

JOURNAL OF THE SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIRST SESSION

FIRST DAY

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
Senate Chamber, Pierre
Tuesday, January 13, 2026

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the thirteenth day of January, A.D., two thousand twenty six, 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 Hundred First regular session of the Senate of the State of South Dakota was called to order by Lieutenant Governor Tonnis H. Venhuizen in the Senate Chamber in the Capitol, in the City of Pierre, the seat of government.

The following prayer was offered by the Chaplain, Rev. Jake Krahn, New Life Assembly of God, Pierre and Gettysburg:

Heavenly Father,

Today we call upon Your name, because You are the God of heaven and earth. We ask from this opening moment of this year's legislative session all the way until its conclusion, that Your divine presence would rest upon every legislator in every aspect of their work.

In James 1:5 we are told that if any of us lacks wisdom, we can ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to us.

As each of these legislators prepares to step into this new session, we know that there will be many challenges in the days ahead, many votes to be held, and many moments where we need that wisdom. Today, God, I ask that You would provide that wisdom in abundance to each one. May this wisdom transcend that of this world and be a wisdom that comes down from above.

Today God, may each one here consecrate themselves to do Your work and to steward well the sacred trust they have been given. In all of it, may the dignity and value of all be honored, and may You be glorified.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States was led by Senate page Finn Bartlett.

1 There being no objection, the Secretary of State's certification of members of the Senate for
2 the One Hundred First Legislative Session was placed in the record without reading.

3 I, MONAE L. JOHNSON, Secretary of State of the state of South Dakota, do hereby certify that
4 the following members, having been duly elected to the Senate at the general election held on
5 November 5, 2024, and were certified on November 12, 2024. The appointed member to District 22
6 of the Senate, Brandon Wipf, was certified by me on August 21, 2025. I do hereby certify that these
7 are the members of the South Dakota Senate for the 2026 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

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		Brandon Wipf, 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

1 District No. 35: Pennington County
 2 Greg Blanc, Rapid City

3 IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the state
 4 of South Dakota, this 5th day of January 2026.

5 Monae L. Johnson
 6 Secretary of State

7 When the roll was called, all members were present except Sens. Beal and Marty who were
 8 excused.

9 **MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS**

10 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that the Senate do now proceed with the organization of the Senate.

11 Which motion prevailed.

12 Sen. Chris Karr was elected President Pro Tempore of the Senate for the 2025-2026 legislative
 13 term on January 14, 2025.

14 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that Peggy Laurenz be elected Secretary of the Senate for the One
 15 Hundred First Legislative Session.

16 The question being on Sen. Mehlhaff's motion that Peggy Laurenz be elected Secretary of the
 17 Senate for the One Hundred First Legislative Session.

18 And the roll being called:

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

20 Yeas: Blanc, Carley, Crabtree, Davis, Deibert, Duhamel, Foster, Grove, Hohn, Howard, Hulse,
 21 Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck (Steve), Lapka, Larson, Mehlhaff, Miskimins, Nelson, Otten, Perry,
 22 Peterson (Sue), Pischke, Reed, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish, Smith, Vilhauer, Voight, Voita, Wipf, and
 23 Zikmund

24 Excused: Beal and Marty

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

27 The oath of office was administered by the Honorable Robert Gusinsky, Justice of the Supreme
 28 Court of the state of South Dakota, to Secretary of the Senate Peggy Laurenz.

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

30 There being no objection, the reading of the appointments of the employees of the Senate for
 31 the One Hundred First Legislative Session was waived.

1 Pages – Finn Bartlett, Halle Braun, Siene Geigle, Gage Miotke, Maddie Osthus,
2 Brynn Samson, Brianna Sargent, Mallory Wells

3 Legislative Interns – Phoebe Allbright, Nate Arens, Ellie Becker, Jayden Bender,
4 Regan Bollweg, Piper Connelly, Cormac Duffy, Samantha Hegge, Claire Koenecke,
5 Isabelle May, Zoe Meinke, Freddy Vizcaya-Garcia, Jamie Ward

6 Which were subscribed to and placed on file in the office of the Secretary of State.

7 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that the permanent rules of the Senate for the One-hundredth Legislative
8 Session be adopted as the temporary Senate rules for the One Hundred First Legislative Session.

9 The question being on Sen. Mehlhaff's motion that the permanent rules of the Senate for the
10 One-hundredth Legislative Session be adopted as the temporary Senate rules for the One Hundred
11 First Legislative Session.

12 And the roll being called:

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

14 Yeas: Blanc, Carley, Crabtree, Davis, Deibert, Duhamel, Foster, Grove, Hohn, Howard, Hulse,
15 Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck (Steve), Lapka, Larson, Mehlhaff, Miskimins, Nelson, Otten, Perry,
16 Peterson (Sue), Pischke, Reed, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish, Smith, Vilhauer, Voight, Voita, Wipf, and
17 Zikmund

18 Excused: Beal and Marty

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

21 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that the permanent joint rules of the One-hundredth Legislative Session
22 be adopted as the temporary joint rules for the One Hundred First Legislative Session.

23 The question being on Sen. Mehlhaff's motion that the permanent joint rules of the One-
24 hundredth Legislative Session be adopted as the temporary joint rules for the One Hundred First
25 Legislative Session.

26 And the roll being called:

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

28 Yeas: Blanc, Carley, Crabtree, Davis, Deibert, Duhamel, Foster, Grove, Hohn, Howard, Hulse,
29 Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck (Steve), Lapka, Larson, Mehlhaff, Miskimins, Nelson, Otten, Perry,
30 Peterson (Sue), Pischke, Reed, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish, Smith, Vilhauer, Voight, Voita, Wipf, and
31 Zikmund

32 Excused: Beal and Marty

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

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

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

6 **SCR 601:** A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION encouraging honest economic development rooted in
 7 the republican principles of limited government, deregulation, and organic entrepreneurial growth.

8 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

9 Was read the first time and the President Pro Tem waived the committee referral pursuant to
 10 JR 6D-1.

11 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that when we adjourn today, we adjourn to convene at 9:30 a.m. on
 12 Wednesday, January 14, 2026, the 2nd legislative day.

