

# *JOURNAL OF THE SENATE*

## *ONE HUNDREDTH SESSION*

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FIRST DAY

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STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
Senate Chamber, Pierre  
Tuesday, January 14, 2025

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the fourteenth day of January, A.D., two thousand twenty five, at the hour of twelve o'clock meridian, being the date and hour fixed by the Constitution of the State of South Dakota, for the convening of the Legislature, the One-hundredth regular session of the Senate of the State of South Dakota was called to order by Lieutenant Governor Larry Rhoden in the Senate Chamber in the Capitol, in the City of Pierre, the seat of our government.

The following prayer was offered by the Chaplain, Reverend Craig Wexler, Pierre/Ft. Pierre Ministerial Association:

Almighty, and gracious God. You have always been a God of mission. From creation, through redemption of our fall, to justice, truth, and mercy, you have been working in and through the disciples that you have called into action. Some of us in this room today might have never thought of their purpose in this way, but I faithfully believe in your sovereign ways, O Lord. From the very first petition to run for office, to the very first signature of support, to the very first vote cast, to the very first time we have stepped into this building to do the work of the people of South Dakota— You have put these men and women to task to debate and create just, and righteous laws. It is my prayer that you would open the hearts and minds of these senators to know that this work is to be your work. I ask you to protect them from the influences of the world, from the temptations of greed and opinions, from the misguided thoughts that stand in contrast to your created will. Give us wisdom, listening ears, compassion, and a disposition of grace towards one another over these coming weeks. In your holiest name we pray. Amen!

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States was led by Senate page Marnie Baker.

1 Unless there is an objection, the Secretary of State's certification of members of the Senate  
2 for the One-hundredth Legislative Session will be placed in the record without reading.

3 Hearing no objections, the certification is submitted.

4 I, MONAE L. JOHNSON, Secretary of State of the state of South Dakota, do hereby certify that  
5 the following members, having been duly elected to the Senate at the general election held on  
6 November 5, 2024, and were certified on November 12, 2024. I do hereby certify that these are the  
7 members of the South Dakota Senate for the 2025 Legislative Session.

8 District No. 1: Brown, Day, Marshall, and Roberts Counties  
9 Michael Rohl, Aberdeen

10 District No. 2: Minnehaha County  
11 Steve Kolbeck, Brandon

12 District No. 3: Brown County  
13 Carl Perry, Aberdeen

14 District No. 4: Clark, Codington, Deuel, Grant, Hamlin, and Roberts Counties  
15 Stephanie Sauder, Bryant

16 District No. 5: Codington County  
17 Glen Vilhauer, Watertown

18 District No. 6: Lincoln County  
19 Ernie Otten, Tea

20 District No. 7: Brookings County  
21 Tim Reed, Brookings

22 District No. 8: Brookings, Kingsbury, Lake, and Miner Counties  
23 Casey Crabtree, Madison

24 District No. 9: Minnehaha County  
25 Joy Hohn, Hartford

26 District No. 10: Minnehaha County  
27 Liz Larson, Sioux Falls

28 District No. 11: Minnehaha County  
29 Chris Karr, Sioux Falls

30 District No. 12: Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties  
31 Arch Beal, Sioux Falls

32 District No. 13: Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties  
33 Sue Peterson, Sioux Falls

34 District No. 14: Minnehaha County  
35 Larry Zikmund, Sioux Falls

36 District No. 15: Minnehaha County  
37 Jamie Smith, Sioux Falls

38 District No. 16: Lincoln, Turner, and Union Counties  
39 Kevin Jensen, Canton

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1	District No. 17:	Clay and Union Counties
2		Sydney Davis, Burbank
3	District No. 18:	Clay and Yankton Counties
4		Lauren Nelson, Yankton
5	District No. 19:	Bon Homme, Hanson, Hutchinson, McCook, and Turner Counties
6		Kyle Schoenfish, Scotland
7	District No. 20:	Davison, Jerauld, Miner, and Sanborn Counties
8		Paul Miskimins, Mitchell
9	District No. 21:	Aurora, Charles Mix, Douglas, Gregory, and Tripp Counties
10		Mykala Voita, Bonesteel
11	District No. 22:	Beadle, Clark, and Spink Counties
12		David Wheeler, Huron
13	District No. 23:	Brown, Campbell, Edmunds, Faulk, Hand, McPherson, Potter, and
14		Walworth Counties
15		Mark Lapka, Leola
16	District No. 24:	Haakon, Hughes, Hyde, Stanley, and Sully Counties
17		Jim Mehlhaff, Pierre
18	District No. 25:	Minnehaha and Moody Counties
19		Tom Pischke, Dell Rapids
20	District No. 26:	Brule, Buffalo, Hughes, Hyde, Jones, Lyman, Mellette, and Todd
21		Counties
22		Tamara Grove, Lower Brule
23	District No. 27:	Bennett, Jackson, Oglala Lakota, and Pennington Counties
24		Red Dawn Foster, Pine Ridge
25	District No. 28:	Butte, Corson, Dewey, Harding, Perkins, and Ziebach Counties
26		Sam Marty, Prairie City
27	District No. 29:	Meade County
28		John Carley, Piedmont
29	District No. 30:	Custer, Fall River, and Pennington Counties
30		Amber Hulse, Hot Springs
31	District No. 31:	Lawrence County
32		Randy Deibert, Spearfish
33	District No. 32:	Pennington County
34		Helene Duhamel, Rapid City
35	District No. 33:	Meade and Pennington Counties
36		Curt Voight, Rapid City
37	District No. 34:	Pennington County
38		Taffy Howard, Rapid City
39	District No. 35:	Pennington County
40		Greg Blanc, Rapid City



1 Yeas: Beal, Blanc, Carley, Crabtree, Deibert, Duhamel, Foster, Grove, Hohn, Howard, Hulse,  
2 Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck, Lapka, Larson, Marty, Mehlhaff, Miskimins, Nelson, Otten, Perry,  
3 Peterson (Sue), Pischke, Reed, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish, Smith, Vilhauer, Voight, Voita, and  
4 Wheeler

5 Excused: Davis and Zikmund

6 So the motion having received an affirmative vote of a majority of the members-elect, the  
7 President declared the motion prevailed.

8 The oath of office was administered by the Honorable Steven R. Jensen, Chief Justice of the  
9 Supreme Court of the state of South Dakota, to President Pro Tempore Sen. Karr.

10 Which was subscribed to and placed on file in the office of the Secretary of State.

11 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that Peggy Laurenz be elected Secretary of the Senate for the  
12 One-hundredth Legislative Session.

13 The question being on Sen. Mehlhaff's motion that Peggy Laurenz be elected Secretary of  
14 the Senate for the One-hundredth Legislative Session.

15 And the roll being called:

16 Yeas 33, Nays 0, Excused 2, Absent 0

17 Yeas: Beal, Blanc, Carley, Crabtree, Deibert, Duhamel, Foster, Grove, Hohn, Howard, Hulse,  
18 Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck, Lapka, Larson, Marty, Mehlhaff, Miskimins, Nelson, Otten, Perry,  
19 Peterson (Sue), Pischke, Reed, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish, Smith, Vilhauer, Voight, Voita, and  
20 Wheeler

21 Excused: Davis and Zikmund

22 So the motion having received an affirmative vote of a majority of the members-elect, the  
23 President declared the motion prevailed.

24 The oath of office was administered by the Honorable Steven R. Jensen, Chief Justice of the  
25 Supreme Court of the state of South Dakota, to Secretary of the Senate Peggy Laurenz.

26 Which was subscribed to and placed on file in the office of the Secretary of State.

27 Unless there is an objection, the reading of the appointments of the employees of the Senate  
28 for the One-hundredth Legislative Session will be waived.

