



ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024

# VOTERS

*Guide*



The Brookings  
**Register**



# Voters guide 2024:

**Election Day** is Nov. 5: General election —polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time.

## What to take when you vote:

All voters must show proof of identification or sign a personal identification affidavit at their polling place. Approved forms of photo identification include:

- South Dakota driver's license or nondriver ID card
- U.S. government photo ID such as a passport
- U.S. Armed Forces ID
- Current student photo identification card from a South Dakota high school or South Dakota accredited institution of higher education
- Tribal photo ID



| November 5, 2024  |   | South Dakota   | Brookings County   |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>OFFICIAL GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT</b>   |   |  |  |
| <b>INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER:</b><br>To vote for a group of presidential electors <b>FILL IN</b> the oval (●) next to the names.<br>Use only a pencil or pen.<br>If you make a mistake, give the ballot back and get a new one.<br><b>DO NOT</b> cast more votes than are allowed in each race. | <b>NONPOLITICAL BALLOT</b><br><b>Supreme Court Justice Retention</b><br>Vote on each justice. Shall the justice of the Supreme Court named on this ballot, whose term expires January 1, 2025, be retained in office?<br>Justice Scott P. Myren, representing the Fifth Supreme Court District<br><input type="radio"/> Yes<br><input type="radio"/> No   | <b>District 7</b><br><b>Constitutional Amendment F</b><br>Title: An Amendment to the South Dakota Constitution Authorizing the State to Impose a Work Requirement on Individuals Eligible for Expanded Medicaid Benefits<br><b>Attorney General Explanation:</b><br>The Medicaid program is funded by the State and the federal government to provide medical coverage for certain low-income people who qualify for the program. In 2022, the voters approved a Constitutional provision that expanded Medicaid eligibility for any person over age 18 and under 65 whose income is at or below 132% of the federal poverty level, plus 2% of the federal poverty level for the applicable family size.<br>This constitutional amendment authorizes the State to impose work requirements on any person eligible to receive benefits under the expanded Medicaid program, except for those persons who are physically or mentally disabled. The amendment does not identify any specific work requirement that may be imposed on those receiving expanded Medicaid benefits. Any work requirement proposed by the State must be approved by the federal government prior to implementation. |  |
|   | <b>For Presidential Electors</b><br>You may vote for <u>one</u> slate or leave it blank.<br><input type="radio"/> Harris & Waiz Electors Democratic Party<br>Mary Susanne Larson<br>Donn Larson<br>Larry Olson<br><input type="radio"/> Oliver & ter Maat Electors Libertarian Party<br>Randy "Uniah" Luallin<br>Gregory Baldwin<br>Brian DeYoung<br><input type="radio"/> Trump & Vance Electors Republican Party<br>Marty Jackley<br>Kristi Noem<br>Larry Rhoden<br><input type="radio"/> Kennedy, Jr. & Shanahan Electors Independent<br>Jordan Thomas<br>Jared Degraaf<br>Edward Dykstra  | <b>For Conservation District Supervisor, Brookings County</b><br>You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.<br><input type="radio"/> Jackson Hegerfeld<br><input type="radio"/> Rick Kerr<br><input type="radio"/> Darrell W. DeBoer<br><input type="radio"/> John D. Heylens  | <b>INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER:</b><br>To vote on a ballot question <b>FILL IN</b> the oval (●) next to "yes" or "no".<br><b>DO NOT</b> cast more votes than are allowed in each race. |
| <b>INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER:</b><br>To vote for a person <b>FILL IN</b> the oval (●) next to the name.<br><b>DO NOT</b> cast more votes than are allowed in each race.   | <b>Constitutional Amendments</b><br>The following amendments to the State Constitution are submitted to the voters by the legislature. The amendments will not become effective unless approved by majority vote.<br><b>Constitutional Amendment E</b><br>Title: An Amendment to the South Dakota Constitution Updating Gender References for Certain Officials and Persons.<br><b>Attorney General Explanation:</b><br>The South Dakota Constitution became effective upon the State joining the United States in 1889. The generic male pronouns he, his, and him are used in the text of the State Constitution to reference certain officials and individuals.<br>This amendment changes the text of the State Constitution to remove the use of generic male pronouns when referencing certain officials and individuals. For example, when referencing the Governor, instead of saying "he shall be commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the state," the text will be changed to read "The Governor shall be commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the state." The amendment makes similar changes to other references to the Governor, as well as to references to other officials including Lieutenant Governor, Supreme Court Justices, and Circuit Court Judges. The amendment also makes similar changes to references in the Constitution to general classes of people such as persons, electors, and public officers. | <input type="radio"/> Yes Vote "Yes" to adopt the amendment.<br><input type="radio"/> No Vote "No" to leave the Constitution as it is.   |  |
| <b>For United States Representative</b><br>You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.<br><input type="radio"/> Sheryl Johnson Democratic Party<br><input type="radio"/> Dusty Johnson Republican Party  | <input type="radio"/> Yes Vote "Yes" to adopt the amendment.<br><input type="radio"/> No Vote "No" to leave the Constitution as it is.  | <b>For Public Utilities Commissioner</b><br>You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.<br><input type="radio"/> Forrest Wilson Democratic Party<br><input type="radio"/> A. Gideon Oakes Libertarian Party<br><input type="radio"/> Kristie Fliegen Republican Party   |  |
| <b>For State Senator, District 07</b><br>You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.   |   |  |  |

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Early Voting Sept 20 ★ Election Day Nov 5

Leadership with heart and FACTS.

Education & Healthcare

Economy & Workforce

Housing & Childcare

Paid for by FEDORA SUTTON-BUTLER for District 7 House

The Many Hats of  
 Dr. Fedora Sutton-Butler, Ph. D.

Educator  
 Scientist

Non-Profit CRO  
 Humanitarian  
 Mother

## stevens4SD.com

Early Voting Sept 20 Election Day Nov 5

# STEVENS

## District 7 House

Integrity. Progress. Unity.

