

Women's Representation in South Dakota

Parity Ranking: 26th of 50

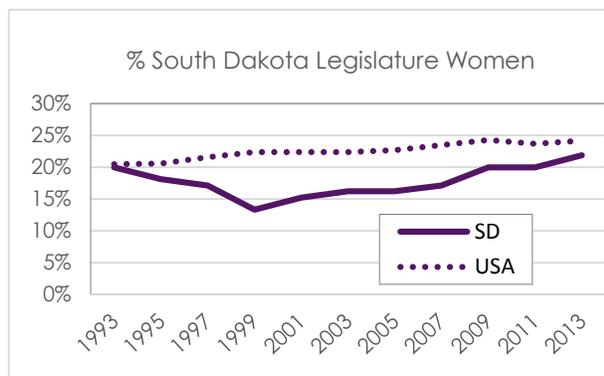
Score of 16: Ten points for electing a woman to the state's single congressional district in the last three elections and 6 points for the percentage of female state legislators.

Quick Fact

Since 2004, when South Dakota elected its first female representative to the U.S. House, a woman has won its single at-large House seat in each election: Democrat Stephanie Herseth Sandlin and Republican Kristi Noem.

Trending

After reaching a nadir of just 13.3% in 1999, the proportion of women in South Dakota's state legislature is slowly on the rise again.



Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University.

Elections to Watch

Former Governor Mike Rounds (R) is heavily favored in the open seat election for U.S. Senate, but will face Annette Bosworth in the Republican primary. Rep. Kristi Noem (R) is expected to keep her seat, as is Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Levels of Government

Statewide Executives

Female governors: None

Current female statewide elected executives: 0 of 7 positions. One of three public utilities commissioners, though not the chair, is a woman.

Number of women to have held statewide elected executive office: 20, one of whom was appointed. An addition five have served as public utilities commissioners.

Congress

U.S. Senate: 0 of 2 seats are held by women

U.S. House: 1 of 1 seat is held by a woman

In its history, South Dakota has elected three women to Congress (two in special elections to fill vacancies). In addition, one woman was appointed to fill a U.S. Senate vacancy.

State Legislature

Percentage women: 21.9%

Rankings: 30th of 50

Senate: 6 of 35 (17.1%) are women

House: 17 of 70 (24.3%) are women

Method of election: Each district has one state senator and two house members. Most of the two-member house districts are elected by numbered posts, while some are elected at-large.

Local

None of South Dakota's five largest cities with elected mayors has a woman mayor.

Words of Wisdom

"We have different perspectives, and if more than 50% of the people in this country who are placing the votes are women, we've got to have some women who represent their perspective."- Kristi Noem, U.S. representative from South Dakota