

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 3, 2017

CONTACT: Eve Byron  
406/444-5357 or ebyron@mt.gov

## **Senator Jon Tester Honored by the American Library Association**

*~James Madison Award Given for Promoting Public Access and the Public's Right to Know~*

**(HELENA) ---**The Montana State Library is pleased to announce that Sen. Jon Tester is the winner of the national 2017 James Madison Award.

The American Library Association announced the award Friday. It will be presented by ALA President Sari Feldman on March 15 in a ceremony at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. and will be streamed live from the Knight TV Studio at [newseum.org/live](http://newseum.org/live)

The annual award is presented near the anniversary of President Madison's birth. It honors individuals or groups who have championed, protected and promoted public access to government information and the public's right to know. This year, the award will be presented during [Sunshine Week](#), the annual nationwide celebration of open access to public information and what it means for communities across the country.

Sen. Tester said he is honored to receive the award.

"Montanans know how important it is that we have a transparent and open government," Tester said. "I am honored to receive this award and will keep fighting for more sunshine so we can ensure taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly, and hold elected leaders accountable to make sure they are working for the people of Montana."

Montana State Librarian Jennie Stapp said she is thrilled about the senator's award, noting that he champions financial disclosure for elected officials, and co-sponsored the Campaign Disclosure Parity Act. He is a strong supporter of libraries, and shares their value for open access to information.

"At the Montana State Library, we pride ourselves in our efforts to conduct business in a manner that is open and transparent, and we encourage libraries throughout Montana to do the same. We believe that all Montanans, and Americans, expect and deserve to witness and access information about our government as an essential element of our democracy. Through his actions, Senator Tester has demonstrated that he shares this belief," Stapp said.

Ann Ewbank, assistant professor of School Library Media at Montana State University in Bozeman, nominated Tester for the award, noting that he has improved transparency at all levels of government.

"Senator Tester is richly deserving of this award," Ewbank said. "His commitment to government transparency and open information was apparent from the day he assumed office by being the first Senator to publish his daily schedule online. During the Senator's tenure, he has sponsored legislation that has solidified his pledge to make government practices fully accessible to Montanans and the American people."

A panel discussion on "Accessing Information in the Trump Administration" will follow the award ceremony. The panel will offer practical advice for journalists, advocates and others who rely on access to government data for informing the public and holding the government accountable.

**About the Montana State Library**

Through its statewide programs, the Montana State Library empowers Montanans; enhances learning in families and communities; builds 21st Century skills; and provides opportunities for civic participation. For more information, visit <http://msl.mt.gov>.

###