29 Hearing no objection, the reading was waived.

30 The President announced the appointment of the following named persons as employees of the  
31 Senate for the One-hundredth Legislative Session:

32 Assistant to the Secretary – Mike Oakland

33 Assistant to the Secretary – Cecelia Kotilnek

34 Chief Chaplain – Craig Wexler

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- 1 Sergeant at Arms – Dave Bonde
- 2 Assistant Sergeant at Arms – Gary Hoscheid
- 3 Assistant Sergeant at Arms – Mike Fugitt
- 4 Secretary to the Majority Party – Judy Page
- 5 Secretary to the Minority Party – Ayden Calvert
- 6 Committee Secretaries – Kaitlyn Baucom, Jean Denton, Mary Kirk, Doug Mortenson, Anne  
7 Reisch, Lexie Schumacher
- 8 Pages (1st term) – Marnie Baker, Aimslee Bunker, Hayley Cunningham, Harold Heinert, Chase  
9 Jennings, Whitney Martinsen, Gage Miotke, Samuel Valle
- 10 Pages (2nd term) – Ava Brown, Esther Burkhalter, Mia Coester, Jackson Faulkner, Danni  
11 Kotalik, Elizabeth Meyer, Brianna Sargent, Sakurako Tinant, Sheridan Voorhees, Raelie Williams
- 12 Pages (3rd term) – Sylvia Bohlander, Aubree Dowling, Chloe Heermann, Andrew Johnson,  
13 Emma Kilene, Bailey Link, Emily Nemeč, Audrey Patterson, Eliza Potter, Grant Roth, Ella Vandersnick
- 14 Pages (4th term) – Leah Aderhold, Patrick Barnett, Chloe Brummett, Kaydence De Haan, Grace  
15 Fulkerson, Maximillian Josko, Trenton Policky, AnneClaire Rubish, Ryler Stevicks, Brooke Wright
- 16 Pages (5th term) – James Burma, Carson Glodt, Mya Heintzman, Madisyn Raymond, Spencer  
17 Sargent, Willa Stern
- 18 Legislative Interns – Robert Arnold, Willow Borgers, Ceci Burroughs, Maddie Cross, Elizabeth  
19 Duffy, Peyton Forney, Samantha Hegge, Savannah Shrake, Levi Taglioli
- 20 The oath of office was administered by the Honorable Steven R. Jensen, Chief Justice of the  
21 Supreme Court of the State of South Dakota, to the following named employees:
- 22 Assistant to the Secretary – Mike Oakland
- 23 Assistant to the Secretary – Cecelia Kotilnek
- 24 Chief Chaplain – Craig Wexler
- 25 Sergeant at Arms – Dave Bonde
- 26 Assistant Sergeant at Arms – Gary Hoscheid
- 27 Secretary to the Majority Party – Judy Page
- 28 Secretary to the Minority Party – Ayden Calvert
- 29 Committee Secretaries – Mary Kirk, Doug Mortenson, Anne Reisch, Lexie Schumacher
- 30 Pages – Marnie Baker, Aimslee Bunker, Hayley Cunningham, Harold Heinert, Chase Jennings,  
31 Whitney Martinsen, Gage Miotke, Samuel Valle
- 32 Which were subscribed to and placed on file in the office of the Secretary of State.

1 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that the permanent joint rules of the Ninety-ninth Legislative Session be  
2 adopted as the temporary joint rules for the One-hundredth Legislative Session.

3 The question being on Sen. Mehlhaff's motion that the permanent joint rules of the Ninety-  
4 ninth Legislative Session be adopted as the temporary joint rules for the One-hundredth Legislative  
5 Session.

6 And the roll being called:

7 Yeas 33, Nays 0, Excused 2, Absent 0

8 Yeas: Beal, Blanc, Carley, Crabtree, Deibert, Duhamel, Foster, Grove, Hohn, Howard, Hulse,  
9 Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck, Lapka, Larson, Marty, Mehlhaff, Miskimins, Nelson, Otten, Perry,  
10 Peterson (Sue), Pischke, Reed, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish, Smith, Vilhauer, Voight, Voita, and  
11 Wheeler

12 Excused: Davis and Zikmund

13 So the motion having received an affirmative vote of a majority of the members-elect, the  
14 President declared the motion prevailed.

15 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that the permanent rules of the Senate for the Ninety-ninth Legislative  
16 Session be adopted as the temporary Senate rules for the One-hundredth Legislative Session.

17 The question being on Sen. Mehlhaff's motion that the permanent rules of the Senate for the  
18 Ninety-ninth Legislative Session be adopted as the temporary Senate rules for the One-hundredth  
19 Legislative Session.

20 And the roll being called:

21 Yeas 32, Nays 1, Excused 2, Absent 0

22 Yeas: Beal, Blanc, Carley, Crabtree, Deibert, Duhamel, Foster, Grove, Hohn, Howard, Hulse,  
23 Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck, Lapka, Larson, Marty, Mehlhaff, Miskimins, Nelson, Otten, Perry,  
24 Peterson (Sue), Reed, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish, Smith, Vilhauer, Voight, Voita, and Wheeler

25 Nays: Pischke

26 Excused: Davis and Zikmund

27 So the motion having received an affirmative vote of a majority of the members-elect, the  
28 President declared the motion prevailed.

29 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that a committee of five on the part of the Senate be appointed to meet  
30 with a committee of five on the part of the House for the purpose of arranging a memorial recognition  
31 of deceased former members of the Senate and House.

32 Which motion prevailed and the President announced as such committee Sens. Perry (Chair),  
33 Karr, Mehlhaff, Smith, and Zikmund.

34 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that when we adjourn today, we adjourn to convene at 9:30 a.m. on  
35 Wednesday, January 15, the 2<sup>nd</sup> legislative day.

36 Which motion prevailed.





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**Retirement Laws (5)**

**\*\*Deibert, \*Vilhauer,** Foster, Kolbeck, Smith

**State Affairs (9)**

**\*\*Mehlhaff, \*Perry,** Beal, Deibert, Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Larson, Peterson (Sue), Pischke

**Taxation (7)**

**\*\*Kolbeck, \*Hohn,** Blanc, Crabtree, Davis, Grove, Hulse

**Transportation (7)**

**\*\*Deibert, \*Beal,** Hohn, Larson, Sauder, Schoenfish, Wheeler

There being no objection, the Senate reverted to Order of Business No. 4 - Communications and Petitions.

**COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS**

MR. PRESIDENT:

The Committee on Legislative Procedure respectfully reports that the Governor has been notified that the Legislature is duly organized and ready to meet in Joint Session to receive any communications she may desire to transmit and that the Governor is ready to appear before the Joint Session to deliver her message.

Also, MR. PRESIDENT:

The Committee on Legislative Procedure respectfully reports that arrangements have been made for a Joint Session of the Senate and the House of Representatives to receive the message of the Governor. And:

That the Senate and the House will convene in Joint Session in the Chamber of the House of Representatives at 1:00 p.m., January 14, 2025.

That the President of the Senate preside over the Joint Session and that the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives act as clerks of the Joint Session.

That the Justices of the Supreme Court and the elective and appointed officials of the state government be invited to attend the Joint Session.

That when the message of the Governor has been received, the Joint Session be dissolved.

That the message of the Governor be printed in the Senate Journal.

Also, MR. PRESIDENT:

The Committee on Legislative Procedure respectfully reports that arrangements have been made for a Joint Session of the Senate and the House of Representatives to receive a message of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. And:

That the Senate and the House convene in Joint Session in the Chamber of the House of Representatives at 10:00 a.m., January 15, 2025.

