



TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: JIM HOBART

RE: KEY FINDINGS FROM A STATEWIDE SURVEY OF LIKELY VOTERS IN SOUTH DAKOTA

DATE: OCTOBER 17, 2026

Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies conducted a statewide survey of N=500 likely voters in South Dakota. The survey was conducted by live interviewers from October 12-16, 2026 and has a margin of error of $\pm 4.38\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases

Key Findings

- ***Senator Mike Rounds has a strong image in South Dakota***

Senator Rounds is well-known and well-liked in South Dakota, with his image sitting at 94% name ID/52% favorable/32% unfavorable. Rounds is quite popular with Republicans (69% fav/15% unfav), and his favorables top 50% with both men (53%) and women (52%).

- ***The incumbent Senator leads by seventeen points on the ballot.***

Fully 54% of South Dakota voters back Mike Rounds, with 37% voting for former Democrat Brian Bengs. Rounds intensity of support (42% definitely Rounds) is more than Bengs total vote.

Rounds also leads by sixteen points (54% Rounds/38% Bengs) with voters who rate their interest in the election as a ten, and his support sits at 54% in both the Sioux Falls and Rapid City media markets.

The Bottom Line

There have been a flurry of polls trying to suggest this race is competitive, but the reality is Mike Rounds remains quite popular in South Dakota and is once-again poised to be re-elected by a double-digit margin.

Note on the sample

The sample consists of 52% registered Republicans, 25% registered Democrats, and 22% Independent/NPA/Other. Actual registration in the state is 52.9% Republican/21.5% Democrat/25.6% Independent/NPA/Other.