2014  Montana

$900 Taxpayer Surplus

$5 Billion in Bills

$310 Million Available to Pay Future Bills
Montana has $15.1 billion in assets, but most of these assets are not available to pay state bills.

The $6 billion of capital assets, such as roads, buildings, and land should not be sold to pay bills. The use of $3.6 billion of the assets is restricted by law or contract.

That leaves $5.4 billion of state's assets available to pay $5.1 billion of bills as they come due.

Montana's elected officials seem to promise only the amount of benefits they can afford to pay.

Each Taxpayer's Share of the Financial Surplus is $900

The state has accumulated bonds of $1.1 billion and other liabilities of $3 billion. The calculation of assets available to pay bills does not include capital assets, so $438 million of related debt is removed from the calculation of State bills.

Unfunded employees' retirement benefits represent 29% of state bills. These unfunded liabilities have accumulated because state employees have been promised $1 billion of pension benefits and $467 million of retirees' health care benefits. Unlike most states, Montana has the assets needed to pay these liabilities.

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A detailed study of Montana's actuaries' schedules found retirement benefits totaling $1.5 billion have been promised, but not funded. A review of the state's balance sheet determined only $319 million of these liabilities are reported. This means the state does not report $1.2 billion of retirement liabilities on its balance sheet.

Data is derived from the state of Montana's June 30, 2014 audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and retirement plans' actuarial reports.

Number of taxpayers is based on an estimation of the state's population with a federal tax liability.