1 That the President of the Senate preside over the Joint Session and that the Secretary of the  
2 Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives act as clerks of the Joint Session.

3 That the Justices of the Supreme Court, the Governor and elective and appointed officials of  
4 the state government be invited to attend the Joint Session.

5 That when the message of the Chief Justice has been received, the Joint Session be dissolved.

6 That the message of the Chief Justice be printed in the Senate Journal.

7 Also, MR. PRESIDENT:

8 The Committee on Legislative Procedure respectfully reports that arrangements have been  
9 made for a Joint Session of the Senate and the House of Representatives to receive a message of  
10 the State of the Tribes from a Tribal Chairman. And:

11 That the Senate and the House convene in Joint Session in the Chamber of the House of  
12 Representatives at 1:00 p.m., January 15, 2025.

13 That the President of the Senate preside over the Joint Session and that the Secretary of the  
14 Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives act as clerks of the Joint Session.

15 That the Justices of the Supreme Court, the Governor and elective and appointed officials of  
16 the state government be invited to attend the Joint Session.

17 That when the message of the Tribal Chairman has been received, the Joint Session be  
18 dissolved.

19 That the message of the Tribal Chairman be printed in the Senate Journal.

## 20 **FIRST READING OF SENATE BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS**

21 **SB 14:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise and repeal provisions related to agricultural  
22 production facilities and to provide a penalty therefor.

23 Introduced by: **Senator** Crabtree

24 **SB 15:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to expand the policy advisory committee for animal  
25 damage control.

26 Introduced by: **Senator** Crabtree

27 **SB 41:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify the minimum age requirements for a hunting  
28 license.

29 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at the request  
30 of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks

31 **SJR 501:** A JOINT RESOLUTION, Providing legislative approval for a future use water permit  
32 application by the Western Dakota Regional Water System.

33 Introduced by: **Senator** Duhamel

34 Were read the first time and referred to the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

1 **SB 25:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify the Plumbing Commission's rulemaking  
2 authority to set standards for plumbing and plumbing systems.

3 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
4 State Plumbing Commission

5 **SB 30:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to remove outdated provisions within the insurance  
6 code.

7 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
8 Department of Labor and Regulation

9 **SB 66:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise certain provisions related to capital  
10 improvements of state buildings.

11 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
12 Bureau of Human Resources and Administration

13 Were read the first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Energy.

14 **SB 3:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to increase driver license fees.

15 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department  
16 of Public Safety

17 **SB 27:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions relating to licensing fees for  
18 cosmetology, esthetics, and nail technology.

19 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
20 Cosmetology Commission

21 **SB 55:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to to revise property tax levies for school districts and  
22 to revise the state aid to general and special education formulas.

23 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the  
24 Bureau of Finance and Management

25 Were read the first time and referred to the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

26 **SB 35:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify substances listed on the controlled substances  
27 schedule and to declare an emergency.

28 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Health and Human Services at the request of  
29 the Department of Health

30 **SB 36:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to repeal the oath requirement for an application for a  
31 lodging establishment, campground, food service establishment, or mobile food service  
32 establishment license.

33 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Health and Human Services at the request of  
34 the Department of Health

35 Were read the first time and referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services.

1 **SB 5:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to permit a sheriff to charge a fee for satisfied or  
 2 unsatisfied service of process.

3 Introduced by: **Senator** Duhamel

4 **SB 7:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to prohibit the adoption or implementation of certain  
 5 policies related to immigration enforcement.

6 Introduced by: **Senator** Crabtree

7 **SB 8:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to establish certain criminal offenses for boat operators  
 8 and to provide penalties therefor.

9 Introduced by: **Senator** Crabtree

10 **SB 18:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to require age verification by websites containing  
 11 material that is harmful to minors, and to provide a penalty therefor.

12 Introduced by: **Senators** Kolbeck, Duhamel, Foster, Karr, Larson, Mehlhaff, and Wheeler and  
 13 **Representatives** Weisgram, Arlint, Duffy, Emery, Soye, and Venhuizen at the request of the Study  
 14 Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Regulation of Internet Access by Minors

15 **SB 58:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions related to human trafficking, to  
 16 prohibit the obstruction of human trafficking enforcement, and to provide a penalty therefor.

17 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Judiciary at the request of the Attorney General

18 **SB 59:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions relating to the delivery, possession  
 19 with intent to deliver, and possession of unauthorized articles in a state correctional facility, and to  
 20 provide a penalty therefor.

21 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Judiciary at the request of the Attorney General

22 Were read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

23 **SB 13:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify the effective date of a measure initiated or  
 24 referred within a political subdivision.

25 Introduced by: **Senator** Deibert

26 **SB 20:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to require a voter use a pen when marking a ballot.

27 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Local Government at the request of the  
 28 Secretary of State

29 **SB 21:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to prevent a member of a governing body from assisting  
 30 in the canvass of the votes for an office for which the member is a candidate.

31 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Local Government at the request of the  
 32 Secretary of State

33 Were read the first time and referred to the Committee on Local Government.

34 **SB 9:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make public the calendars and appointment logs of  
 35 certain public officials.

36 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

1 **SB 10:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to shorten the time before records of a Governor or a  
2 lieutenant governor are opened to the public.

3 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

4 **SB 11:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to limit the amount of money that a political committee  
5 may accept from an inactive candidate campaign committee.

6 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

7 **SB 12:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to limit the amount of money that may be loaned to a  
8 candidate or political committee.

9 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

10 **SB 17:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify when a political committee must file certain  
11 campaign finance disclosure statements.

12 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

13 **SB 22:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify provisions pertaining to the submission of a  
14 nominating petition.

15 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Local Government at the request of the  
16 Secretary of State

17 **SB 23:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to require the secretary of state to publish the numbers  
18 pertaining to the collection of signatures on a nominating petition.

19 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Local Government at the request of the  
20 Secretary of State

21 **SB 53:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make modifications to the implementation, review,  
22 and oversight of the internal control system of the state.

23 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the  
24 Bureau of Finance and Management

25 **SB 61:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify the authority of the Board of Internal Controls.

26 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Judiciary at the request of the Attorney General

27 **SJR 502:** A JOINT RESOLUTION, Applying to the United States Congress for a convention of  
28 the states to propose amendments to the United States Constitution regarding the imposition of  
29 fiscal restraints on the federal government, further limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal  
30 government, and limiting the terms of office for members of Congress and other federal officials.

31 Introduced by: **Senator** Mehlhaff

32 Were read the first time and referred to the Committee on State Affairs.

33 **SB 1:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to update references to certain federal motor carrier  
34 regulations.

35 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department  
36 of Public Safety

1 **SB 2:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to increase civil penalties for commercial driver violations.

2 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department  
3 of Public Safety

4 **SB 38:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify requirements for a vehicle approaching a  
5 vehicle that is stopped or occupying the shoulder of the highway with warning lights flashing.

6 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department  
7 of Transportation

8 **SB 39:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise the description of highways included in the  
9 state trunk highway system.

10 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department  
11 of Transportation

12 **SB 40:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise Department of Transportation regulatory  
13 authority regarding aeronautics.

14 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department  
15 of Transportation

16 Were read the first time and referred to the Committee on Transportation.

17 **SB 4:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to authorize the sale of real property in Spink County by  
18 the Department of Human Services and to declare an emergency.

19 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on State Affairs at the request of the Department  
20 of Human Services

21 **SB 6:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make an appropriation to support capital and  
22 infrastructure projects necessitated by the expansion of Ellsworth Air Force Base and to declare an  
23 emergency.