13 Which motion prevailed.

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

16 **COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS**

17 The President Pro Tempore announced the following changes in committee assignments:
 18 Sen. Grove to the Senate Committee on Government Operations and Audit; Sen. Kolbeck to Chair
 19 of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and to the Senate Committee on State Affairs; Sen. Peterson
 20 to Chair of the Senate Committee on Taxation; Sen. Rohl to the Senate Committee on
 21 Transportation; and Sen. Wipf to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources and
 22 to the Senate Committee on Local Government.

23 There being no objection, the reading of the President Pro Tempore's appointments of standing
 24 committees was waived.

25 The President announced the appointment of the following standing committees:

26 **** Denotes Chair** *** Denotes Vice-Chair**

27 **Agriculture and Natural Resources (7)**

28 ****Pischke, *Jensen (Kevin),** Davis, Duhamel, Marty, Voight, Wipf

29 **Commerce and Energy (9)**

30 ****Crabtree, *Peterson (Sue),** Beal, Deibert, Hohn, Karr, Kolbeck (Steve), Larson, Perry

31 **Committee on Appropriations (9)**

32 ****Otten, *Lapka,** Carley, Foster, Howard, Miskimins, Vilhauer, Voita, Zikmund

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Education (7)

****Schoenfish, *Voight,** Marty, Nelson, Peterson (Sue), Sauder, Smith

Government Operations and Audit (5)

****Howard, *Otten,** Foster, Grove, Karr

Health and Human Services (7)

****Jensen (Kevin), *Davis,** Grove, Perry, Reed, Smith, Voight

Judiciary (7)

****Kolbeck (Steve), *Hulse,** Blanc, Duhamel, Grove, Mehlhaff, Pischke

Legislative Procedure (7)

****Karr, *Mehlhaff,** Deibert, Larson, Perry, Peterson (Sue), Pischke

Local Government (7)

****Reed, *Duhamel,** Nelson, Rohl, Schoenfish, Smith, Wipf

Military and Veterans Affairs (5)

****Zikmund, *Marty,** Blanc, Hohn, Howard

Retirement Laws (5)

****Deibert, *Vilhauer,** Foster, Kolbeck (Steve), Smith

State Affairs (9)

****Mehlhaff, *Perry,** Beal, Deibert, Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck (Steve), Larson, Pischke

Taxation (7)

****Peterson (Sue), *Hohn,** Blanc, Crabtree, Davis, Grove, Hulse

Transportation (7)

****Deibert, *Beal,** Hohn, Larson, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish

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 he may desire to transmit and that the Governor is ready to appear before the Joint Session to deliver his 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:

1 That the Senate and the House will convene in Joint Session in the Chamber of the House of
2 Representatives at 1:00 p.m., January 13, 2026.

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

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

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

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

9 Also, MR. PRESIDENT:

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

13 That the Senate and the House convene in Joint Session in the Chamber of the House of
14 Representatives at 10:00 a.m., January 14, 2026.

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

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

19 That when the message of the Chief Justice has been received, the Joint Session recess.

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

21 Also, MR. PRESIDENT:

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

25 That the Senate and the House convene in Joint Session in the Chamber of the House of
26 Representatives at 1:00 p.m., January 14, 2026.

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

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

31 That when the message of the Tribal Representative has been received, the Joint Session be
32 dissolved.

33 That the message of the Tribal Representative be printed in the Senate Journal.

1

FIRST READING OF SENATE BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

2

SB 16: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to provide for the licensure of fishing and hunting guides, and to provide a penalty therefor.

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Introduced by: **Senator** Voight

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SB 38: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify the annual fee imposed on certain concentrated animal feeding operations.

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

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SB 39: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions relating to industrial hemp.

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

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SB 40: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise the compliance requirements for limitations on foreign ownership of agricultural land.

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

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

17

SB 4: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise procedures for returning and withholding security deposits for residential premises.

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Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

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SB 6: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to reduce the duration of an individual's reemployment benefits.

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22

Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

23

SB 9: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions regarding notices to the one-call notification center.

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Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the Department of Public Safety

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SB 25: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to update provisions related to the permit application process for proposed energy and transmission facilities.

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Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of South Dakota

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SB 36: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to authorize utilities to establish wildfire mitigation plans and associated liability limitations for wildfire damages.

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Introduced by: **Senator** Kolbeck (Steve)

34

SB 60: FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to restrict ownership of certain real property near military installations by certain prohibited entities and to provide for enforcement.

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36

Introduced by: **Senator** Crabtree

1 **SB 62:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to discontinue the issuance of new Class B electrician
2 licenses.

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

5 **SB 63:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to establish the state office of apprenticeship within the
6 Department of Labor and Regulation.

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 64:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise and repeal provisions related to the athletic
10 commission.

11 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the
12 South Dakota Athletic Commission

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

14 **SB 20:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make an appropriation for tax refunds for elderly
15 persons and persons with a disability, and to declare an emergency.

16 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the
17 Department of Revenue

18 **SB 21:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify tax refunds for elderly persons and persons
19 with a disability.

20 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the
21 Department of Revenue

22 **SB 37:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make appropriations for water and environmental
23 purposes and to declare an emergency.

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

26 **SB 55:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make an appropriation for the payment of
27 extraordinary litigation expenses and to declare an emergency.

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

30 **SB 67:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make an appropriation for costs related to
31 emergencies and disasters impacting the state and to declare an emergency.

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

34 **SB 68:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make an appropriation for costs related to the
35 suppression of wildfires impacting the state and to declare an emergency.

36 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the
37 Department of Public Safety

1 **SB 69:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make an appropriation for the purchase of a new
 2 Division of Highway Patrol airplane and mission equipment and to declare an emergency.

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

5 **SB 72:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to extend the time for reverting moneys appropriated
 6 for the modernization of the state's enterprise resource planning systems.

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

9 **SB 73:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise provisions relating to state financial practices.

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

12 **SB 74:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to transfer moneys to the general fund from the budget
 13 reserve fund and the general replacement fund, and to declare an emergency.

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

16 **SB 75:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to amend the type of entities eligible to participate in
 17 the cybersecurity services initiative.

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

20 **SB 76:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to transfer moneys from the housing infrastructure fund
 21 to the revolving economic development and initiative fund, and to authorize loans from the revolving
 22 economic development and initiative fund for airport infrastructure.

23 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Energy at the request of the
 24 Governor

25 **SB 78:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise the General Appropriations Act for fiscal year
 26 2026.