- Infrastructure and Affordable Housing
- Access to Quality Health Care
- Small Businesses and Local Economy
- Fair Wages and Workforce Support

Paid for by BLAKE STEVENS for District 7 House



# District 7 Senate: Tim Reed, R-Brookings

*Editor's note: All local candidates responded to The Register's extensive questionnaire. Reed is unopposed for the District 7 Senate seat.*

**Q: What do you want our readers to know about you and your experience for a this position?**

**A:** I am a lifelong resident of Brookings and a proud graduate of South Dakota State University. I've dedicated much of my life to serving this community, starting with 13 years in city government — including 8 years as Mayor. Following my time in city government, I had the honor of representing our district in the State House of Representatives for 6 years, and I'm now finishing up my first 2 years in the State Senate. My experience at both the local and state levels has given me a deep understanding of the issues facing our community, and I am committed to continuing to work for solutions that benefit us all.

**Q: What values inform your campaign most strongly?**

**A:** As a legislator, my values are rooted in the experiences and opportunities South Dakota has provided for me and my family. After graduating from South Dakota State University, I chose to stay and build my life here because of the strong sense of community, the opportunities available and the quality of life. I was fortunate to raise my children in South Dakota, a place where they could grow up in a safe, thriving environment.

I believe South Dakota is a great place to live, work and play, and I am committed to keeping it that way. I work to promote policies that ensure a strong economy so that everyone can continue to build their future here. My focus is on maintaining a business friendly environment that supports job creation and growth, preserving the values that make our state unique and ensuring future generations have the same opportunities to succeed and thrive in South Dakota.

**Q: What issues would you put at the top of the state or district's agenda?**

**A:** I believe the top priorities for our state should be economic development,



Reed

increasing access to quality, affordable child care, strengthening education and supporting our public higher education system. Supporting business growth and entrepreneurship is key to ensuring a strong economy and creating opportunities for future generations. Expanding child care capacity and quality will help working families thrive and boost workforce participation. Additionally, improving K-12 education, expanding vocational and technical training and strengthening our public higher education system will better prepare our students for success in the workforce or higher education.

**Q: What skills and experience would enable you to be successful in in this position?**

**A:** My experience in public service, including 13 years in city government with 8 years as Mayor, and 8 years in the State Legislature, has provided me with a deep understanding of how government functions at both the local and state levels. This experience has allowed me to develop strong leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, which are critical to navigating the legislative process. Additionally, my work in the private sector gives me insight into the economic and community needs of our district, helping me craft policies that

promote growth and opportunity for all.

**Q: What do you think the role of the state legislature is? Please be as specific as possible.**

**A:** The role of the state legislature is to represent the interests of the people by crafting, debating and passing laws that address local needs. It's responsible for establishing the state budget; funding critical areas like education, healthcare, and infrastructure and ensuring that state agencies function efficiently. The legislature also plays a role in checking the executive branch and upholding the state constitution, ensuring laws are in line with the values and legal framework of the state. Additionally, it acts as a voice for communities, addressing both immediate and long-term issues that impact residents' quality of life.

**Q: What is your top priority? Why are you running for this office?**

**A:** I'm running for state office to ensure South Dakota's economy remains strong for future generations. Supporting business growth and entrepreneurship will create jobs, expand opportunities, and help families thrive. A vibrant economy depends on a robust workforce, which is why expanding access to quality, affordable child care and improving education at every level—from K-12 to vocational training and public higher education—is essential.

**Q: What is your position on a possible carbon sequestration pipeline through this area and South Dakota?**

**A:** I support the carbon sequestration pipeline because it opens up critical markets for our farmers and ethanol plants. By utilizing this technology, we can ensure that our agricultural products remain competitive and sustain profit-

See REED, page 5

RE-ELECT ROGER!

## Roger DeGroot

### for State Representative

Supporting Education • Economic Development  
Workforce Development

# I would appreciate your vote on Nov. 5!

Common Sense Leadership For District 7.

Paid for by DeGroot for House - Larry Tidemann, Chairman

# District 8 Senate: Casey Crabtree, R-Madison

*Editor's note: All local candidates responded to The Register's extensive questionnaire. Crabtree is unopposed for the District 8 Senate seat.*

**Q: What do you want our readers to know about you and your experience for this position?**

**A:** I've been fortunate to serve as the District 8 Senator since 2020, and in 2022, my Senate colleagues elected me their Majority Leader. I understand how the Legislature works and how to get the job done for South Dakota.

**Q: What values inform your campaign most strongly?**

**A:** I was born and raised in South Dakota and love this state. I love our rural communities, homegrown businesses and our commitment to the values that shape who we are. We believe in hard work and helping our neighbors and we believe that government is best when it's involved the least. We don't always appreciate how great we have it here, but I want to return to Pierre to do everything I can to ensure it continues.

**Q: What issues would you put at the top of the state or district's agenda?**

**A:** As I talk with folks across our district and state, I see many of the issues they care most about are the same. They want safe communities, quality education and abundant job opportunities. They want to know that their tax dollars are being used responsibly and that we're paying attention to the future of our small towns and rural areas. Our farmers and ranchers want opportunities to thrive with the rights and protections to ensure they're around for the next generation.

**Q: What skills and experience would enable you to be successful in this position?**

**A:** Throughout my life, I have been a member of teams that put the good of all above the needs of the individ-



Crabtree

ual. From the football field to helping communities across the state with economic development, I have always placed the good of the group in front of my personal ambitions. This approach is why I've had a successful record tackling some of the toughest issues facing our state.

**Q: What do you think the role of**

## Amendment G

Text to be added to state constitution:

**"Before the end of the first trimester, the State may not regulate a pregnant woman's abortion decision and its effectuation, which must be left to the judgment of the pregnant woman.**

**After the end of the first trimester and until the end of the second trimester, the State may regulate the pregnant woman's abortion decision and its effectuation only in ways that are reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman.**

**After the end of the second trimester, the State may regulate or prohibit abortion, except when abortion is necessary, in the medical judgment of the woman's physician, to preserve the life and health of the pregnant woman."**

**the state legislature is? Please be as specific as possible.**

**A:** Unlike the federal government, we do things right in South Dakota. First and foremost, the Legislature must pass a balanced budget to fund State Government. We will look at issues like reducing property tax burdens, education funding, rural infrastructure upgrades, public safety and more this next session and I'm excited to find common-sense solutions. While I look forward to these discussions, it's important we do our best to do no harm to what exists today. In a world where a lot is going wrong, we have a lot of things going right in South Dakota.

