

SOUTH DAKOTA

Voters in South Dakota will elect a Governor and Lt. Governor this cycle. All 70 South Dakota State House seats will be on the ballot as well as all 35 Senate seats. Republicans are expected to maintain control of both the Governor's Office and the legislature.

Governor

Republican Nominee

Governor Kristi L. Noem (R)

Governor Kristi Noem (R) is seeking her second term as head of state after serving in the South Dakota Legislature and the U.S. House of Representatives. Noem defeated Democratic candidate Billie Sutton in 2018 in the closest gubernatorial election South Dakota had seen since 1986. This victory continued the longest hold on a governorship by one party, as the GOP has controlled every gubernatorial election in South Dakota since 1978.

Noem touts her prioritization of agriculture, South Dakota's leading industry. In January 2021, she issued an executive order to merge two departments and create the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. While the South Dakota Farm Bureau praised this move, other groups focused on conservation opposed it.

Noem cites efforts she has made to close the state's broadband gap. She has tasked the Governor's Office of Economic Development with this mission. Since 2019, more than \$203 million has been invested into the state's broadband, giving more than 26,000 homes and businesses access to high-speed internet.

Noem launched a campaign in 2019 to bring awareness to the meth epidemic in South Dakota, stating in the campaign's public service announcement that the state's meth crisis was growing at an alarming rate. The campaign went viral on social media due to double meaning found in its slogan, "Meth. We're On It", but Governor Noem still declared it a success.

South Dakota's economy has done well coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, and personal income growth in the state was 19.4% over the past two years-the best in the nation.

Noem has achieved a rockstar-like-status within the Republican party, and the prospect of her as a potential candidate for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination has been floated. However, Noem has sought to downplay this.

Noem has received over \$10 million in campaign contributions as of July. She will debate her opponent, South Dakota House Minority Leader Jamie Smith, on September 30.

Trivia: Noem was raised on her family's ranch in rural Hamlin County, South Dakota.