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

29 **SB 79:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to make an appropriation to the South Dakota Board
 30 of Technical Education to construct an advanced manufacturing laboratory space and classrooms on
 31 the campus of Southeast Technical College and to declare an emergency.

32 Introduced by: The Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations at the request of the
 33 South Dakota Board of Technical Education

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

35 **SB 8:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to permit a school district to administer epinephrine
 36 using a nasal spray.

37 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Education at the request of the Department of
 38 Education

39 Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Education.

1 **SB 14:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify provisions related to the practice of pharmacy.

2 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Health and Human Services at the request of
3 the State Board of Pharmacy

4 **SB 15:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to create the Developmental Disability Services
5 Oversight Committee.

6 Introduced by: **Senators** Karr, Larson, Nelson, and Voita and **Representatives** Heinemann,
7 Baxter, Mulder, and Uhre-Balk at the request of the Community Support Providers, State and Federal
8 Efficiencies Interim Committee

9 **SB 61:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to ban hemp-derived intoxicants not for medical
10 purposes.

11 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

12 **SB 77:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to ban kratom and kratom products and to provide a
13 penalty therefor.

14 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

15 **SB 80:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to prohibit the sale of delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol
16 products to individuals under the age of twenty-one.

17 Introduced by: **Senator** Vilhauer

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

19 **SB 2:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to provide that a firearm silencer is not a controlled
20 weapon.

21 Introduced by: **Senator** Crabtree

22 **SB 41:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise a provision related to criminal invasions of
23 privacy, prohibit the creation and distribution of digitally fabricated material of an identifiable
24 individual, and provide penalties therefor.

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

26 **SB 42:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to enhance the penalties for ingestion, possession,
27 possession with intent to deliver, and delivery of a controlled substance in a state correctional
28 facility.

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

30 **SB 43:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to address search and seizure provisions applicable to
31 digital currency.

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

33 **SB 44:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to establish investigative subpoena authority to gather
34 business records in certain investigations.

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

1 **SB 45:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise a provision regulating delta-8
 2 tetrahydrocannabinol, THC-O acetate, and hexahydrocannabinol for persons under the age of
 3 twenty-one and to provide a penalty therefor.

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

5 **SB 49:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to safeguard the integrity, privacy, and security of
 6 genetic data and provide a civil penalty therefor.

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

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

9 **SB 3:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to limit the types of residential improvements for which
 10 counties, municipalities, and townships may require a permit.

11 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

12 **SB 22:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify when certification of values is transmitted to
 13 the county.

14 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Local Government at the request of the
 15 Department of Revenue

16 **SB 34:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to amend provisions pertaining to conducting a
 17 municipal or school district election and to declare an emergency.

18 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on State Affairs at the request of the Secretary of
 19 State

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

21 **SB 35:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise the process for requesting a veteran's
 22 certificate of discharge from a county register of deeds.

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

25 Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs.

26 **SB 50:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to update the reference to the Internal Revenue Code
 27 to reflect current federal law for the administration of South Dakota Retirement System statutes.

28 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Retirement Laws at the request of the South
 29 Dakota Retirement System

30 **SB 51:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise certain requirements for contesting actions of
 31 the South Dakota Retirement System.

32 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Retirement Laws at the request of the South
 33 Dakota Retirement System

1 **SB 52:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify statutes governing the administration of
2 disability benefits by the South Dakota Retirement System.

3 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Retirement Laws at the request of the South
4 Dakota Retirement System

5 **SB 53:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to ensure uniformity in member identification provisions
6 governing the South Dakota Retirement System.

7 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Retirement Laws at the request of the South
8 Dakota Retirement System

9 **SB 54:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise the conditions for in-service distributions from
10 the South Dakota deferred compensation plan.

11 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Retirement Laws at the request of the South
12 Dakota Retirement System

13 **SB 65:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise certain required minimum distribution
14 provisions of the South Dakota Retirement System.

15 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Retirement Laws at the request of the South
16 Dakota Retirement System

17 Were read the first time and referred to the Committee on Retirement Laws.

18 **SB 1:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to amend the process by which moneys are distributed
19 from the employer's investment in South Dakota's future fund.

20 Introduced by: **Senators** Howard, Foster, and Karr and **Representatives** Lems, Auch, Emery,
21 Moore, and Overweg at the request of the Committee on Government Operations & Audit

22 **SB 5:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to require the disclosure of whether a ballot question
23 was proposed by initiative or by the Legislature.

24 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

25 **SB 13:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify application of the seventy-two hour notice
26 requirement to website posting.

27 Introduced by: **Senator** Reed

28 **SB 17:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to prohibit a candidate or political committee from
29 accepting contributions or loans made by a foreign national, to provide a penalty therefor, and to
30 declare an emergency.

31 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on State Affairs at the request of the Attorney
32 General

33 **SB 28:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to permit the use of a ballot on demand system and to
34 declare an emergency.

35 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on State Affairs at the request of the Secretary of
36 State

1 **SB 29:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to amend provisions pertaining to the tabulation of
 2 ballots and permit the release of any cast vote record and collection of ballot images produced by
 3 automatic tabulating equipment and to declare an emergency.

4 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on State Affairs at the request of the Secretary of
 5 State

6 **SB 30:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to amend the reasons for challenging an individual's
 7 eligibility to vote.

8 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on State Affairs at the request of the Secretary of
 9 State

10 **SB 31:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to permit the use of a confirmation letter to verify a
 11 voter's registration.

12 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on State Affairs at the request of the Secretary of
 13 State

14 **SB 32:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to amend and repeal provisions pertaining to the ballot
 15 requirements for certain elections and to declare an emergency.

16 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on State Affairs at the request of the Secretary of
 17 State

18 **SB 33:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify the number of signatures required on certain
 19 election-related petitions.

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

22 **SB 46:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify the requirements for open meeting agendas
 23 and provide a penalty therefor.

24 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Local Government at the request of the Attorney
 25 General

26 **SB 47:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise the requirements for executive sessions and
 27 closed meetings.

28 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Local Government at the request of the Attorney
 29 General

30 **SB 48:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify that an official open meeting agenda must be
 31 posted online at least seventy-two hours before the scheduled start of the meeting.