**Q: What is your top priority? Why are you running for this office?**

**A:** My priorities are:

- Strengthening our state's economy
- Keeping taxes low
- Supporting rural communities
- Ensuring our kids have the quality education I experienced
- Maintaining safe communities

**Q: What is your position on a possible carbon sequestration pipeline**

**through this area and South Dakota?**

**A:** This past session the Legislature passed SB 201, which was signed by Governor Noem, and now on the ballot as RL-21. A vote yes keeps in place the landowner protections requiring that pipeline companies be liable and compensate the landowners, while allowing the Public Utilities Commission to make local ordinances a condition of a permit. It also allows for counties to impose a per linear foot annual surcharge, which provides landowner's much needed property tax relief.

**Q: What is your position on legal recreational marijuana in South Dakota?**

**A:** South Dakotans overwhelmingly voted for medical marijuana, and I have worked with my colleagues to honor the will of the voters and institute an effective and accessible medical program. Recreational marijuana would provide complications to that effort as well as issues with federal law for South Dakotans.

**Q: What is your position on the abortion referendum facing South Dakota voters this fall?**

**A:** I'm pro-life and believe that Amendment G is too extreme for South Dakota. I will be voting no.

**Q: What is your plan to get things done in the Legislature?**

**A:** My passion is for people, not politics. A lot of people can sit on the sidelines and shout about one or two specific issues, but effective legislators understand the importance of civility and compromise when it comes to lawmaking. I was born and raised in this district, I work in this district; my wife owns a business in this district and my two boys attend public school in this district. I'll always be accessible to anyone, regardless of whether they agree with me or not. It would be an honor to continue serving District 8 and I'm excited to get to work once again.



# District 7 House: Roger DeGroot, R-Brookings

*Editor's note: All local candidates responded to The Register's extensive questionnaire. DeGroot is an incumbent running for one of two District 7 House seats.*

**Q: What do you want our readers to know about you and your experience for this position?**

**A:** I am a lifelong educator, 40+ years as a teacher, coach, elementary principal, middle school principal, and superintendent. I also served 3 years on the Brookings School Board, supervised student teachers for SDSU and also sit on the DSU Foundation Board. After serving on the Brookings School Board I ran for the District 7 house seat. I am finishing my first term and am running for a second term. I presently sit on the Souse Ed Committee, the House Taxation committee, the summer Medical Marijuana Oversight Committee and the Interim Rules review committee....

**Q: What values inform your campaign most strongly?**

**A:** I think it is important to be honest and respectful of others. If you promise someone you will be voting for a bill, you better vote for it. If you change your mind, make sure you inform the party that you have done so. It's also important that you build relationships and listen to others to find out what's important to them. Finally, I will once again use common sense if sent back



DeGroot

to Pierre.

**Q: What issues would you put at the top of the state or district's agenda?**

**A:** The top priority for the state agenda would have to be the State Budget. For several years there has been significant surplus, but now that Covid dollars are drying up the budget will be more difficult to balance. If IM28 passes I'm sure that significant time will be spent dealing with the details. On the District's top agenda item it would have to be education. I ran two years ago and said I would work to increase teacher salaries, freeze SDSU tuition, and work for other district priorities. I have done

all of that. I sit on the House Education committee and through that committee past two years we passed bills to the house that increased the minimum K-12 teacher salaries, increased dollars for higher education significantly, and made possible a tuition freeze.

Education and district needs would once again be my priority..

**Q: What skills and experience would enable you to be successful in this position?**

**A:** Being in a leader in education all those years gave me a skill set that works well in Pierre. I try to find common ground and a compromise whenever possible. Once again my experience in education works well for me on the House ED Committee.

**Q: What do you think the role of the state legislature is? Please be as specific as possible.**

**A:** To represent what's best for South Dakota, and their district. We are sent to Pierre to pass bills that will improve the lives of all of South Dakota

**Q: What is your top priority? Why are you running for this office?**

**A:** Education, Education, Education—and once again doing my best to represent our District's needs. I'm running for office so I can ensure that our children (our future) get the best possible education they can get and work to make our teacher salaries competitive so we can keep the best and brightest teachers in

front of our students.

Besides supporting education my top priorities would be economic development and workforce development, as well as child care, I think they do hand in hand.

**Q: What is your position on a possible carbon sequestration pipeline through this area and South Dakota?**

**Q: What is your position on legal recreational marijuana in South Dakota? Q: What is your position on the abortion referendum facing South Dakota voters this fall?**

**A:** The next three questions I will answer the same. From my history lessons I learned there is no more direct Democracy than one person-one vote on any issue. These ballot issues give each individual person living in South Dakota the opportunity to vote and give law makers in Pierre clear direction. However I would say it is the responsibility of each voter to educate themselves on all of the issues on the ballot. There is a great publication put out by the Office of the Secretary of State call 2024 Ballot Questions. It can be picked up at the courthouse or found online.

**Q: What is your plan to get things done in the legislature?**

**A:** Continue to build relationships with existing and new legislator, build consensus, and get things accomplished for the good of all the people of SD and especially my District.

**REED: Continued from page 3**

ability. I look forward to the results of the referendum on SB201 to better understand where the people of District 7 and the whole state stand on this issue.

**Q: What is your position on legal recreational marijuana in South Dakota?**

**A:** I believe in the legalization of marijuana to ensure transparency in potency.

By regulating cannabis, we can

provide consumers with safe access to products that are clearly labeled, promoting informed choices.

Additionally, I will always advocate for private property rights. Property owners should have the authority to control the use of their premises, including the right to prohibit marijuana consumption on their properties. Furthermore, I support businesses in their decisions to not allow employees to use marijuana, prioritizing workplace safety and productivity.