24 Introduced by: **Senator** Duhamel

25 **SB 16:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to set aside certain contractor's excise tax collections  
26 relating to the Ellsworth Air Force Base, to create a fund for the collections, and to provide an  
27 appropriation therefor.

28 Introduced by: **Senator** Howard

29 **SB 19:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to repeal the expiration date for the 911 emergency  
30 surcharge increase.

31 Introduced by: **Senator** Mehlhaff

32 **SB 24:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions relating to the promulgation of  
33 rules to set licensing and inspection fees for plumbers and related professions.

34 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
35 State Plumbing Commission

1 **SB 26:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to reduce employer contribution rates and increase the  
2 administrative fee rate for reemployment assistance.

3 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
4 Department of Labor and Regulation

5 **SB 28:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions relating to licensing fees and license  
6 renewal dates for the practice of barbering and to declare an emergency.

7 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
8 Board of Barber Examiners

9 **SB 29:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to amend provisions regarding the Division of Insurance  
10 and the former Division of Securities operating fund.

11 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
12 Department of Labor and Regulation

13 **SB 31:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise amounts for inspection fees for electrical  
14 installations.

15 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
16 State Electrical Commission

17 **SB 32:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise amounts for licensing fees for the practice of  
18 accountancy.

19 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
20 South Dakota Board of Accountancy

21 **SB 33:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make appropriations for water and environmental  
22 purposes and to declare an emergency.

23 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the  
24 Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources

25 **SB 34:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to update the roles of the Department of Agriculture  
26 and Natural Resources and the Department of Public Safety regarding burning and burn permit  
27 issuing authority.

28 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at the request  
29 of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources

30 **SB 37:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise and repeal provisions related to the 911  
31 emergency surcharge and the 911 Coordination Board.

32 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Judiciary at the request of the Department of  
33 Public Safety

34 **SB 42:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify the wholesale purchase price of tobacco  
35 products.

36 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Taxation at the request of the Department of  
37 Revenue

38 **SB 43:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to establish a timeframe within which a remote seller  
39 and marketplace provider must register and remit sales tax.

40 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Taxation at the request of the Department of  
41 Revenue

1 **SB 44:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify tax refunds for elderly persons and persons  
2 with a disability, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency.

3 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the  
4 Department of Revenue

5 **SB 45:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to impose a motor vehicle technology fee to support  
6 and enhance technology used to administer motor vehicle services, and to make an appropriation  
7 therefor.

8 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department  
9 of Revenue

10 **SB 46:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to specify the funds into which certain boat fees are  
11 deposited.

12 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department  
13 of Revenue

14 **SB 47:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify eligibility for licensure as a video lottery  
15 operator.

16 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
17 Department of Revenue

18 **SB 48:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify provisions pertaining to the registration of  
19 voters.

20 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on State Affairs at the request of the Secretary of  
21 State

22 **SB 49:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to prohibit the exercise of the right of eminent domain  
23 for the construction of certain facilities.

24 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

25 **SB 50:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to prohibit the use of drones for purposes of assessing  
26 real property for taxation, and to provide a penalty therefor.

27 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

28 **SB 51:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to require the display and curricular inclusion of the  
29 Ten Commandments and other documents.

30 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

31 **SB 52:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to authorize the expansion of the South Dakota State  
32 Veterans Cemetery, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency.

33 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs at the request of  
34 the Department of Veterans Affairs

35 **SB 54:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise the distribution of revenue from the cigarette  
36 tax.

37 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the  
38 Bureau of Finance and Management



1 **SB 56:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to authorize the payment of lease rental obligations to  
2 the South Dakota Building Authority by the Bureau of Finance and Management, to make an  
3 appropriation therefore, and to declare an emergency.

4 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the  
5 Bureau of Finance and Management

6 **SB 57:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise presumptive probation.

7 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Judiciary at the request of the Attorney General

8 **SB 60:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to to expand the access and investigatory authority of  
9 the state auditor.

10 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Judiciary at the request of the Attorney General

11 **SB 62:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to establish mandatory reporting requirements related  
12 to crimes, improper governmental conduct, and conflicts of interest, and to provide a penalty  
13 therefor.

14 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Judiciary at the request of the Attorney General

15 **SB 63:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to establish protections for state employees who report  
16 crimes, misconduct, or conflicts of interest.

17 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Judiciary at the request of the Attorney General

18 **SB 64:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions related to the establishment of an  
19 initial parole date.

20 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Judiciary at the request of the Department of  
21 Corrections

22 **SB 65:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to provide for the sale of certain real estate located in  
23 Pennington County and to provide for the deposit of the proceeds.

24 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the  
25 Bureau of Human Resources and Administration

26 **SB 67:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to establish the state office of apprenticeship within the  
27 Department of Labor and Regulation.

28 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the  
29 Department of Labor and Regulation

30 **SB 68:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to require an individual be a citizen of the United States  
31 before being eligible to vote and to provide a penalty therefor.

32 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

33 **SB 69:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions related to trusts.

34 Introduced by: **Senator** Crabtree

35 Were read the first time.

1 Sen. Duhamel moved that the Senate do now adjourn, which motion prevailed and at  
2 12:46 p.m. the Senate adjourned.

3 Peggy Laurenz, Secretary

4 **JOINT SESSION**

5 The Senate convened with the House of Representatives in the House Chamber for the  
6 purpose of receiving a message from the Governor, Kristi Noem. The President of the Senate, Larry  
7 Rhoden, presided.

8 The following prayer was delivered by Rev. Craig Wexler, Pierre/Fort Pierre Ministerial  
9 Association, Pierre, South Dakota:

10 *Romans 8:1-9 (ESV)*

11 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the*  
12 *Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what*  
13 *the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*  
14 *and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might*  
15 *be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live*  
16 *according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the*  
17 *Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set*  
18 *the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it*  
19 *does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You,*  
20 *however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who*  
21 *does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*

22 Almighty and everlasting God, nothing shall separate us from the love of you, through Jesus  
23 Christ our Lord. You have given us your law as a gift. You have sovereignly allowed us government  
24 to care for, and protect the people. However, we live in a time when it seems every understanding  
25 of this has been turned upside down. For many, laws have become overpowering and a detrimental  
26 burden. For many, government seems to have become an opportunity to rule and direct, rather  
27 than care and protect. Forgive us when and where we have erred.

28 Renew a right Spirit within me, O Lord—within us—each and every one of these elected  
29 officials. Remind them of why they are here—remind them of the calling you have placed in their  
30 hearts to `serve`—not to `be served`—even if there is denial that you are the active agent in their  
31 lives. We truly are a government “of the people, by the people, for the people”...may this certainly  
32 remain true for us here in this great state of South Dakota, but may it be so, through your wisdom  
33 and guidance. Your law was given to us to protect us from others, and to protect us from ourselves.  
34 As these weeks commence, help us to reflect on the laws we have created in the past, help us to be  
35 just and fair in the laws we are tasked to create for the future, and forgive us when we have created  
36 some that have served the flesh, rather than upheld your Spirit. Forgive us, renew us, lead us, grant  
37 us your wisdom, and guide us through the darkness all around us, with your light that shines forth  
38 through the mercy granted unto us through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. In His Holy name we  
39 pray. Amen!