32 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Local Government at the request of the Attorney
 33 General

34 **SB 56:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to require that agencies promulgating permanent rules
 35 publish the rules and associated rulemaking forms on a state website.

36 Introduced by: **Senators** Howard and Larson and **Representatives** Hansen, DeGroot, and
 37 Muckey at the request of the Interim Rules Review Committee

38 **SB 57:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to clarify when agency financial resource information
 39 must be filed in the permanent administrative rulemaking process.

40 Introduced by: **Senators** Howard and Larson and **Representatives** Hansen, DeGroot, and
 41 Muckey at the request of the Interim Rules Review Committee

1 **SB 59:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to require the use of certain geographic terminology in
2 official materials of a state agency.

3 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

4 **SB 66:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to prohibit the use of automatic tabulating equipment
5 and electronic ballot marking systems.

6 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

7 **SJR 501:** A JOINT RESOLUTION Proposing and submitting to the voters at the next general
8 election an amendment to the Constitution of the State of South Dakota, limiting the number of
9 terms an individual may serve as a member of the Legislature.

10 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

11 **SJR 502:** A JOINT RESOLUTION applying to the United States Congress under Article V of the
12 United States Constitution to call for a convention proposing an amendment to the constitution fixing
13 the number of justices of the United States Supreme Court at one chief justice and eight associate
14 justices.

15 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

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

17 **SB 7:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to modify the tax rate on gold severed in this state.

18 Introduced by: **Senator** Rohl

19 **SB 12:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to provide for a refund of property taxes in previous
20 years for qualifying veterans and surviving spouses.

21 Introduced by: **Senator** Otten

22 **SB 18:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to repeal income modifications for the bank franchise
23 tax pertaining to bad debts.

24 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Taxation at the request of the Department of
25 Revenue

26 **SB 19:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise certain references to the Internal Revenue
27 Code.

28 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Taxation at the request of the Department of
29 Revenue

30 **SB 58:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to reduce to zero mill levies for property taxation.

31 Introduced by: **Senator** Carley

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

33 **SB 10:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise a provision related to the adoption of federal
34 motor carrier regulations.

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

1 **SB 11:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to increase reinstatement fees and abstract driver
2 record fees.

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

5 **SB 23:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to include certain types of vehicles in the unpaid repair
6 bill titling process.

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

9 **SB 24:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to create a solid background license plate for South
10 Dakota.

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

13 **SB 26:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise procurement for highway construction
14 contracts.

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

17 **SB 27:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise the description of certain highways included
18 in the state trunk highway system.

19 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department
20 of Transportation

21 **SB 70:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to revise the duties of the Transportation Commission
22 to include responsibilities of the South Dakota Railroad Board and the South Dakota Aeronautics
23 Commission.

24 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department
25 of Transportation

26 **SB 71:** FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to authorize the assumption of certain responsibilities
27 and the waiver of sovereign immunity in connection with certain actions under federal environmental
28 law.

29 Introduced by: The Chair of the Committee on Transportation at the request of the Department
30 of Transportation

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

32 Sen. Foster moved that the Senate do now adjourn, which motion prevailed and at 12:46 p.m.
33 the Senate adjourned.

34 Peggy Laurenz, Secretary

1

JOINT SESSION

2 The Senate convened with the House of Representatives in the House Chamber for the purpose
3 of receiving a message from the Governor, Larry Rhoden. The President of the Senate, Tonnis H.
4 Venhuizen, presided.

5 The following prayer was delivered by Pastor Bill Meirose, Union Center Community Baptist
6 Church, Union Center, South Dakota:

7 Timothy 2:1-2 "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and
8 giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a
9 quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence."

10 Almighty Father, we pray today for our State Government leaders for the following:

11 Wisdom & Discernment – that our leaders make wise decisions in the many issues that will
12 come before them during this legislative session

13 Justice & Righteousness – that they act justly and protect the innocent and vulnerable who
14 need others to speak for them in our society

15 Peace & Order – that we may live peaceful and prosperous lives

16 Godliness – that in all decisions they are guided by Godly Principles

17 We ask these things in the Precious Name of Jesus, Amen.

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

20 Blanc, Carley, Crabtree, Davis, Deibert, Duhamel, Foster, Grove, Hohn, Howard, Hulse,
21 Jensen (Kevin), Karr, Kolbeck (Steve), Lapka, Larson, Mehlhaff, Miskimins, Nelson, Otten, Perry,
22 Peterson (Sue), Pischke, Reed, Rohl, Sauder, Schoenfish, Smith, Vilhauer, Voight, Voita, Wipf, and
23 Zikmund

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

26 Andera, Arlint, Auch, Aylward, Bahmuller, Baxter, Czmowski, DeGroot, Derby, Duffy, Emery,
27 Fitzgerald, Fosness, Garcia, Goodwin, Gosch, Greenfield, Halverson, Healy, Heermann, Heinemann,
28 Hughes, Hunt, Ismay, Jamison, Jensen (Phil), Jordan, Jorgenson, Kassin, Kayser, Kull, Ladner,
29 Lems, Manhart, Massie, Moore, Mortenson, Muckey, Mulally, Mulder, Nolz, Novstrup, Odenbach,
30 Overweg, Peterson (Drew), Pourier, Randolph, Rehfeldt, Reimer, Reisch, Rice, Roby, Roe,
31 Schaeftbauer, Schwans, Shorma, Shubeck, Sjaarda, Soye, Uhre-Balk, Van Diepen, Walburg, Weems,
32 Weisgram, Wittman, and Speaker Hansen

33 Sen. Mehlhaff moved that a committee of seven on the part of the Senate and a committee of
34 seven on the part of the House be appointed to escort the Honorable Larry Rhoden, Governor of the
35 state of South Dakota, to the rostrum.

36 Which motion prevailed and the President announced as such committee Sens. Karr, Mehlhaff,
37 Perry, Larson, Smith, Jensen, and Peterson on the part of the Senate, and Reps. Lems, Odenbach,
38 Overweg, Healy, Emery, Bahmuller, and Jamison on the part of the House.

39 The Lieutenant Governor, Tonnis H. Venhuizen, introduced the Honorable Larry Rhoden, who
40 delivered the State of the State Address.