**Q: What is your position on the abortion referendum facing South Dakota voters this fall?**

**A:** I believe that abortion should be permitted in cases of rape and incest. It is crucial that the decision regarding a pregnancy is made between a mother and her doctor, taking into consideration the unique circumstances of the health of the mother.

However, I have concerns about Constitutional Amendment G, which I feel goes too far by not allowing adequate regulations surrounding abor-

tions.

**Q: What is your plan to get things done in the legislature?**

**A:** I am effective as a state legislator due to my extensive experience in local government, which has been enhanced by my tenure in the State House of Representatives and now the State Senate, enabling me to navigate complex political landscapes effectively. I bring a collaborative spirit, which is essential for building relationships across party lines and working with diverse stakeholders to achieve common goals.



# District 7 House: Mellissa Heermann, R-Brookings

*Editor's note: All local candidates responded to The Register's extensive questionnaire. Heermann is an incumbent running for one of two District 7 House seats.*

**Q: What do you want our readers to know about you and your experience for this position?**

**A:** I have been married to my husband Cody for 21 years and we have three children. I am the director of revenue cycle at Brookings Health System and additionally have served in the South Dakota House of Representatives for two years. Before that, I served on the City Council and as Mayor of Lake Preston before moving to Brookings 17 years ago. I then served on the Brookings School Board for six years before making the decision to run for the legislature. I have served in many different leadership roles at Daktronics prior to my current position at the Brookings Health System. I have an undergraduate degree from the University of Nebraska — Lincoln in International Business and a master's degree from South Dakota State University in Operations Management. Serving others is a core value in my life and has helped shape the way I lead and serve today.

**Q: What values inform your campaign most strongly?**

**A:** I always seek to be quick to listen and slow to speak. I strive to listen first with a focused and engaged mind that does not multi-task with attempts to come up with a quick response. I also focus on respectful interactions with others, so that they can see my genuine intent to understand their perspective. Broad topics that are important to me include care for the weak and vulnerable in our communities, support for strong families, educational opportunities, and efforts to support mental health in our state. I have a special place in my heart for veterans and youth. I take all of my experiences in servant leadership and publicly elected posi-



Heermann

tions and utilize them to thoughtfully reflect on all sides of an issue and provide good decision making for District 7 and South Dakota.

**Q: What issues would you put at the top of the state or district's agenda?**

**A:** As I have spoken with people in our district over the last two years, I generally hear that District 7 cares about education, the arts, property taxes and health care. As far as the top issues for this legislative session for the state, that will be directed greatly by which ballot measures are passed by the voters in November.

**Q: What skills and experience would enable you to be successful in this position?**

**A:** I truly care about people in our District and have a genuine desire that our efforts make things better for South Dakota. I do a tremendous amount of work to prepare including discussions, education, reading and research to equip myself as much as possible to make good decisions. I am very even-tempered and can build bridges and create strong relationships with others. That is a necessary skill in order to bring new legislation and get it passed in Pierre. I have experience mediating situations and managing difficult conversations to come to reasonable resolutions and move forward. I also have two years of working hard in the legislature already, successfully bringing forward new legislation that was signed on the Governor's desk and brought into fruition. Because I have learned the process involved, I can hit the ground running.

**Q: What do you think the role of the state legislature is? Please be as specific as possible.**

**A:** To represent the districts they are elected in, remove or reduce legislation that is outdated or unnecessary, update legislation that is needed, provide the mechanism for law making and ensure successful allocation of funds within the budget.

**Q: What is your top priority? Why are you running for this office?**

**A:** My top priority is to represent District 7 well, bring forward legis-

lation that addresses their concerns, ensure a balanced budget, support legislation that ensures a secure future for the state.

I am running as a proven servant leader that has risen in support of our district in a number of different ways over the years.

**Q: What is your position on a possible carbon sequestration pipeline through this area and South Dakota?**

**A:** There are landowners on both sides of this issue, and the ethanol plant in Aurora to consider. The carbon pipeline would support the ag economy as well as the ethanol producers in the state that employ our fellow South Dakotans. It will also support opening up new markets for ethanol in the future, further supporting our farmers.

**Q: What is your position on legal recreational marijuana in South Dakota?**

**A:** I do not support recreational marijuana. The consequences of this passing would be severe and long lasting. It is also interesting to note that should IM 28 also pass, we would not be able to tax the recreational marijuana, as it would be sold for human consumption. This will be up to the voters to decide in November.

**Q: What is your position on the abortion referendum facing South Dakota voters this fall?**

**A:** I do not support Amendment G, which allows abortions through the third trimester. The amendment includes terms that are undefined which brings forward several concerns around what the state can or cannot regulate regarding health and safety regulations. This will be determined by the voters in November.

**Q: What is your plan to get things done in the legislature?**

**A:** I will continue to do be available for constituents, listen to the opinion of others, bring forward strong legis-

## Initiated Measure 29

This measure would allow people 21 and older to "possess, grow, ingest, and distribute marijuana or marijuana paraphernalia." Possession would be allowed up to 2 ounces in a form other than marijuana concentrate or other marijuana products.

This will be the third consecutive election cycle that South Dakota voters are asked whether recreational marijuana should be legal in the state.



# District 7 House: Blake Stevens, D-Brookings

*Editor's note: All local candidates responded to The Register's extensive questionnaire. Stevens is an challenger running for one of two District 7 House seats.*

**Q: What do you want our readers to know about you and your experience for a this position?**

**A:** I want readers to know that my experience comes from real life—working blue-collar jobs, balancing work and education and understanding the daily struggles that many families face. I'm not a career politician; I'm someone who knows first-hand the challenges of making ends meet in today's economy.

My experience gives me a unique perspective on the issues that matter most to working people—fair wages, access to affordable healthcare and the right to a quality education. I've walked in those shoes, and I understand what's at stake. I'm running for office because I believe we need more leaders who truly represent the working class, not corporate interests. I'm committed to being a voice for the people of District 7 and I will work tirelessly to bring about meaningful change for our community.