40 The Secretary of the Senate, Peggy Laurenz, called the roll of the Senate and the following  
41 members were present:

42 Beal, Blanc, Carley, Crabtree, Deibert, Duhamel, Foster, Grove, Hohn, Howard, Hulse,  
43 Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck, Lapka, Larson, Marty, Mehlhaff, Miskimins, Nelson, Otten (Ernie),  
44 Perry, Peterson (Sue), Pischke, Reed, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish, Smith, Vilhauer, Voight, Voita,  
45 Wheeler, and Zikmund

1 The Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, Patricia Miller, called the roll of the House and  
2 the following members were present:

3 Andera, Arlint, Auch, Aylward, Bahmuller, Bathke, Baxter, DeGroot, Derby, Duffy, Emery,  
4 Fitzgerald, Garcia, Goodwin, Gosch, Greenfield, Halverson, Healy, Heermann, Heinemann, Hughes,  
5 Hunt, Ismay, Jamison, Jensen (Phil), Jordan, Jorgenson, Kassin, Kayser, Kull, Ladner, Lems,  
6 Manhart, Massie, May, Moore, Mortenson, Muckey, Mulally, Mulder, Nolz, Novstrup, Odenbach,  
7 Overweg, Peterson (Drew), Pourier, Randolph, Reder, Rehfeldt, Reimer, Reisch, Rice, Roby, Roe,  
8 Schaeftbauer, Schwans, Shorma, Sjaarda, Soye, Stevens, Uhre-Balk, Van Diepen, Vasgaard,  
9 Venhuizen, Walburg, Weisgram, Wittman, and Speaker Hansen

10 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that a committee of five on the part of the Senate and a committee of  
11 five on the part of the House be appointed to escort the Honorable Kristi Noem, Governor of the  
12 State of South Dakota, to the rostrum.

13 Which motion prevailed and the President announced as such committee Sens. Karr, Mehlhaff,  
14 Perry, Larson, and Smith on the part of the Senate, and Reps. Lems, Odenbach, Overweg, Healy,  
15 and Emery on the part of the House.

16 The Lieutenant Governor, Larry Rhoden, introduced the Honorable Kristi Noem, who delivered  
17 the State of the State Address.

18 The Sergeant at Arms announced the arrival of the Honorable Kristi Noem, who was escorted  
19 to the rostrum.

## 20 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

### 21 Introduction

22 Lieutenant Governor Rhoden, Mr. Speaker, Supreme Court justices, Constitutional officers,  
23 members of the House and Senate, and my fellow South Dakotans:

24 We stand here at the start of the 100th session of the South Dakota State Legislature. Over  
25 those 100 sessions, we have made history here in South Dakota. The things that took place in this  
26 building have changed our state forever. Today, I want to share a story that inspires me – a story  
27 about a South Dakota trailblazer, Gladys Pyle.

28 Gladys was born in Huron in 1890. Her mother, Mamie, secured the right to vote for South  
29 Dakota women. Her father, John, was the fourth Attorney General of South Dakota. But Gladys  
30 would outshine them both. She became the first female Secretary of State in South Dakota in 1927  
31 – then the first Republican woman elected to the U.S. Senate in 1938. But did you know that Gladys  
32 Pyle was almost the first female governor of South Dakota? In fact, she won the primary with 28%  
33 of the vote. But she didn't clear the 35% threshold, so the vote went to the GOP convention, where  
34 a different candidate was selected after 12 ballots. 88 years later, I became the first woman to hold  
35 this office. Gladys' story reminds me that sometimes, the obstacles that we face prepare us for  
36 greatness.

37 America has been through a difficult time. Now, we stand on the cusp of a great American  
38 comeback. In just 6 days, a leader will take office in Washington who will truly make our nation  
39 great again. South Dakota has had its own share of difficulty in these past years. But those  
40 challenges have been opportunities that have put us in position to succeed – and to thrive. Today,  
41 South Dakotans have prosperity and hope! Our people enjoy a greater level of Freedom than  
42 anywhere else. We have made our state safer, stronger, and freer for our kids and our grandkids.  
43 We have built a stronger South Dakota than ever before.

44 And we are just getting started. When I was elected Governor, I knew that our best days were  
45 still ahead of us, and I still believe it today. Because we focused on Freedom and not government  
46 control, we have unleashed something in our people. We have fostered that American sense of hard  
47 work, grit, and determination – a spirit that is disappearing in far too many other places.

1 South Dakota has created our very best days. More importantly, we've created the opportunity  
2 for even better days ahead. And that is what I would like to talk to all of you about today. You might  
3 have learned by now that I love "Top 10" lists – and you might even be tired of hearing them! But  
4 I think they're more interesting. So today, I'm going to share with you the top-10 reasons why  
5 South Dakota will continue to be an example to the nation.

6 **The number 10 reason why South Dakota will continue to be an example to the**  
7 **nation: Education.** One of the very best ways that we can set our kids up for success is by giving  
8 them the best education possible. We raised the bar for the education that our kids will get in the  
9 classroom. We supported their teachers to attract and retain the very best. We provided additional  
10 opportunities for parents to help their kids succeed.

11 We know that reading is the foundation of educational success. We implemented the Science  
12 of Reading across South Dakota so that our kids can get excellent phonics-based reading education.  
13 We revamped our social studies standards so that our kids will get the very best civics and history  
14 education in America. We launched the South Dakota Sturdy initiative to teach our students grit and  
15 mental resilience – I believe this will become yet another example for the nation. And we eliminated  
16 hateful teachings like Critical Race Theory that only seek to divide our kids.

17 We recognized that, after parents, teachers are the most impactful people on our children's  
18 education. So we made sure that they will be paid what they deserve. And we launched a fantastic  
19 teacher apprenticeship program. Now, teacher aides can become fully certified teachers while still  
20 earning a paycheck to put food on the table for their families.

21 But education isn't one-size-fits-all. That's why we're expanding options for parents. We  
22 improved alternative education in South Dakota to give flexibility to parents who choose that path  
23 for their kids. We expanded the Partners in Education Tax Credit Scholarship. And this year, we will  
24 be working with Majority Leaders Odenbach and Mehlhaff to institute Education Savings Accounts  
25 for South Dakota kids.

26 These Education Savings Accounts will support all South Dakota students. We will provide  
27 families greater opportunities to choose the best fit for their child's education. And we won't impact  
28 the funding that goes to our great public schools. These ESAs will be a testament to our ability to  
29 meet the unique needs of every South Dakota family that participates.

30 **The number 9 reason why South Dakota will continue to be an example to the nation:**  
31 **Healthcare.** Our state has been a leader in healthcare policy. We took a unique approach to the  
32 COVID pandemic. We cared for our people while still respecting their Freedoms. We created a first-  
33 in-the-nation initiative where telehealth services are available in the back of ambulances across  
34 South Dakota. We guaranteed that South Dakotans will have price transparency from health  
35 insurance companies. And we created regional mental health facilities across the state to get South  
36 Dakotans care closer to home.

37 We are reforming healthcare to give South Dakotans more opportunities to work. The Freedom  
38 Works Here campaign recruited nurses to South Dakota because this was our number one workforce  
39 need. Ladies and gentlemen, the results have been incredible. Over the last two years, the number  
40 of nurses working in South Dakota has increased by at least 1,100 across all nursing classifications.  
41 These professionals are filling critical roles in hospitals and clinics across the state, ensuring that  
42 every community has access to care.

43 And we are advancing career opportunities for South Dakotans who use our state's Medicaid  
44 program. South Dakota already has work requirements in place for many of our social welfare  
45 programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Food Stamps. For folks in these  
46 programs, the Department of Social Services provides SD Career Link to help them find a career  
47 that they'll love. We assist with education and training, interview skills, and finding career  
48 opportunities.

1 This past November, South Dakota voters passed Amendment F, which allows for future work  
2 requirements under Medicaid Expansion. SD Career Link will be available for these folks, as well.  
3 We will connect them with the training, guidance, and support they need to find a stable and  
4 meaningful career. This will make South Dakota even stronger and more prosperous for the next  
5 generation.