1 The Sergeant at Arms announced the arrival of the Honorable Larry Rhoden, who was escorted
2 to the rostrum.

3 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

4 Introduction

5 Lieutenant Governor Venhuizen, Mr. Speaker, members of the House and Senate, Chief Justice
6 Jensen, Supreme Court justices, constitutional officers, and my fellow South Dakotans:

7 We are gathered here at the convening of another session of the South Dakota Legislature.
8 I've thought a lot this past year about that word, convene. Convene means, "To meet formally as a
9 group...for a serious purpose." We are gathered here for such a purpose: to do the work of the
10 people of South Dakota.

11 Before I became Governor a year ago, a good friend of mine reminded me of an important
12 power of the Governor: "the power to convene." When I served as Majority Leader in this Chamber,
13 our Republican caucus was 52 members with a wide range of wisdom over many areas. Convening
14 the right group at the right time helped us get things done.

15 We've accomplished much in the past year – much of it through convening. The last time a
16 vote was cast on this House floor was in a Special Session after the convening of the prison task
17 force. I have convened both the GRIT task force and the Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force to
18 work on key issues. And of course, your legislative summer studies also convened and got to work
19 on important problems.

20 I'm talking about convening because it's important for you all to understand my leadership
21 style. I don't need to be the smartest person in the room. It's more important to me to get the right
22 people in the room – people with different perspectives who are focused on solutions. Shortly after
23 becoming Governor, I pledged to all of you that a cornerstone of my administration would be civility.
24 We achieved that last year. Let's all recommit to civility this legislative session.

25 At face value, this session might not be as historic as last year. For starters, we won't have a
26 change of power this session – so Tony, don't get any ideas. But our work this session matters. If
27 we all recommit to civility, work together, and focus on our small-government, commonsense
28 conservative principles, we can do great work for the people this year. After all, "Under God, the
29 People Rule."

30 South Dakota is a pretty special place. Our strength lies in our people. South Dakota has
31 become a beacon to the rest of the nation. Our people have tremendous opportunities because we
32 keep South Dakota strong, safe, and free. We've protected opportunity for all South Dakotans to
33 live, work, raise their families, and do business.

34 I'm committed to keeping South Dakota Open for Opportunity. Today, I'd like to share my
35 Opportunity Agenda – my plans to keep South Dakota strong, safe, and free for our kids and
36 grandkids.

37 Strong

38 I am focused on keeping South Dakota strong. In the past few years, the hard work of farmers,
39 ranchers, small businesses, and families has built a remarkably strong state. We've weathered
40 national economic headwinds with steady growth, low unemployment, and fiscal responsibility. We
41 balance our budget and keep taxes low. We have the second most competitive tax system in America,
42 the second least regulations, the lowest unemployment rate, and growing incomes that have
43 exceeded the national average.

1 We need to keep working, though, to hold down property taxes. Last session, I convened a
2 group of legislators to work on a solid first step, and we worked collaboratively to put together a bill
3 that passed with bipartisan support. That was the only property tax bill that passed last session. It
4 wasn't meant to solve every problem, but it helped to stem the bleeding. Now, it's time for more
5 substantial relief.

6 I propose that we cut owner-occupied property taxes by giving the people in each county a
7 simple option: replace the county's share of property taxes with a half-cent sales tax. The people's
8 elected leaders at the county level could implement this plan if it fits their community, or they could
9 refer it to a vote of the people, or the people could even initiate it. The areas with the biggest
10 property tax increases are also those that attract the most visitors, so this proposal will allow those
11 counties to cut property taxes and draw more revenues from tourists and out-of-staters. We've
12 modeled this carefully, and we have estimated impacts for every county. If you'd like details on how
13 it affects your constituents, my team will get the information to you.

14 This is a commonsense conservative plan: not a mandate, but a choice. We are giving local
15 decision makers the flexibility to make the best decisions for their counties. We're empowering them
16 to deliver significant property tax relief for homeowners. And my plan doesn't have to stand alone;
17 legislative ideas could work in tandem, and I look forward to considering your ideas this year.

18 I also want to continue to listen to South Dakotans on this topic. Over the next few weeks, I
19 will host property tax town halls in hard-hit areas like Sioux Falls, the Black Hills, and counties like
20 Clay, Turner, and Union. If you'd like one of these events in your community, let me know. We will
21 meet face-to-face to discuss and refine these solutions. Together, we'll keep our economy strong,
22 our taxes low, and opportunity wide open.

23 After last session, I wanted to get out of my office and see the people of this state. As a new
24 governor, I felt that I should get out so people could talk to me, and I could learn from them. Over
25 the next several months, I toured communities across South Dakota, and we focused on turning
26 challenges into opportunities. Much of what I'm telling you today was motivated by what I saw and
27 heard on those visits. I've lived in South Dakota my whole life, and I am always impressed by the
28 work ethic and creativity of our fellow South Dakotans. Everywhere I looked, I saw incredible
29 products that aren't just Made in America – they're Made in South Dakota.

30 We helped tackle challenges for many of these businesses – and we even changed policies at
31 the federal level. I heard from many businesses that are making good use of the new apprenticeship
32 opportunities that we expanded during the Noem-Rhoden Administration, and there is room to do
33 more in this area. This year, my Department of Labor and Regulation is bringing legislation to set
34 up a State Apprenticeship Agency. This will give us more flexibility to structure apprenticeships in a
35 way that makes sense for South Dakota businesses.

36 All told, we visited dozens and dozens of businesses on my Open for Opportunity tour, and I
37 hate to pick favorites. But I have about a dozen leaders of those businesses here today. They reflect
38 a variety of sectors including manufacturing, agriculture, firearms, biotech, and more. Would you
39 all help me recognize these entrepreneurial South Dakotans?

40 Those business leaders are helping our state grow. And that's a good thing. An old pastor once
41 told me, "Don't wait for doors to open. Check the doors; see if they're unlocked." Ultimately,
42 economic development is about opening more doors of opportunity for our kids and grandkids. We
43 want them to be able to pursue their careers right here in South Dakota. We will continue to check
44 the doors, and we certainly should not lock the doors by limiting our economic potential.

45 This session, there will be plenty of conversation about economic growth and development. Let
46 me be clear where I stand: economic growth is a good thing, and we should encourage it. But growth
47 should not be reckless. We should be bold enough to seize opportunity – and wise enough to prepare
48 for the future in a responsible way.