**Q: What values inform your campaign most strongly?**

**A:** The values that encompass my campaign are integrity, progress, unity and a dedication to the working class. I believe that these are foundational to us as Americans and human beings. When we work as a collective unit for the betterment of our communities there is nothing we cannot achieve. I want to be the voice of those left behind by the system and help bring honor back to the profession of civil service.

**Q: What issues would you put at the top of the state or district's agenda?**

**A:** The top three issues in our district — and I would say the state as a whole — are solving the cost of living crisis, expanding access to affordable quality healthcare and investing heavily into education. By increasing the minimum wage and helping promote small businesses while cracking down on the price gouging we see in large corpora-



Stevens

tions; we can put the economy back to work for the average American. Health care and its ease of access, especially in rural areas, should always be a priority. By expanding access to Medicare and following other states' leads who have easier access to healthcare, we can make sure those in need are properly served in South Dakota. Education is paramount to a thriving society. When we invest in our youth we see dividends down the road. Not only in economic output but in social cohesion and a tight-knit community. When the young people of our great state see that we are putting the time, effort and capital behind them to succeed in the future, they will be more willing to stay here when their education ends and their careers begin.

**Q: What skills and experience would enable you to be successful in this position?**

**A:** Firstly I would say my experience as a regular, blue-collar worker has given me the proper insight to what the actual problems are in society today and what my fellow workers want from their government. Seeing first-hand the struggles that the average American faces grounds me and helps me see the bigger picture. I have also spent the better part of a decade studying, debating, and discussing the topics and hard-

ships we face today. These are a few of the reasons why I decided to go back to school to study political science further and then eventually go to law School. I can use my energy and tenacity to advocate for those who do not have the power to advocate for themselves.

**Q: What do you think the role of the state legislature is? Please be as specific as possible.**

**A:** The role of any state legislature is to be the voice of the people and represent them by crafting, debating and passing laws that directly help the people.

**Q: What is your top priority? Why are you running for this office?**

**A:** My top priority is the working class. I am running to bring dignity and honor back to politics. My desires for this position are to make the government work for the people again. For too long the worker has been suppressed by a lack of government oversight on large corporations and moneyed interests. The people are sick and tired of do-nothing politicians. I am here to bring the power back to the people. I will fight for you, and nobody else.

**Q: What is your position on a possible carbon sequestration pipeline through this area and South Dakota?**

**A:** I oppose the carbon sequestration pipeline as currently proposed through South Dakota. While I believe we must address climate change and reduce carbon emissions, the pipeline raises serious concerns about land rights, safety and environmental impact.

The process of eminent domain—where private land can be taken for public use—is being unfairly used to benefit corporate interests rather than the local communities affected. Farmers and landowners deserve to have control over their property without the threat of having it taken away for a project that primarily benefits outside corporations.

Additionally, pipeline safety is a major concern. There are risks of leaks or accidents that could damage the environment, harm nearby communities, and

pose long-term dangers to our water and land.

We need to focus on sustainable, long-term solutions to combat climate change — like investing in renewable energy, supporting local agriculture, and protecting our natural resources. Any large-scale projects must prioritize the well-being of South Dakotans, respect landowners' rights and ensure that safety and environmental concerns are fully addressed. Until these issues are resolved, I cannot support a project that places corporate interests above the needs and rights of the people.

**Q: What is your position on legal recreational marijuana in South Dakota?**

**A:** Legalize it, tax it and regulate it. There is no reason we are so behind on this issue. This is even outside of the realm of just letting people consume the product. This is about taxes and the state budget. With legalization, we will be able to bring in millions a year in tax revenue that we can use to help fund education, healthcare, housing, and so much more. This is a no brainer, anyone still opposing this legislation is misguided at best and malicious at worst.

**Q: What is your position on the abortion referendum facing South Dakota voters this fall?**

**A:** I stand with the right to choose and will support anyone in their decision to do with their own body what they believe is right for them. The government has no business regulating what an individual can and cannot do with their own bodies. This has been debated and solved for over a thousand years and the consensus is clear — banning abortion does not eliminate the need for it.

**Q: What is your plan to get things done in the legislature?**

**A:** Being in South Dakota I know I will have to work with my Republican house mates so unity and cooperation will be key. I want to be an advocate for all of South Dakota and District 7, not just those in my party.



# District 7 House: Fedora Sutton-Butler, D-Brookings

*Editor's note: All local candidates responded to The Register's extensive questionnaire. Sutton-Butler is a challenger running for one of two District 7 House seats.*

**Q: What do you want our readers to know about you and your experience for a this position?**

**A:** I have been an educator for over 25 years. I have worked for the State of S.D. and the U.S. government as a Program Director at the National Science Foundation. I am the CEO of a non-profit I co-founded in 2006 (Science Visions Inc). I have managed my research laboratory as the principal investigator of teams composed of HS students, teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and visiting scientists from around the globe. I have managed NSF budgets as large as \$37 million.

**Q: What values inform your campaign most strongly?**

**A:** My values are informed by the preamble of the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

**Q: What issues would you put at the top of the State or district's agenda?**

**A:** Basic health, food, housing and education. No child in our state should go to bed hungry or without a safe place to sleep or be able to receive basic medical care. No child should be prohibited from receiving a basic education or be allowed to attend school on an empty stomach. The data are significant that children lacking proper nutrition can fail to thrive physically or academically.

**Q: What skills and experience would enable you to be successful in this position?**

**A:** I can cross party lines to find solutions. I look for solutions rather than debate why we cannot solve the problem or why changes will not work. As a program director at the NSF, one of my responsibilities was to evaluate propos-



Sutton-Butler

als and to find nuggets of risky high-pay-off projects. I know how to see outside the box.

**Q: What do you think the role of the state legislature is? Please be as specific as possible.**

**A:** The state legislature is one of the three arms of the state government. It is the law-making branch. As such, it has the role of evaluating the concerns of the state and generating laws. On various committees, the legislature deliberates on the issues and proposes laws for solutions.

