

## **Rumbles on the Prairie: June Primaries in the Upper Midwest**

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June elections offer an early prelude of the coming political fireworks. South Dakota has a high-profile “special election” for the U.S. House of Representative seat that had been held by Republican William Janklow. The Democrats may pick up this longtime Republican safe seat. Primaries in South Dakota and Iowa will determine the starting line-ups in what could be heated state elections this fall.

### **South Dakota**

South Dakota holds its state wide primary on June 1<sup>st</sup>, including a highly publicized special election for the state’s at-large seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

### **U.S. House**

The US House race is a special election for the at-large seat vacated by Representative Janklow who resigned on January 20<sup>th</sup> after receiving a manslaughter conviction for killing a motorcyclist with his automobile. Democrat Stephanie Herseth (attorney, 2002 nominee, [www.hersethforcongress.org](http://www.hersethforcongress.org)) squares off against Republican Larry Diedrich (state senator, 2002 candidate, [www.diedrichforcongress.com](http://www.diedrichforcongress.com)). Libertarian candidate Terry L. Begay (retired prison worker, 2002 nominee [www.terry4congress.com](http://www.terry4congress.com)) will be on the ballot when this at-large seat is up for re-election in November, but is not a challenger in this special election.

History: South Dakota’s at-large seat went Republican in 2002, with 53.5% going to Janklow and 45.6% for Herseth. Republican John Thune dominated this seat from 1994-1998 with victory margins of 20.7, 50.2, and 48.5 points respectively. The democrats won the first seven at-large races when the number of South Dakota’s representatives dropped from two to one in 1982. However, since 1960, republicans have won 21 of 33 U.S. House elections in the state.

Outlook: Herseth’s family has a long political history in the state – her grandfather was governor of South Dakota, her grandmother was Secretary of State, and her father served in the state legislature for twenty years and was the democratic nominee for governor in 1986. Herseth’s strong name recognition combined with her credible run in 2002 make her a strong candidate in this year’s election. She leads Diedrich by about 10 points in two recent statewide polls.

## State Senate

All 35 districts are on the ballot for the South Dakota State Senate. The current balance in the Senate is 26 Republicans to 9 Democrats. Twenty Republican incumbents are running for reelection compared to 4 Democratic incumbents, which leaves 6 open GOP-held districts and 5 open Democratic-held districts.

Four Republicans are ineligible to run due to term limits: Kenneth D. Albers (16<sup>th</sup>), Arlene H. Ham (32<sup>nd</sup>), Marguerite M. Kleven (29<sup>th</sup>), and Drue J. Vitter (30<sup>th</sup>). Three additional Republican state senators are retiring: Al Kurtenbach (4<sup>th</sup>), Arnold Brown (7<sup>th</sup>), Mike Jaspers (11<sup>th</sup>).

Three Democrats are ineligible to run due to term limits: H. Paul Dennert (2<sup>nd</sup>), John J. Reedy (17<sup>th</sup>), Paul Symens (1<sup>st</sup>). Three additional Democrats are retiring from the state senate: Paul Symens (1<sup>st</sup>), Sam Nachtigal (21<sup>st</sup>), and Robert Duxbury (22<sup>nd</sup>).

The Republican Party is well-organized in South Dakota, as evidence by the fact that the GOP has fielded a nominee in every Senate district. The Democrats, by contrast, failed to field a nominee in 9 of the 35 races.

For the Tuesday's primary, Democrats face off against each other in four Senate districts: 9, 27, 28, & 30. Republicans battle in nine districts: 5, 11, 16, 17, 24, 25, 29, 30, & 32.

Third Party candidates from the Constitution Party are on the ballots in Districts 11 and 14. These candidates, Scott D. Bartlett (#11) and Patrick J. Libby (#14) are running on a strong anti-abortion platform. Abortion has been a big issue in South Dakota state politics this year when a bill that would have banned all abortions in the state (except in cases to save the life or health of a pregnant woman) passed the House and ultimately failed by a just a single vote in the Senate.