49 In recent weeks, I've prioritized bold, long-lasting projects. In Brookings, Dakota BioWorx is
50 developing the technology to create new opportunities for value-added ag and bioprocessing. In
51 Aberdeen and Watertown, community and business leaders are joining together to create new
52 industrial development parks. These projects bring tremendous potential for strong growth in our

1 communities. They are excellent examples of how the Future Fund can be used, strategically, to
2 support forward-looking projects. Future Fund investments have moved South Dakota forward by
3 turning bold vision into reality! And for as long as I am your Governor, that is the approach that we
4 will take to economic development.

5 Access to healthcare is an important building block of every community. In many communities,
6 healthcare is also one of the largest employers. I am proud that South Dakota has some of the best
7 healthcare in the nation. But we also have plenty of wide-open spaces. I grew up in Union Center,
8 so I understand exactly how important access to healthcare is in rural areas.

9 This is a big year for rural healthcare in South Dakota. Our state was recently awarded \$189
10 million in federal funding for our Rural Health Transformation Plan. This is the first year of a five-
11 year investment to strengthen healthcare access across our state. As I told you in my Budget
12 Address, we planned for \$100 million a year, so this higher award is a major win for South Dakota!
13 And we will readjust our request for federal authority, accordingly.

14 We didn't commit to policy changes or programs that don't make sense for South Dakota. We
15 focused on what our communities actually need. Our plan modernizes healthcare by bringing more
16 services to rural and remote areas – and by bolstering technology. But ultimately, healthcare is
17 about people, and we need the best people to provide the best healthcare, so this plan strengthens
18 our healthcare workforce. We will attract and retain health professionals, expand community health
19 workers, integrate behavioral health into primary care, improve chronic disease management, and
20 support rural facilities. We will also establish Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics
21 statewide and create regional EMS hubs.

22 This plan was built with extensive input from rural communities, the Great Plains Tribal Leaders
23 Health Board, and healthcare providers and other stakeholders across the state. They told us what
24 they need, and this plan delivers it. South Dakota is competing with every other state, and in future
25 years, the federal government will reward states that move quickly. We could be the first state in
26 the nation to authorize this funding, so I would love it if this was the first bill that reaches my desk.

27 Speaking of supporting our rural communities, in the last decade, we lost 3,600 family farms
28 in South Dakota. Farms keep getting larger, but we can help families pass their farms on to the next
29 generation. I recently announced that we're extending the State's support for the Keep Farmers
30 Farming initiative. The South Dakota Ag Foundation helps family farms and ranches with estate and
31 transition planning so that the operation can stay in the family. It's about transferring more than
32 just money and assets – it's about passing down experience, work ethic, values, and history. Ag is
33 king in South Dakota, so let's keep it strong for the future.

34 A strong economy depends on strong infrastructure. I launched the GRIT task force to assess
35 our resilience to disasters, system failures, and cyber threats. This year, GRIT recommends
36 expanding the SecureSD program at Dakota State University to extend cybersecurity support from
37 cities and counties to nonprofit utilities like rural water systems. It is another way that we can
38 maintain a strong economy and strong communities, which will lead to a stronger South Dakota.

39 **Safe**

40 In the last year, we have also taken several key steps to keep South Dakota safe. In my first
41 month as Governor, I announced the formation of a new Highway Patrol squad in Sioux Falls, and
42 you all responded and funded that new squad in last year's budget.

43 As Sioux Falls grew, we saw a major opportunity to improve public safety, so I launched
44 Operation: Prairie Thunder. It has two missions. First: saturation patrols between the Highway Patrol
45 and local law enforcement to fight crime and drugs. Second, targeted support for ICE, using
46 resources from the National Guard, Highway Patrol, and Department of Corrections.

47 Let me be clear: Highway Patrol troopers do not have a special mission to find illegal aliens.
48 They are working on crime and drug enforcement. When that mission brings them in contact with
49 someone who is here illegally, they enforce the law and hand that individual over to the proper
50 authorities. That's just common sense, and in South Dakota, we respect the rule of law.

1 Our saturation patrols were so successful in Sioux Falls that we took them on the road to Belle
2 Fourche, Huron, Sturgis, Winner, and Yankton – and yes, we were in Brookings last week. And the
3 numbers speak for themselves. To date, Operation: Prairie Thunder has yielded 432 individuals
4 brought into custody, over 1,000 drug charges, nearly 250 warrants executed, 20 parole and
5 probation absconders arrested, more than 2,100 traffic citations including 38 DUIs and 112 revoked
6 licenses, 22 vehicle pursuits – nearly all of which were successful, 63 illegal aliens handed over to
7 ICE custody, and 9 cartel or gang members apprehended. Separate from the saturation patrols,
8 there was also a record 207 pound meth bust.

9 Operation: Prairie Thunder is not done. I said that we'd start with six months, and now it's
10 time to reassess. We will continue the saturation patrols and add a trooper to the Sioux Falls Drug
11 Task Force later this year. We'll continue the support for ICE, increase our 287(g) agreements with
12 Highway Patrol and the Department of Corrections, and extend our administrative support from the
13 National Guard.

14 Today, we have with us several of the Highway Patrol troopers and their leadership who
15 delivered those outstanding results. We also have some of the National Guard soldiers who have
16 provided administrative support to ICE. Please stand – and please join me in honoring these heroes
17 who do so much to keep us safe.

18 Our National Guard also supported crucial national security missions this year. Our guardsmen
19 served at the southern border and helped to deliver the most secure border in American history.
20 And when President Trump committed to Make D.C. Safe and Beautiful Again, we did our part. Today,
21 we have leadership of the South Dakota National Guard who do so much to keep America safe.
22 Please stand – let's honor all of our men and women who have served in our armed forces, especially
23 those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

24 The men and women in uniform are heroes. They signed up, and they show up. They truly go
25 above and beyond. Last August, one Highway Patrol trooper took decisive action to save lives. She
26 saw a vehicle speeding down I-90 – only it was going the wrong direction. So she drove her vehicle
27 across the median and initiated a collision. When the vehicle again tried to drive away, she initiated
28 another collision, then arrested the offender. Today, Trooper Emily Metzger is here with us. Would
29 you please stand? Today, I am proud to honor Trooper Metzger with the Governor's Award for
30 Heroism. Please join me in thanking her for her incredible courage!