**Q: What is your top priority? Why are you running for this office?**

**A:** I would like to be on the Education and Appropriations committees in the House of Representatives. SD is 49th in the nation for teacher compensation next to Mississippi. I believe I can bring new direction to the committee. In their attempt to make changes to education, the legislatures have removed the teachers' autonomy by defining what can be

taught and how it should be taught in the classroom.

Additionally, I plan to engage the legislature in deliberations about reforming the financing of the total education system as separate from funding the operations of the buildings and support staff.

**Q: What is your position on a possible carbon sequestration pipeline through this area and South Dakota?**

**A:** I vote no to the possible sequestration pipeline. I believe the threat to the safety of communities through which the pipeline will pass is too great. CO2 at the levels released in a pipeline break will release gas, which at the level released would endanger lives. Additionally, the referral law does not protect landowners. It leaves landowners without recourse should there be damage to their property.

**Q: What is your position on legal recreational marijuana in South Dakota?**

**A:** I vote yes. I have analyzed the data, and the evidence that medical or recreational marijuana is a gateway to hard drugs is missing. For states that have recreational marijuana, there has been a decrease in the amount of overdoses on hard drugs from last year compared to this year. Alcohol is more dangerous than marijuana. More people die from overconsumption of alcohol than marijuana, and the social repercussions from alcohol abusers far surpass the passive responses brought on by marijuana. Taxing of recreational marijuana will also serve as a revenue stream for the state as it does for other states.

**Q: What is your position on the abortion referendum facing South Dakota voters this fall?**

**A:** I vote yes. A vote of no supports the extreme measure of the legislature. It is extreme for the legislature with no medi-

cal training to stand between a woman and her doctor, and most extreme is the consideration of criminalization of physicians trained in women's health issues. It is extreme to deny women the right to address their rights regarding issues concerning their bodies. The referendum allows an abortion without intervention effectively until there can be viability outside the womb. The referendum is based on a trimester framework for regulation.

- During the first trimester, the state would be prohibited from regulating a woman's decision to have an abortion;

- During the second trimester, the state may regulate abortion, but "only in ways that are reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman;" and

- During the third trimester, the state may regulate or prohibit abortion, except "when abortion is necessary, in the medical judgment of the woman's physician, to preserve the life and health of the pregnant woman."

The amendment does not call for the killing of babies outside the womb. No physician does that. Physicians take an oath to 'Do No Harm'. Two teams walk into the operating room when there is a problem with a pregnancy. I know. My firstborn was foot-linked breached. There was the team to take care of me, and the pediatrician and the team to take care of the baby. He was lifeless when he was removed from my womb. The pediatrician and his team were able to get him to take "the breath of life". Only then I heard his first sound, and I knew that he was alive.

**Q: What is your plan to get things done in the legislature?**

**A:** I plan to meet with all my colleagues of all persuasion. I plan to attend all the meetings that explain the various committees. I will ensure that I am available to sit on committees I am qualified for. I plan to study the issues we will deliberate on. I plan to read my constituents' letters and come home to visit with them so that I understand their concerns. I will work as a representative of District 7 and the State of SD.

## Amendment E

This is a legislative resolution from the 2023 session that proposes to change outdated male-only references to South Dakota's governor and other officials in the state constitution and statutes.

# District 8 House: Tim Reisch, R-Howard

*Editor's note: All local candidates responded to The Register's extensive questionnaire. Reisch is an incumbent running for the District 8 House seat.*

**Q: What do you want our readers to know about you and your experience for a this position?**

**A:** My wife Anne and I have five children and ten grandchildren, and we want the best possible future for them all. My current legislative committee assignments have allowed me to help shape South Dakota's future in a positive way. As a member of the House Education Committee, I have been a strong advocate of quality public education, increasing teacher pay, and of limiting tuition increases at our state universities. My experience serving as county sheriff and corrections secretary for many years has been extremely valuable as a member of the House Judiciary Committee. We consider many proposals that impact the public safety of South Dakotans, which is a high priority of mine. Finally, as Chair of the House Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, I have been able to help pass laws that assist our veterans and their families. My 40 years of military service have been extremely valuable in this role.

**Q: What values inform your campaign most strongly?**

**A:** I have lived a life of public service, which began at age 20 when I enlisted in the South Dakota Army National Guard, and at age 24 when I was first elected as the Miner County Sheriff. My strong Christian faith also fuels my personal desire to serve others. When I retired from the state in 2019, I felt that I could still serve the public in a meaningful way, so I applied for and was selected to fill the position of Miner County Veterans Service Officer. I really enjoy helping veterans and their families receive the benefits that they have earned. My wife Anne is continually helping others in the community, and she is a true inspiration for me. This year, we volunteered to teach the confirmation class at our church. It is a way to not only share our



**Reisch** faith with the youth of our parish, but to continue to grow closer to God as well. I believe that there is a lot of opportunity throughout our legislative district. Rather than dwelling on the negative, I believe we should strive to be thankful for the blessings we have, and if able, commit to helping others who have not been as fortunate.

**Q: What issues would you put at the top of the state or district's agenda?**

**A:** Ever-rising property taxes, daycare shortages, as well as workforce and housing challenges are the most common complaints that I have heard since taking office. Some counties have also struggled to remain financially solvent leading to reduction in services and spending down reserves. I was selected to serve on a legislative study committee last summer to look for solutions to county funding, as well as a committee currently underway examining property tax methodology. The property tax study committee will develop legislation to introduce in the 2025 session to provide needed relief. I also will continue to support grants and low-interest loans to communities that address daycare and housing challenges.

**Q: What skills and experience would enable you to be successful in this position?**

**A:** I was elected county sheriff at age 24 and reelected to four subsequent 4-year terms. I served on the cabinets

of three different governors (Rounds, Dugaard & Noem) serving as Secretary of Corrections from 2003 to 2011 and as the Adjutant General of the SD National Guard from 2011 to 2019. In 2022 I was elected as a state representative for District 8. Even though I have only completed two legislative sessions, I was the prime sponsor on six House bills and four Senate bills that passed and were signed into law. These successes far surpassed other first-term, as well as many veteran legislators. I know how to get things done in Pierre! Regardless of the outcome of this election, I do not intend to run for a third term, because I believe a certain amount of turnover is healthy for the legislature. However, sending two first-term legislators to Pierre at the same time would not be in the best interests of the citizens of District 8.

