely with law enforcement to combat crime in his community. After witnessing the effects of these harrowing realities on Montanans, Austin ran for office as Montana’s 25th Attorney General in 2020, winning with 59 percent of the vote in the general election.

During his time as Attorney General and as the head of the Montana Department of Justice, Austin has continued to prioritize combatting the drug epidemic and violent crime and increasing support for law enforcement. His administration has dedicated additional state resources to public safety including additional narcotics agents and human trafficking investigators and spearheaded a successful grant program that helped place 24 drug-detecting canines with law enforcement agencies across the state.

In the state legislature, Austin has successfully advocated for new laws that empower Montana law enforcement and prosecutors with tools to bring perpetrators of drug and human trafficking to justice, including mandatory minimum sentences for fentanyl trafficking and prison sentences of up to 100 years for dangerous distribution of drugs that results in a death.