31 Our law enforcement deserves respect – at all levels. But for too many years, tribal law
32 enforcement officers have not had the full protection of South Dakota law. This year, I will be
33 supporting the State-Tribal Relations Committee's bill to recognize tribal law enforcement under the
34 definition of "law enforcement officer" in state law.

35 We also must increase protections for all law enforcement officers. In recent years, law
36 enforcement officers have come under fire across the country. Well, South Dakota took a different
37 path. The Noem-Rhoden Administration recruited law enforcement officers to move to South Dakota,
38 and many answered that call. Now that they're here, we're going to protect them. Doxxing of law
39 enforcement officers has become a serious problem in other states. They've had their homes
40 targeted and their families attacked. We've also seen elected officials targeted, including the tragic
41 attacks on state legislators in Minnesota.

42 To address this, my office is bringing forward two bills to protect the personal information of
43 law enforcement, judges, legislators, and statewide officials by removing it from public voter files.
44 We will also add doxxing to the crime of stalking and increase penalties when it targets law
45 enforcement and public officials. South Dakota will not tolerate threats against those who uphold
46 the law and serve the public.

47 In the last year, my office has worked with this Legislature to make important progress on
48 improving our entire criminal justice system. We got the plan done for the new prison in Sioux Falls,
49 and dirt work has started! And the new women's prison in Rapid City is set to open in just a few
50 months.

1 The Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force is hard at work. They've already recommended the
2 Prison Seminary Model, and I was proud to accept that recommendation. This faith-based program
3 will restore hope, build character, and strengthen our correctional system from the inside out. The
4 task force has also advanced other recommendations, including tribal-focused rehabilitation
5 opportunities. Thank you to the legislators on that task force – keep up the good work!

6 While we keep South Dakota safe, South Dakota is keeping the nation safe and secure. In fact,
7 our state is punching above our weight in national security. Of course, our Secretary of Homeland
8 Security is my predecessor, Kristi Noem. John Thune is our U.S. Senate Majority Leader. Senator
9 Mike Rounds serves on the armed services committee and focuses on defense, intelligence, and
10 cybersecurity. The Secretary of the Air Force is a South Dakotan, Dr. Troy Meink. The next
11 generation B-21 bomber is coming to Ellsworth Air Force Base in Western South Dakota. And our
12 cybersecurity industry has grown by 350% over the last decade, the second-fastest growth in the
13 nation.

14 Governor Noem declared that cybersecurity would be South Dakota's "next big industry," and
15 we've put real action behind those words. Today, I am taking it a step further. I am declaring that
16 national security is South Dakota's next big industry. This will be the major focus of my economic
17 development efforts. National security creates major opportunities for South Dakota, and we need
18 to seize them.

19 Businesses are already recognizing South Dakota as a great place for national security
20 companies. When I recognized businesses earlier, one of those was MMS Products. They're a Sioux
21 Falls-based warfare-technology company. And they're leading the field for innovation of drone
22 munitions. Just last month, we announced that they received a \$35 million contract from the
23 Department of War to produce groundbreaking warheads for America's drone fleet.

24 And they won't be the last announcement we make. The continued growth and leadership of
25 Ellsworth Air Force base will pave the way for economic development in national security. Dakota
26 State University will continue leading the field in cybersecurity. And bold, innovative companies like
27 MMS Products will continue to make important contributions to America's security. I talked to
28 Senator Rounds about this last month, and he agreed that there is huge potential in this area.

29 We also recognize that food security is national security, and that is why I will continue to
30 prioritize value-added ag. The new High Plains Processing plant near Mitchell and the CJ Schwan's
31 development in Sioux Falls are each half-a-billion dollar investments in our state. Both will create
32 new markets and better prices for our farmers. I look forward to more announcements in value-
33 added ag as well.

34 **Free**

35 In all those ways, we are keeping South Dakota – and our nation – safe. And we will also keep
36 South Dakota free. We're the freest state in America, and we will keep it that way for our kids and
37 our grandkids.

38 This past year, we took some important steps to protect freedom. This Legislature protected
39 landowner rights, and I was proud to sign that into law. When the issue with the Maude family came
40 up, I worked with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins to make sure that the charges against
41 them got dismissed. And when out-of-state organizations tried to attack the right to life of unborn
42 South Dakotans, I worked quickly with Attorney General Jackley to put a stop to it.

43 South Dakota is the most pro-life state in America, and we will keep it that way. The biggest
44 threat to unborn lives is abortion pills being illegally mailed into our state. Abortion pills cause a
45 higher rate of medical complications for women – that's a fact. More than that, they end the life of
46 an unborn child. I've worked on this issue for over 20 years. Back in my freshman term in the
47 Legislature, I was the prime sponsor of a House Concurrent Resolution urging the FDA to reconsider
48 its approval of drugs that kill babies.

1 Some folks have tried to question whether abortion pills are actually dangerous. Well, don't
2 take my word for it. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is actively reviewing the
3 safety of these pills. Here today, we have medical professionals from two crisis pregnancy centers,
4 the Alpha Center in Sioux Falls and Black Hills Pregnancy Center in Rapid City. They are seeing
5 firsthand how abortion pills harm women. Some moms come in with medical complications; other
6 moms come in seeking reversal pills, which are a medical miracle. Would you please join me in
7 thanking these medical professionals for their life-saving work?

8 This session, I will be working with legislators and the Attorney General on legislation to stop
9 abortion pills from coming into South Dakota, and I hope that legislation reaches my desk.

10 South Dakota is also the most pro-Second Amendment state in America, and we will keep it
11 that way. I'm proud of our state for recognizing the right to Constitutional Carry for every South
12 Dakotan. I focused on it as a legislator and during the Noem-Rhoden years, and there's more work
13 to do. This year, I am working with legislators including Senator Crabtree to deregulate suppressors
14 as part of a movement at the national level. This is another opportunity for our state to be first, and
15 I look forward to signing that bill.

16 My wife, Sandy, is in the gallery today with some of our family. Our children and grandchildren
17 are our greatest asset, and our pride and joy. I'm proud to tell you that, in 2026, our brood of
18 grandkids will be growing from seven to ten! Please help me welcome Sandy and our family.