**Q: What do you think the role of the state legislature is? Please be as specific as possible.**

**A:** First and foremost, the legislature represents the people. The fact that about half of the bills I have introduced since taking office were ideas brought to me by constituents shows that I have listened to the people I was elected to represent. Another critical role of the legislature is to pass a budget that funds state government operations every year. I was proud to support the largest tax cut in the state's history during the 2022 legislative session. We need to continue to look for ways to cut state government spending if we are to have any realistic chance at providing property tax relief. Finally, the legislature must understand, respect and effectively work with the other two branches of government – the executive branch and the judicial branch.

**Q: What is your top priority? Why are you running for this office?**

**A:** The people of District 8 deserve the most effective person possible to help shape the future and represent their interests in Pierre. Because I have completed two legislative sessions as a member of the House of Representatives makes me the

most experienced choice. It is likely that I will be selected to chair the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee again, and I may also be considered for other leadership positions. As mentioned earlier, one of my top priorities is property tax relief. Runaway inflation has driven up the cost to run our schools and local governments. It has also caused property valuations to rise dramatically. The state needs to find efficiencies to provide relief to local taxpayers. I have proven that I am effective at getting legislation passed to benefit the citizens that I represent, and I pledge to work hard to reduce taxes.

**Q: What is your position on a possible carbon sequestration pipeline through this area and South Dakota?**

**A:** It is important to understand that whether or not a CO2 pipeline is constructed in South Dakota is not up the legislature. That decision ultimately lies with the Public Utilities Commission and with the courts. Even though there are more than 5,000 miles of CO2 pipelines operating safely in other states, currently, no pipeline company has the authority to build one here. If, however, a company is granted the authority to build a pipeline here, I want to make sure that the landowners and the local governments impacted get the best possible outcome in the end.

**Q: What is your position on legal recreational marijuana in South Dakota?**

**A:** I oppose the legalization of recreational marijuana. The societal costs far outweigh any new tax revenue that proponents claim it will create.

**Q: What is your position on the abortion referendum facing South Dakota voters this fall?**

**A:** It is too extreme.

**Q: What is your plan to get things done in the legislature?**

**A:** I have a proven track record and know how to get things done in Pierre. I will leverage that experience and my relationships with other legislators and the executive branch to best benefit the citizens of District 8.



# District 8 House: Tim Walburg, R-Madison

**Q: What do you want our readers to know about you and your experience for a this position?**

**A:** I want to bring my 30-plus years of public service protecting and working for you. We have to bring people together and talk about the issues, create dialog, and working together. I have a strong desire to continue improvements with public safety, education, infrastructure, and healthcare. We've got to be able to put politics aside to work for what is best for our citizens while listening and working together. While working with the South Dakota Sheriff's Association, I have had firsthand experience working with the legislature and lobbyists for 13 years. While we didn't win everything, we did make great progress moving things forward for the next session. I have been proud to continue the open dialog my former predecessors have done, and other continue to do today.

**Q: What values inform your campaign most strongly?**

**A:** I have a dedicated 30 years of public service. I have demonstrated during those years working in the medical field and law enforcement on how I help protect you. Protecting your rights just isn't a single topic. In law enforcement, you must be able to adapt to any situation at any given time. The same holds true for emergency



Walburg

medical services. This is what I will bring to Pierre.

**Q: What issues would you put at the top of the state or district's agenda?**

**A:** Making sure we have a balanced budget with the resources available to us. If the sales tax initiative passes, the legislature and state agencies will be forced to take hard looks to optimize the funds we already collect. I want to make sure you are keeping your hard earned money in your pockets without the additional inflation we already experience. I will work hard to maintain public safety and take your interests, to make sure you are being protected. I will work with my fellow colleagues to develop economic growth, try to keep our work force here in South Dakota.

**Q: What skills and experience would enable you to be successful in this position?**

**A:** With my 30 years of dedicated public service in emergency medical services and law enforcement, I have had the distinct pleasure be a part of the SD Sheriff's Office and serve our association in Pierre. I have worked with the legislature and lobbyist on law enforcement

related matters. The experience I have gained will help me effectively communicate with our constituents and fellow colleagues for the best outcomes for our state. I also have over 20 years of preparing and working budgets. I was excited every year that I could return money from my budget back as a surplus.

**Q: What do you think the role of the state legislature is? Please be as specific as possible.**

**A:** Our role is to be good stewards of your tax dollars. The legislature needs to make sure we are using your tax dollars in the best manner possible. We have to work hard to keep your hard-earned money where it belongs while we work to control inflation. The legislature works with all departments for laws and some policy changes, and authorized department budgets, as it relates to state government. The legislature should also put priority on protecting your public safety.

**Q: What is your top priority? Why are you running for this office?**

**A:** I want to be the voice for constituents and represent them as I did while Sheriff, protecting your safety and your rights. As when I was Sheriff, you are the first line of communication and sometimes the last. They remember the first person they spoke with and relate

See **WALBURG**, page 11

# District 8 House: Greg Zimmerman, L-Wentworth

**Q: What do you want our readers to know about you and your experience for a this position?**

**A:** I was born and raised in South Dakota, and have lived both East River and West River and worked various jobs along the way. I know what it's like to work construction as a laborer, and how it changes as an engineer. I'm very connected to the agriculture and industrial side of the economy — I know how it works, and what to do to help people and business owners prosper.

**Q: What values inform your campaign most strongly?**

**A:** Freedom, liberty and self-determination. I'm like a lot of people in this state currently — I'm sick of our elected representatives telling us they stand for us, then selling out our rights at the first opportunity for a campaign check. I plan to be seen as honest and forthright — no one who wants to know will ever be left in the dark of how I feel about any proposed law. I want this because I believe in transparency; but I also believe that when we don't agree, a conversation is a good first step, because even if we don't agree in the end, we've had an honest conversation about the topic, and that's the first step to solving a lot of our issues.