6 **The number 8 reason why South Dakota will continue to be an example to the nation:**  
7 **Agriculture.** Ag is more than just our largest industry – it’s our way of life. When Ag has a good  
8 year, our communities grow and thrive. When the opposite is true, our entire state faces challenges.  
9 I am proud that we’ve preserved our ag operations, opened up new markets for our commodities,  
10 and strengthened biofuels production. And we protected South Dakota ag from interference by evil  
11 foreign governments like Communist China. We’ve put South Dakota ag in position to be stronger  
12 than ever before.

13 We need a robust, diverse food supply, and our family farms are one of the most crucial parts  
14 of that. Family farms and ranches have a special connection to the land that has been in their family  
15 for generations. Today, I am announcing a partnership to keep farmers farming in South Dakota.  
16 We have reached an agreement between the State of South Dakota, the South Dakota Ag  
17 Foundation, and First Dakota National Bank to transfer the Keep Farmers Farming program from  
18 First Dakota to the South Dakota Ag Foundation. The partnership works with farm and ranch families  
19 on estate and transition planning. It helps our producers pass along their land and legacy to their  
20 kids and grandkids. It’s about transferring not just assets – but experience, work ethic, morals, and  
21 history to the next generation. My Governor’s Office of Economic Development will provide the South  
22 Dakota Ag Foundation with a one-year \$200,000 grant to administer, market, and grow the  
23 program. And there will be no loss of service for existing program participants.

24 We have representatives here today from the South Dakota Ag Foundation – would you please  
25 give them a round of applause for the work they will do to Keep Farmers Farming in South Dakota?

26 **The number 7 reason why South Dakota will continue to be an example to the nation**  
27 **is our Outdoor Opportunities.** South Dakota has some of the most beautiful landscapes in the  
28 world. From the rolling prairies to the rugged Black Hills, our landscapes are a testament to God’s  
29 creation. We’ve worked to conserve and enhance these treasures.

30 We’re breaking records for outdoor opportunities – including our pheasant hunting. Our Nest  
31 Predator Bounty Program has been incredibly successful. We’ve gotten our kids outdoors, passed  
32 on our outdoor heritage, and increased our bird population. And our Second Century Habitat  
33 Initiative took marginal acres and created more havens for wildlife. It had the added benefit of  
34 opening up more acres for public hunting. In 2024, South Dakota had a record 1.6 million acres of  
35 private land open for public hunting. We’ve had the most pheasant hunters in over 10 years.  
36 Hundreds of thousands of residents and nonresidents enjoyed our pheasant season. We had nearly  
37 8 million visitors to our state parks. We’re expanding the Sioux Falls Outdoor Campus. We completed  
38 the fantastic expansion of Palisades State Park. And we broke the record for highest attendance at  
39 my favorite event of the year, the Governor’s Buffalo Roundup at Custer State Park.

40 The new Shooting Sports Complex near Rapid City will open later this year. It will be one of  
41 the very best firearms range complexes in the nation. It will offer a wide variety of options for  
42 firearms enthusiasts of all levels, from hunters and recreational shooters to law enforcement  
43 training.

44 We are conserving South Dakota’s natural beauty and creating more opportunities to share it  
45 in the future. I am so glad that my grandbabies will be able to enjoy the same beautiful great  
46 outdoors that I enjoyed growing up.

47 Speaking of babies, that brings me to **the number 6 reason why South Dakota will**  
48 **continue to be an example to the nation: Babies.** South Dakota still has the highest birth rate  
49 of any state in America. Our people are happy and have hope for our future. Every baby brings  
50 boundless potential.

1 We are caring for South Dakota moms and babies both before birth and after. Last year, we  
2 talked about the first thousand days of a child's life – from conception to their 2nd birthday. These  
3 days are the most crucial to a child's development. In the last year, our Bright Start program  
4 supported more than 600 mothers and more than 500 infants and toddlers. One mom started Bright  
5 Start as a teen – now she's a registered nurse in an emergency room. She wrote to the Department  
6 of Health, "I talk about you and the Bright Start program all the time to new moms. I tell them the  
7 big impact you made on my life. I am forever grateful."

8 This past November, the people of South Dakota endorsed the way that we are taking care of  
9 moms and babies. They voted to support life. And the Department of Health will continue  
10 emphasizing care for our next generation. If you have any questions about pregnancy, parenting,  
11 financial assistance, or adoption – Life.SD.gov is a one-stop shop that will get you the help that you  
12 need. Our commitment to moms, babies, and families ensures that our state's future is as bright as  
13 the hope in a newborn's eyes.

14 And we also need to keep our families safe. So, **the number 5 reason why South Dakota**  
15 **will continue to be an example to the nation is Safety.** I am incredibly proud of the work that  
16 we have done over the past six years to make South Dakota safer. We supported and respected law  
17 enforcement officers when much of the rest of the nation was attacking them. We led the way in  
18 cybersecurity by banning TikTok for state government and enhancing the mission of Dakota State  
19 University. And we led the nation by prioritizing our border security when the Biden Administration  
20 failed to keep America safe.

21 We made South Dakota the first state in America to offer a state-led tribal-specific law  
22 enforcement training. For the first time, future tribal law enforcement officers were trained right  
23 here in Pierre. They didn't have to leave their families for three months to go to New Mexico. This  
24 year, we will make this training a part of our ongoing budget so that we can train tribal law  
25 enforcement officers into the future.

26 Today, we have here with us Corson County Sheriff Alan Dale and Ziebach County Sheriff Gary  
27 Cudmore. Would you two gentlemen please stand? These two sheriffs represent counties that are  
28 on South Dakota tribal lands. They helped me come up with the idea that became the tribal law  
29 enforcement training academy. Would you please join me in thanking them for their work to keep  
30 South Dakota safe?

31 We have also kept South Dakota safe through unprecedented natural disasters. My first year  
32 in office, South Dakota saw a historic bomb cyclone and other flooding events that made 63 of our  
33 66 counties federal disaster areas. We've had tornados hit small towns and even our largest city.  
34 We've had wildfires threaten the Black Hills. We've seen a derecho, blizzards, and even an  
35 unprecedented 1,000-year flood. Every time, South Dakotans worked together to get through the  
36 very worst situations.

37 As an example, over the past several years, we have improved our infrastructure. We built  
38 levees stronger and higher. We invested in reinforcing and rebuilding dams to hold back these  
39 powerful rivers to the greatest extent possible. And we didn't see any major dam breaks unlike in a  
40 neighboring state. But we know that planning can only go so far in preparing for a 1,000-year flood.

41 During the 1,000-year flood, several agencies stepped up to respond: at my direction, the  
42 South Dakota Department of Public Safety sent Highway Patrol and an Incident Management  
43 Assistance Team; the Department of Game, Fish & Parks deployed conservation officers to conduct  
44 boat rescues; the Department of Transportation handled traffic control, detours, and helped  
45 construct a levee across the Interstate in just hours in accordance with the city's flood plan; and  
46 the State Geologist with the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources worked with local first  
47 responders to adjust to the river projections and water flows. After the flooding, the Department of  
48 Social Services helped arrange counseling; the Department of Health provided free tetanus shots;  
49 even the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications set up a network in the Emergency  
50 Operations Center to support response efforts. I want to thank all of the emergency responders,  
51 volunteers, local governments, and state employees whose quick and professional actions prevented  
52 further damage. And I want to honor a few individuals whose actions went above and beyond the  
53 call of duty.

1 Tim Cowman, our South Dakota State Geologist with the Department of Agriculture and Natural  
2 Resources, saved lives with his water flow projections. Without Tim, we would not have had as  
3 accurate of projections on the rising rivers. The data that we were getting from the Federal River  
4 Forecast Center was too unreliable.

