POLICY UPDATE

November 6, 2026

South Dakota Farm Bureau®

South Dakota General Election Recap

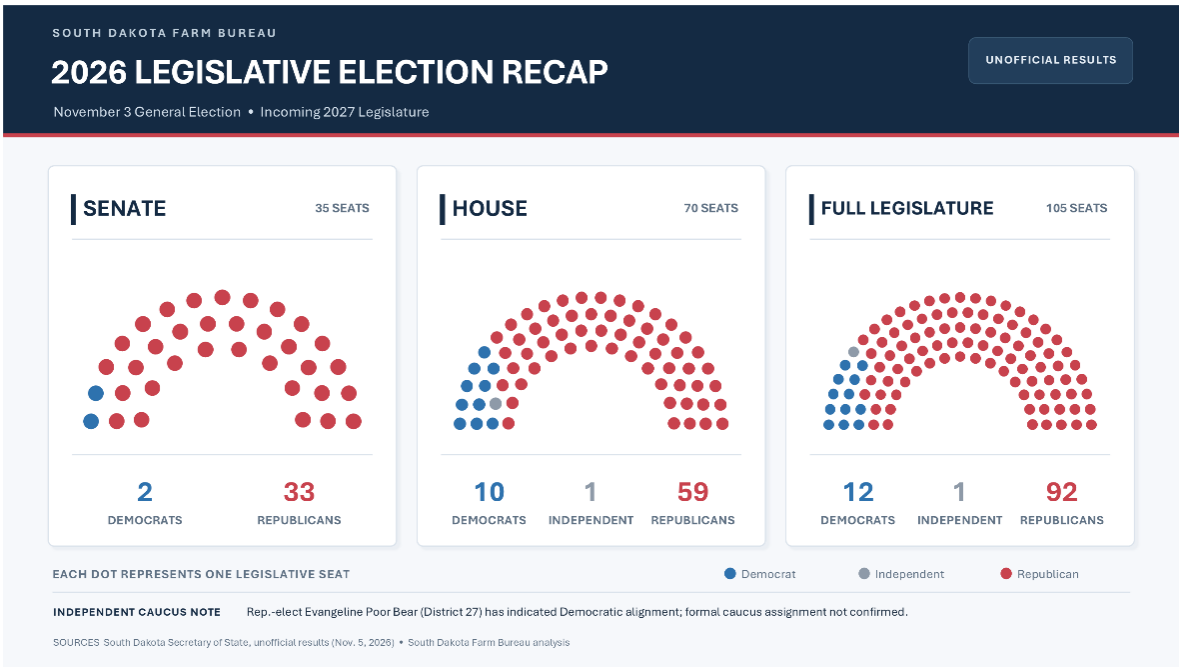
The 2026 General Election is over and South Dakota voters will receive a much-needed break from elections! In some cases, South Dakotans have voted in four elections in the last six months. When examining voter turnout numbers, it appears around only half of South Dakota registered voters participated in the election. Voting data from the Secretary of State's Office indicates this is the lowest voter turnout in a General Election on record. Voter turnout records only go back to 1964.

Federal and State Offices

Tuesday night's headlines showed a blue tsunami hitting the United States; however, only a slight ripple hit parts of South Dakota. South Dakota voters did not deviate from their support for Republicans in Congress and statewide offices. Both Mike Rounds (U.S. Senate) and Marty Jackley (U.S. House) were successful by large margins.

South Dakota's State Legislature will also continue to be dominated by Republicans. While there was a small blue ripple in several Sioux Falls legislative districts, Republicans will still maintain a super majority. House seats that flipped from Republican to Democrat in Sioux Falls include districts 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. An interesting insight into the election is the closeness of many races, particularly in urban areas. For example, there are several recounts that can still happen. For example, in the District 11 Senate race, Republican Senator Chris Karr who was the Pro Tem of the South Dakota Senate in 2025-26, is only ahead by 35 votes. There were also close races in Aberdeen and in Rapid City.

Overall, it is important to note that Republicans still hold a super majority in both chambers with Democrats only increasing seats in the State House of Representatives. Below are charts highlighting the expected numbers.



Ballot Issues

The South Dakota General Election also asked voters to cast their votes on four ballot measures. These measures included:

- Constitutional Amendment I: An Amendment to the South Dakota Constitution that repeals expanded Medicaid coverage if federal funding for the program drops below 90%. **FAILED: 44-56**
- Constitutional Amendment J: An Amendment to the South Dakota Constitution clarifying that an individual must be a citizen of the United States to be eligible to vote. **PASSED: 62-38**
- Constitutional Amendment K: An Amendment to the South Dakota Constitution establishing the trust for unclaimed property fund. **PASSED: 61-39**
- Constitutional Amendment L: An Amendment to the South Dakota Constitution requiring that a proposed constitutional amendment or revision receive an affirmative vote of sixty percent of the votes cast. **FAILED: 58-42**

In addition to statewide candidates, legislative and local candidates, and statewide ballot measures, the county sales tax question was before two counties. Below are the outcomes of those results.

- Brown County: **FAILED: 44-56**
- Codington County: **FAILED: 40-60**

The ability for counties to enact up to a 0.5% county sales tax was allowed with the passage of SB 96 during the 2026 legislative session. To date, only eight counties have chosen to pursue the counties sales tax. Those counties include Custer, Hughes, Fall River, Lawrence, Lincoln, Meade, Pennington and Yankton. Clay and Charles Mix Counties will have a special election on November 17, 2026, to decide if the sales tax will be approved.

In summary, the 2026 South Dakota General Election is behind us so it's time to prepare for the 2027 legislative session. It is worth noting that the upcoming legislature will be different than in years past. Many populist Republican incumbents were defeated in the primary election and more "traditional" Republicans won and will be in Pierre.

Most importantly, regardless of who controls the Legislature, Governor's Office, or even Congress, it is important to be involved in the policy process. Every week during session, SDFB will send out updates members are encouraged to reach out to your legislator on issues affecting agriculture. A legislator shared the following advice: "If you aren't at the table helping shape policy, you surrender your voice to those who are."

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