**Q: What issues would you put at the top of the state or district's agenda?**

**A:** Property rights. I stand with the people and will fight the use of government by any corporation to take



Zimmerman

people's land without their permission just so they can make a larger profit for themselves. This is the most important issue. Our representatives have sold our property rights away, and want to tell you it's for "economic development". In reality, it's so some corporations owned by a few millionaires in the agricultural industry can make a few more millions, while we risk our lives living near the pipeline.

The end result of this is farther reaching than just property rights when it comes to pipelines — what happens when Amtrak wants to route its new track directly through some rancher's pasture? Are we just going to let them get steamrolled as well, as long as the "economic development" is there? I am the ONLY candidate in this race saying they will unequivocally stand for your rights for property and as a person. That should tell you something.

Inflation and rising taxes make it more difficult for people to afford groceries, rent, and gas. As a Libertarian candidate, my goal is to make government less wasteful, in turn creating a budget surplus, and sending that back to the citizens in the form of lower taxes.

**Q: What skills and experience would enable you to be successful in this position?**

**A:** As an electrical engineer and journeyman electrician, I've spent my career solving problems using logic and common sense. I plan to apply this to the problems we face as a state. In addition, my background in biofuels, automation and construction will help me see through false arguments other politicians use.

I am a volunteer firefighter on Chester Fire Department, and a rescue diver on the Lake County Dive Rescue Team as well and spent a year working as an EMT on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, which gives me inside knowledge of the issues facing our state's first responders.

I'm not a professional politician, and in my eyes that's a good thing.

**Q: What do you think the role of the state legislature is? Please be as specific as possible.**

**A:** The first and foremost task is to protect the rights of the people you're representing. Next, your role should be to find ways to help those in need, but at the same time work to reduce the burden placed on families by government — meaning lower taxes. The goal should always be to become more efficient and streamlined, while protecting people's rights.

**Q: What is your top priority? Why are you running for this office?**

**A:** I'm running because our elected representatives have

See **ZIMMERMAN**, page 11

**WALBURG Continued from page 10**

back to you when things don't go right our have questions. We need to make good sound decisions. We don't need to make new laws when changing some of what we currently have is the best decision. I want to make sure we are protecting your tax dollars and keeping your hard-earned money where it belongs. The legislature has to continue to do our party with public safety. We need to provide those with the tools to do their job.

**Q: What is your position on a possible carbon sequestration pipeline through this area and South Dakota?**

**A:** I am a proponent for improved infrastructure for cities and counties. Improving infrastructure and services, help with economic growth. While I was not in Pierre when this legislation was drafted and eventually approved and signed by Gov. Noem, I have listened to several people talk pros, cons, and I have taken away lots of concerns. The South Dakota Supreme Court has issued their opinion on this matter, which changes SB 201. I do not support parts of this legislation. I know the bill says landowners will be compensated, but I am concerned about those that aren't landowners and should a disaster happen, how are we going to ensure they are taken cared of? I understand the landowners that are in favor of this project and safeguards they have noted in the legislation. When people do not agree, we have a process for citizens to voice their concerns and bring the vote to the people, which is going to happen here and allow their voice to be heard. The safety of the citizens should be our top concern.

**Q: What is your position on legal recreational marijuana in South Dakota?**

**A:** I am not in favor of legalizing Marijuana. This legislation only allows you to possess and grow your own and doesn't allow you to offer Marijuana for sale or distribute to anybody else.

**Q: What is your position on the abortion referendum facing South Dakota voters this fall?**

**A:** I am not in favor of the abortion referendum. I feel this takes things to far and abortion can happen right up to birth.

**ZIMMERMAN Continued from page 10**

a problem with honesty and transparency, and that bleeds through to their voting records. I'm running because we need representatives who don't belong to foreign corporations. The government should work for the people.

**Q: What is your position on a possible carbon sequestration pipeline through this area and South Dakota?**

**A:** Economic development should not come at the expense of people's property rights. Making the Summit Carbon Pipeline synonymous with economic development means taking on the assumption it will make a large amount of money. If it's going to be so profitable, then Summit should be able to offer property owners compensation for the loss of value on their property and to assuage their concerns. They could, but they don't want to; that's why they're paying off our representatives to help them take the people's land for an amount much lower than is fair compensation.

RL21 is by no means a "landowner bill of rights." It takes local control of ordinances away from counties and gives it to the state. I stand with the people — no eminent domain for private gain.

**Q: What is your position on legal recreational marijuana in South Dakota?**

**A:** This is the third time this has been voted on by the people in this state, and in 2020 when it was during the general election where more people vote, it was passed very convincingly before being vetoed by our governor.

The law enforcement professionals I've talked to through the years would like to not have to look for this. If we are going to allow citizens to consume alcohol, which is far more dangerous, then I don't see what the issue is with allowing citizens to consume marijuana

**Q: What is your position on the abortion referendum facing South Dakota voters this fall?**

**A:** I'm Catholic so that will tell you how my opinion on this amendment starts. I believe Amendment G is far too extreme and needs far better framework. I remember back years ago when the statements talking about abortion contained the phrase "Safe, legal and RARE". The problem is, it isn't rare anymore, and it truly hurts my conscience.

**MELLISSA HEERMANN**  
STATE HOUSE

**ROGER DEGROOT**  
STATE HOUSE

**TIM REED**  
STATE SENATE

**WORKING FOR BROOKINGS**  
**WORKING FOR YOU!**

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES RUNNING UNOPPOSED IN THE GENERAL ELECTION.**

**TIM REED - DISTRICT 7 SENATE  
CASEY CRABTREE - DISTRICT 8 SENATE  
DOUG POST - COUNTY COMMISSION  
DAVE MILLER - COUNTY COMMISSION**

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**BALLOT ISSUES**

**VOTE NO ON "G"** - Abortion Rights Amendment - *It's too extreme.*

**VOTE NO ON "H"** - Open Primary Amendment - *It undermines our political process.*

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# ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024