5 Boat rescue crews with Sioux Falls Swift Water Rescue and conservation officers with the  
6 Department of Game, Fish and Parks acted heroically to save lives. I want to highlight one story in  
7 particular. In rural Union County, one individual was trapped on a highway overpass. They were  
8 stuck without food, water, or a way out in extreme heat. Our emergency management officials were  
9 trying to coordinate a helicopter rescue – but that would have been dangerous because of fast water  
10 flows, debris, and other hazards. Suddenly, a local official walked into the Emergency Operations  
11 Center and exclaimed, “Well scratch that plan, some crazy Game, Fish & Parks guys launched their  
12 boat in a highway ditch and were able to figure out a way to get to him.”

13 They risked their own safety and eliminated the need for a more dangerous aerial rescue. They  
14 used a drone to scout the possible route, boated across cornfields with unknown hazards, walked  
15 across a narrow berm to the overpass, and rescued that South Dakotan. I appreciate their example,  
16 leadership, and heroism.

17 The Sioux Falls Swift Water Rescue came at our request because of their special skillset. When  
18 the first member of their team arrived on site, he single-handedly assisted several people before  
19 the rest of the team arrived. In fact, when the rest of the team got there, he was taken for medical  
20 attention due to heat exhaustion. The other team members worked with Game, Fish & Parks through  
21 the night to make sure everyone was rescued. After everyone was out, they slept a few hours in the  
22 grass until morning.

23 These individuals all went above and beyond throughout this crisis. They truly saved lives, and  
24 we cannot thank them enough for what they accomplished. But here’s what I can do: I would like  
25 to give the Governor’s Award for Heroism to Tim Cowman; those “crazy Game, Fish & Parks guys:”  
26 Sam Schelhass, Jeremy Roe, Christopher Schiera, and Taylor Etherington; and the six members of  
27 the Sioux Falls Swift Water Rescue Team: Mike Murphy, Mike Olson, Adam Frick, Chris Lohan, Jack  
28 Claussen, and Rob Flannery. Please give them a round of applause.

29 Thank you.

30 **The number 4 reason why South Dakota will continue to be an example to the nation:**  
31 **our Economy.** We’ve built the strongest economy of any state in America. Our 1.9% unemployment  
32 rate is the lowest in the nation today, and it has averaged the lowest since I took office. We even  
33 broke the record for lowest unemployment rate of any state in American history. Our incomes have  
34 consistently grown faster than any other state, and we have led the nation in new housing  
35 development. Our labor force participation is far above the national average. We broke ground on a  
36 nearly one billion dollar food processing facility with CJ Schwan’s. Last year, we won the Governor’s  
37 Cup as the top state in America for economic development projects -- and we’re poised to do well  
38 in this metric again this year. And our GDP growth has consistently been among the fastest in the  
39 nation.

40 Rising incomes mean that – during a historic inflation crisis – South Dakota families have been  
41 better able to keep food on the table. New jobs mean our kids don’t need to leave the state to  
42 pursue the career of their dreams. New homes mean that we are able to welcome more Freedom-  
43 loving Americans to join us.

44 Our biggest challenge has been workforce. When I started the Freedom Works Here campaign  
45 in June 2023, we had more than 25,000 open jobs in South Dakota. Today, that number is down by  
46 more than 7,000. And we’re filling some of the most important job needs like nurses, electricians,  
47 plumbers, and accountants.

48 Our apprenticeship programs have completely changed how South Dakotans get educated for  
49 the future. Our teacher apprenticeship pathway is on track to turn out about 150 new certified  
50 teachers within just three years. We have more than 1,500 apprentices in professions like  
51 electricians, plumbers, K-12 teachers, linemen, carpenters, sheet metal workers, fire medics, HVAC

1 installers, ag mechanics, welders, and more. Businesses across the state have welcomed  
2 apprenticeship opportunities with open arms.

3 Speaking of arms, South Dakota’s firearms manufacturing industry is thriving. We recently  
4 welcomed Paradigm Carbon to Yankton – they manufacture carbon wrapped gun stocks and barrels.  
5 Silencer Central in Sioux Falls is one of the fastest growing companies in America. Cole TAC in Rapid  
6 City joined us from out of state. Our firearms industry supports 1,600 jobs in South Dakota and  
7 generates more than \$400 million in annual economic activity. And we are aggressively recruiting  
8 other arms and ammo manufacturers to bring their businesses to the most 2nd Amendment-friendly  
9 state in America.

10 And to show the diversity of our state’s economy, I want to focus on another growing business.  
11 I want to welcome leaders from a business that is revolutionizing our largest industry: agriculture.  
12 Our economy cannot thrive unless ag thrives. Bel Brands is doubling their production capacity. They  
13 will create additional markets for our ag producers and help ensure that South Dakota’s best  
14 economic days are still ahead of us. Will you all please join me in welcoming the leadership of Bel  
15 Brands?

16 **The number 3 reason why South Dakota will continue to be an example to the nation:**  
17 **our Values.** South Dakota embodies the values that make America so special. People visit here and  
18 think, “This is the way America is supposed to be.”

19 I recently had the opportunity to meet with Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz, South Dakota’s only  
20 rabbi. He talked to me about how traditional morals are eroding across the country. Antisemitic  
21 hatred continues to rise in far too many places. South Dakota addressed that last year. We defined  
22 antisemitic discrimination so that we can identify when it occurs and stop it. The Rabbi and I  
23 discussed how the nation needs to turn to South Dakota’s example to face this moral decline. We  
24 embody the values and morals that built this nation.

25 Make no mistake – America was built on Judeo-Christian values. This might be a controversial  
26 statement for some, but it wasn’t for our Founders. Take it from the father of our nation: George  
27 Washington.

28 It might surprise you to know that George Washington did not sign the Declaration of  
29 Independence. He was with his troops in the field while the Continental Congress met. John Hancock  
30 mailed him a copy. On July 9th, five days after it was signed, General Washington wrote General  
31 Orders to his men to gather and listen as the Declaration was read aloud. These were Washington’s  
32 words:

33 “The blessing and protection of Heaven are at all times necessary, but especially so in times  
34 of public distress and danger. The General hopes and trusts that every officer and man will endeavor  
35 to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of his  
36 country.”

37 Even in that historic moment, General Washington encouraged his troops to first act as  
38 becomes a Christian – then defend our rights and liberties.

39 Four-and-a-half years ago, we had the tremendous honor of celebrating America’s birthday  
40 right here in South Dakota. We had this celebration with fireworks at Mount Rushmore, which honors  
41 President Washington and three other monumental American leaders. We welcomed President  
42 Trump to South Dakota to celebrate with us. We are the first nation built on the principle that our  
43 rights come from God, not government – that our people have the unalienable rights to life, liberty,  
44 and the pursuit of happiness. In the coming days, we will once again move forward with planning  
45 to return fireworks to Mount Rushmore for America’s birthday. Get ready America – our nation’s  
46 250th birthday is coming up in 2026. And South Dakota is going to throw the biggest birthday party  
47 ever at Mount Rushmore.

48 **The number 2 reason why South Dakota will continue to be an example to the nation:**  
49 **our Freedoms.** South Dakota has been a shining “City Upon a Hill” over the past few years. We  
50 have proven that Freedom Works Here. Here’s what I love most about that fact: we don’t have to  
51 just talk about Freedom. We can look from state to state and compare results.



1 When COVID came in 2020, South Dakota was the ONLY state that never forced a business or  
2 church to close. I never mandated anything. I trusted our people to use personal responsibility to  
3 make the best decisions for themselves and their loved-ones. We defended the First Amendment,  
4 including Freedom of Assembly, in ways that no other state did.