19 Sandy will be busy as a grandma, but she's also been busy as First Lady. She spent her career
20 as a teacher and coach, and she is applying that experience now. Over the past year, Sandy has
21 visited schools and talked to school leaders. They've discussed the problems caused by cell phones
22 in the classrooms, and we've seen how local decision-makers are already confronting that issue
23 without a state mandate. Her "South Dakota Rising" initiative is all about encouraging South
24 Dakotans to pursue a positive lifestyle of a sound mind in a sound body. She is doing great work –
25 please help me thank her!

26 A free state is one where students are able to learn in a commonsense way. We emphasize
27 innovation through competition, excellence, and new pathways to brighter career opportunities.
28 Even in a tough funding year – maybe especially in a tough funding year – we can be proud of our
29 educators and the work they do. And we can look for ways to support that work.

30 I am very proud of the work that my Department of Education is doing to improve outcomes
31 in key areas, including reading and math. Our Science of Reading initiative is bringing phonics back
32 into the classrooms. This effort is fueled by a \$6 million investment from this Legislature, which
33 leveraged \$54 million in federal dollars. We rewrote our reading standards, changed our teacher
34 training at the universities and offered training to current teachers. Last year, we began bold
35 changes to the math standards, as well, to make it easier for parents to help with homework. We're
36 replacing common core with common sense. And the Noem-Rhoden Administration's social studies
37 reforms were implemented this fall.

38 And we're addressing teacher shortages. The Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway produces dozens
39 of new teachers yearly. We're helping paraprofessionals achieve full teacher certification while still
40 filling classroom jobs. Our teacher pay reforms are also helping recruit quality teachers.

41 For students, freedom means options. I was proud to opt-in to the Trump Administration's
42 school choice opportunity through the One Big Beautiful Bill. This is not about public versus private
43 schools. It's about unleashing innovation for every child, just as competition drives success in
44 business and beyond. Over the next year, we will be working with leaders from private schools,
45 public schools, and the homeschooling community, so that our state is ready to implement this
46 program on January 1, 2027. It's a great opportunity to increase options for students and families.

47 Career and Technical Education is helping steer our kids toward high-demand fields, so we will
48 continue prioritizing the growth of our Tech Colleges, such as our proposal this year for the new
49 welding and machining facility at Southeast Tech. I also know CTE is an important part of the high
50 school curriculum. Just last month, I visited the CTE Academy in Sioux Falls, where high school
51 students learn everything from nursing and homebuilding to baking and aviation. They are even
52 adding a large animal livestock facility.

1 Our schools sometimes have to deal with students who come from tough circumstances and
2 cause disruptions in class. This year, my Department of Education will be bringing a bill to address
3 the most challenging circumstances. It will give school boards more flexibility to find alternative
4 settings for students in these tough situations. Legislators are focused on this issue, as well, and I
5 hope we can work together on this important topic.

6 In South Dakota, you never feel freer than when you are enjoying the great outdoors. 2024
7 was our strongest pheasant season in a decade, and by all accounts, 2025 was just as strong. We
8 have nearly 1.7 million acres of private land enrolled for public hunting access. And over 120,000
9 acres are enrolled by GFP's habitat programs. GFP fisheries stocked nearly 300,000 pounds of fish
10 across the state in 2025. And we welcomed nearly 23,000 visitors for the 60th annual Buffalo
11 Roundup.

12 In particular, we're focused on expanding opportunities for youth hunting and fishing. In
13 October, we opened up Capitol Lake to youth mentored fishing for the first time – it's been fun to
14 see families fishing and making memories. Last year, I signed legislation to streamline requirements
15 for mentored youth hunting and fishing to encourage more participation and recruit the next
16 generation of outdoors enthusiasts. As Kristi often said, we're encouraging our kids to put down the
17 Xbox and pick up the tackle box.

18 Talking about the outdoors reminds us what makes South Dakota special. I have talked to you
19 today about a vision for the future, but we also can't lose sight of all there is to celebrate, to preserve,
20 and to imitate about our past.

21 This year is the 250th birthday of the United States of America, the freest nation in history.
22 And South Dakota will host the very best and brightest celebration of that occasion when fireworks
23 go off over Mount Rushmore on July 3rd. That monument celebrates four of our greatest presidents,
24 who fought for the revolutionary ideal "that all men are created equal, and that [we] are endowed
25 by our Creator with certain unalienable rights." Nearby, Crazy Horse monument celebrates the
26 legacy of the native people who met us here.

27 We are able to enjoy our Black Hills today, in part, because of the foresight of one of South
28 Dakota's greatest leaders, our ninth governor, Peter Norbeck. As I close today, I would like to read
29 the conclusion to his State of the State Address from 1919:

30 "I believe in South Dakota, in the fertility of her soil, the warmth of her sunshine, and the
31 nurturing tenderness of her winter snows; I believe in the simple beauty of her rolling prairies and
32 the more pretentious splendor of her western hills; I believe in her government, and in her
33 institutions of home and church and school; I believe in the sturdy, intelligent manhood of her sons,
34 and the chaste womanhood of her daughters; the hundred percent Americanism of her whole
35 people;

36 "I believe that under the skies of South Dakota will continue to grow and prosper an intelligent,
37 patriotic, and God-fearing people amply able to work out and solve the perplexing problems of the
38 future as they have those of the past. I believe that as the bright noonday sun is only the fulfillment
39 of the morning prophecy of its dawning splendor, so the accomplishments of our State today are
40 the monuments of the hardy pioneers of yesterday. I believe that as the gorgeous tints of the sunset
41 skies predict the coming of a bright tomorrow, the proud record and accomplishments of South
42 Dakota surely point to a State whose star shall outshine all others in the Flag of our Country."

43 **Conclusion**

44 Governor Norbeck's words hold true today. And it is why I am committed, as he was, to keeping
45 our state strong, safe, and free. Today I have shared my Opportunity Agenda with you. South
46 Dakota is in good shape. We have the opportunity this year to do commonsense things to make our
47 state even better. If you need to talk to me or someone on my team, we'll be open and responsive.
48 As I told you a year ago, I am not hard to find.

1 For as long as I have the honor to serve as your Governor, I will continue to make sure our
2 people are blessed to live in the freest state in a nation founded on the principle of freedom.

3 Thank you. God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the great state of South Dakota.

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

5 Which motion prevailed.