## State House

There are 34 two-member districts plus 2 single-member districts on the ballot in this year's election for the South Dakota State House. The current balance in the House is 49 Republicans and 21 Democrats.

Thirty-six Republican incumbents are on the ballot, leaving 13 open GOP-held districts, compared to 14 Democratic incumbents on the ballot, and 7 open Democratic-held districts.

Three Republicans are ineligible to run due to term limits: Claire B. Konold (5<sup>th</sup>), Orville B. Smidt (7<sup>th</sup>), and William Peterson (14<sup>th</sup>). Eight republicans are retiring: Tim Begalka (4<sup>th</sup>), Burdette Solum (5<sup>th</sup>), Matt McCaulley (10<sup>th</sup>), Ron Williamson (10<sup>th</sup>), Bill Peterson (14<sup>th</sup>), Kent Juhnke (26<sup>th</sup>), Christopher Madsen (31<sup>st</sup>), and John Teupel (31<sup>st</sup>). In addition three Republican House members are running for their respective district Senate seat: Claire B. Konold (5<sup>th</sup>), Jim Lintz (30<sup>st</sup>), and Stanford M. Adelstein (32<sup>nd</sup>). One House member, Al Koistinen (6<sup>th</sup>), is running for a House seat in the nearby 5<sup>th</sup> District.

One Democratic House member is retiring: Mel Olson (20<sup>th</sup>), while six Democratic House members are running for the district Senate seat: Gary Hanson (1<sup>st</sup>), Jim Hundstad (2<sup>nd</sup>), Jim Pederson (4<sup>th</sup>), Ben Nesselhuf (17<sup>th</sup>), Julie Bartling (21<sup>st</sup>), and Quinten L. Berg (22<sup>nd</sup>).

Since there are 34 dual-member districts in the State House, it is in the interest of each major party to run at least two candidates in each district to maximize the potential number

of representatives in the House. The GOP has fielded at least one candidate in every House race, and failed to field two candidates in only two dual-member districts (Districts 16 & 27). The Democrats failed to get even one democrat on the ballot in six districts (Districts 10, 18, 23, 24, 28b, & 29) and ran only one candidate in eight districts (Districts 14, 16, 25, 26, 28b, 31, 33, & 34).

House races with more than two Democrats facing off in a primary challenge are: Districts 2, 3, 4, & 9. Races with more than two Republican challengers facing off in a primary challenge are: Districts 5, 10, 11, 13, 26, 29, 30, & 31.

## **Iowa**

Iowa holds its state wide primary on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Although there are very few intra-party challenges in June, the race for control of each chamber of the State Assembly in November will be much more fierce in the Hawkeye state than in South Dakota.

### **State Senate**

The Iowa State Senate is closely divided, 29 Republicans and 21 Democrats. Twenty-five State Senate seats are on the ballot (each of the even-numbered districts, District's 2 through 50).

However, only two of these districts have contested primaries: Senate District 12 for both the Republicans and Democrats, and Senate District 42 for the Democrats.

Fifteen Republican incumbents are up for reelection, in addition to 3 open GOP-held seats. By contrast, only 6 Democratic incumbents are up for re-election with only 1 open Democratic-held seat.

In short, come November, there will be many more opportunities for Democrats to gain seats in the State Senate, than for the Republicans, even though the Democrats failed to run a candidate in 5 of these 25 districts, compared to 3 for the GOP.

### **State House**

All 100 State House districts are on the ballot in Iowa this year.

Republicans hold on to a relatively narrow 54 to 46-seat edge over the Democrats. There are 50 Republican incumbents are running for reelection, with 4 open GOP-held districts. For the Democrats, 43 incumbents are running for reelection, with 3 open democratic-held districts. The Republicans seem to be in a more precarious position to hold ground in the State House too, having failed to field a nominee in 26 of the 100 districts, compared to just 18 for the Democrats.

Democrats face off in competitive primary races in 11 districts: 10, 25, 31, 45, 47, 54, 66, 67, 68, 81, & 87.

Republicans hold competitive primary races in 10 districts: 3, 8, 25, 38, 40, 45, 61, 71, 98, & 99.