5 Later that year, when other states attacked and defunded law enforcement, South Dakota  
6 invited officers to move to a state that would respect them. And several times over the past few  
7 years, when other states accepted piles of federal money with strings attached to leftist policies,  
8 South Dakota said “no thanks.”

9 We’ve defended our Second Amendment more than any other state. The first bill that I signed  
10 as governor was Constitutional Carry. We blocked local governments from using emergencies to  
11 seize people’s firearms. We strengthened Stand Your Ground laws. I signed an Executive Order to  
12 protect our God-given right to keep and bear arms from being infringed upon by financial  
13 institutions. And we made South Dakota the first state in America where it will not cost you a penny  
14 to exercise your Second Amendment rights.

15 Thomas Jefferson once wrote a letter to James Madison where he said, “I prefer dangerous  
16 Freedom over peaceful slavery.” The media thought that the decisions we were making in South  
17 Dakota were “dangerous,” but those decisions were right. In the future, when tough decisions are  
18 in front of our state, we will have an easier time making the right choice. We have the courage of  
19 our convictions.

20 But Freedom is only as good as the people exercising those Freedoms – which brings me to  
21 **the number 1 reason why South Dakota will continue to be an example to the nation: our**  
22 **People.**

23 You’ve heard me recite our state motto many times: “Under God, the People Rule.” I hope that  
24 you will remind each other of that motto every day. Everything that we do is for the PEOPLE. The  
25 everyday South Dakotan does not have a lobbyist in this Capitol. It is the charge of each of the 105  
26 legislators in this chamber to be that voice. Listen to your constituents, do the work to learn the  
27 facts, and then make the best decisions you can as their elected leaders.

28 I do want to thank one particular group of fantastic South Dakotans: my family. Several of  
29 them are in the back of the room here today, and I’d like to say a few words honoring them.

30 My mom Corinne is here. Mom, you spoke life into me and made me realize how special I am  
31 to God. You taught me that I could do anything, and your love showed me that I was already  
32 enough.

33 My son Booker couldn’t be here today – he’s across the world telling people about Jesus.  
34 Booker, I am so proud of your example of Christ’s love. God has you right where he wants you, and  
35 we sure enjoy when we can spend time with you. I’m so proud of you.

36 My daughter Kennedy and her husband Tanner couldn’t be here because they will be having  
37 my next grandbaby any day now! Kenners and Tanner, I am amazed at what you have already  
38 accomplished at such a young age. I will be praying for you as you start parenthood. I know that  
39 you will do a great job, just like you always do!

40 My oldest, Cassidy, is here with her husband Kyle, and they brought their oldest, Miss Addie.  
41 I am her best friend! They have two other beautiful babies too: Branch and Lenni Lou. For a minute  
42 there, they had three kids under three! And they still are achieving fantastic things in their careers.  
43 Kass and Kyle, you have such a bright light and are such an example to others. You are raising  
44 amazing kiddos. It’s a wonderful reflection of your love. Thanks for letting me babysit so often –  
45 there’s nothing I love more!

46 Last but certainly not least, I want to thank my husband Bryon for being the best partner  
47 through this crazy journey together. When he married me, he thought he was marrying a farmer!  
48 Bryon, you have always been there with advice and support. Thank you for all the adventures, the  
49 love, and the years that we are enjoying together.

1 I love each and every one of you. Would everyone please join me in honoring my family?

2 **Conclusion**

3 So that's it: my Top 10 Reasons why South Dakota will continue to be an example to the  
4 nation. But before I go, I do have something else to talk to you about.

5 You probably know that President-elect Trump has called on me to serve, if confirmed, as the  
6 next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. It's a tremendous honor and a great  
7 responsibility. The mission is to keep the American people safe from threats to the Homeland.

8 The situation at our Southern Border is nothing short of an invasion. Over the last four years,  
9 America's border security has been purposely weakened and ignored. Our laws have not been  
10 enforced. And this has led to millions and millions of law enforcement encounters with illegal aliens.  
11 That doesn't include millions of "gotaways" that we're aware of. It doesn't include the ridiculous  
12 number who got in through the "CBP One" phone app. And it doesn't include the many thousands  
13 who caught a free plane ride over our borders courtesy of the federal government. Too many of  
14 these individuals disappear while they wait for an asylum hearing or don't ever show up for that  
15 hearing.

16 As you know, I've taken a stand against this invasion. I have deployed South Dakota National  
17 Guard to our southern border eight times. That includes five state deployments to support Texas'  
18 work to stop the flow of illegal aliens. I went to the border myself several times. I witnessed illegal  
19 immigrants infiltrate our nation. And I saw our National Guard troops enforcing our laws and building  
20 the wall.

21 Ladies and gentlemen, leadership has consequences. We see the consequences of  
22 Washington's inaction here in South Dakota. The cartels and their affiliates have invaded our poorest  
23 communities. Other states around the country see it too. Increased crime. Increased drugs.  
24 Increased overdose deaths, violence, rape, human trafficking, and murder. Even known terrorists  
25 have crossed the border amongst the illegals – and they could be anywhere. This invasion is an  
26 existential threat to America. It threatens our national security and our economy.

27 The basic question is this: What kind of country do we want to leave to our families? I want to  
28 leave them a state and a nation that is even safer, stronger, and freer than the one that I grew up  
29 in.

30 That leaves me in a position where I may say "farewell" to all of you in the very near future.  
31 But before I do, I want to say a few words about the man sitting beside me. I started this speech –  
32 and every speech that I have given to this joint legislative session – with the words, "Lieutenant  
33 Governor Rhoden." Almost seven years ago, people recommended I pick a Sioux Falls businessman  
34 to be my running mate. But I didn't. I asked a West River rancher to join me on the ride of a lifetime.  
35 Larry Rhoden stepped up to the plate. He has been more than just a partner in this role – he has  
36 been an adviser, a source of wisdom, and (this is sometimes more important) a source of laughter.

37 I chose Larry to run with me because I knew that a day like today might come. I knew that it  
38 was always possible that I might not be your governor anymore – whether that circumstance be the  
39 result of tragedy or opportunity. So I wanted a partner who would lead this state just as I would. I  
40 wanted someone who realized that our rights come from God, not from government – that it is our  
41 duty to protect the rights and Freedoms of our people. I wanted a friend – and Larry has been a  
42 friend since I was first elected to the state legislature almost 20 years ago.

43 Larry, you're next at bat, so here's a baseball bat that will help you do the job. Maybe it'll hold  
44 up better than those gavels that you love to shatter at this podium. Senators and leaders, you will  
45 find smaller replicas of this bat at your desks. And house members, you'll find baseballs. These are  
46 a reminder that all of you are at bat now.

47 Ladies and gentlemen, I trust you to knock it out of the park – because the people have  
48 bestowed that trust in you. "Under God, the People Rule." Our people are worth serving. They are  
49 the very best in America. They have been such a blessing and a source of joy to me and my family.  
50 So although I am saying "farewell," please know that I'm not going far. South Dakota has always

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1 been my home – and it is still my home. I will continue to focus on making our people safer, stronger,  
2 and freer.

3 To the people of South Dakota: thank you for the incredible honor of serving you as state  
4 representative, as congresswoman, and now as governor. Thank you for trusting me and for working  
5 with me to accomplish incredible things.

6 But that’s enough of that. We must keep looking ahead. Our state and our nation have even  
7 better days in front of us, God willing. The state of our state is strong. With your leadership, it will  
8 continue to grow stronger.

9 Thank you all. God bless you. And may God continue to bless the great state of South Dakota.

10 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that the Joint Session do now dissolve.

11 Which motion prevailed.

