

## South Dakota (SD) (3 votes)

Capital: **Pierre**  
 Area: **77,116sq mi. / 199,729sq km**  
 Population: **919,318**  
 Nickname: **"The Mount Rushmore State"**  
 State motto: **"Under God the People Rule"**  
 Governor: **Kristi Noem (R)**  
 U.S. Senators: **John Thune (R),  
Mike Rounds (R)**



### How will your state vote?

Predicting a vote is a challenging task. Political researchers have different opinions on how to predict an election outcome. Different formulas and methods are used, however none is perfect. Each prediction is a snapshot of the voters' opinion at a certain point in time. But with election issues and current events changing so fast, it is quite a challenge to have an accurate prediction of how the election will turn out. In the 2020 election, most political pundits and polls before Election Day accurately estimated that Democratic candidate Joe Biden would receive more votes than the Republican candidate and former President Donald J. Trump. However, Biden's victory in the Electoral College was narrower than predicted because the polls overstated Biden's support relative to Trump.

What are the most common predictors to determine how citizens will vote? Socio-economic factors are among the most important ones. They include, but are not limited to, citizens' education, income, and ethnicity. While these are often mentioned as decisive, others are important to consider as well. For example, many Americans cast their vote based on a single issue like health care, women's reproductive rights, the economy, or the environment. These voters choose their preferred candidate based on the issue most important to their identity, their social network, or personal biography, for example religious affiliation, ideology, or health. Americans also often cast their vote in a local context and are influenced by political and social issues affecting their own state. Finally, calculating voter turnout is key to an accurate prediction.

### Some key variables for predicting the election outcome



#### Voting history

*How have people in the state voted in the past? Is the state solidly red, blue, or purple? What is the expected turnout?*



#### Ethnicity

*What ethnic group does a citizen belong to? What is the ethnic make-up of the state?*



#### Religion

*How important is religion to the citizens? How often do they pray or attend worship service?*



#### Economy

*What's the current economic situation in the state? How many citizens live in poverty? How many are without a job?*



#### Income inequality

*How wide is the gap between wealthy and poor people? How much income does the top 1% in the state take home?*



#### Education

*How many people graduate from high school in your state? How many have a college degree?*



## Voting history <sup>[2]</sup>

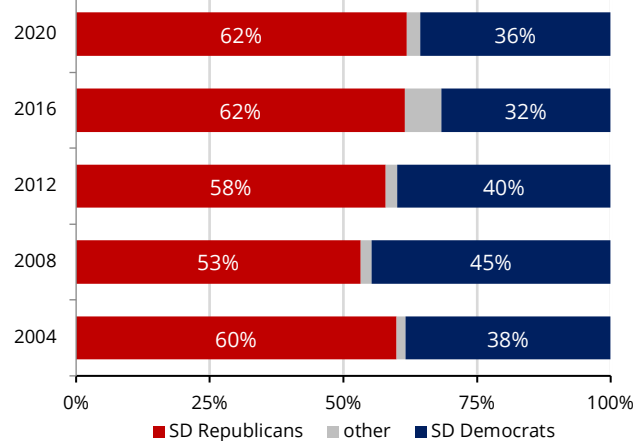
South Dakota entered the Union in November 1889, one of four states admitted in the first part of that month, the busiest period of new-statehood creation in U.S. history.

South Dakota is reliably Republican in presidential elections – only voting Democratic four times, most recently in 1964 when Lyndon Johnson won a landslide victory over Barry Goldwater. South Dakota is one of six states with the minimum three electoral votes. In 2020, Donald Trump defeated Joe Biden by a margin of 26 points.

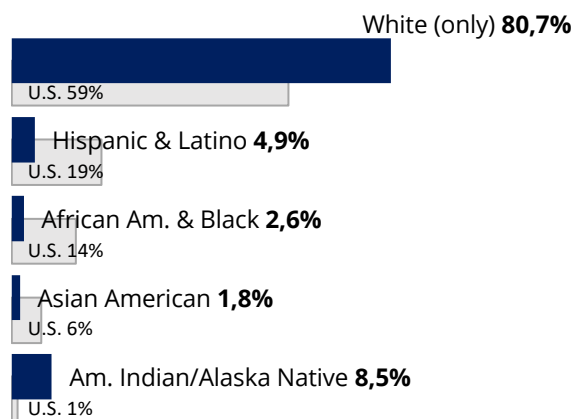
### Voter turnout 2020:



## Election results in South Dakota (2004–2020): <sup>[2]</sup>



## Ethnicity <sup>[3]</sup>



(U.S. average in grey)



## Religion <sup>[4]</sup>

SD is the 16<sup>th</sup> most religious state overall

59% of adults in SD are "highly religious," based on an overall index

### Religious profile of South Dakota

57% (16<sup>th</sup>) say religion is very important in their lives

36% (21<sup>st</sup>) say they attend worship at least weekly

73% (17<sup>th</sup>) say they pray daily

82% (13<sup>th</sup>) say they believe in God w/ absolute certainty



## Economy <sup>[5]</sup>

**12.5%** (23<sup>rd</sup> highest)  
poverty rate

**2.0%** (3<sup>rd</sup> lowest)  
unemployment rate



## Income inequality <sup>[6]</sup>

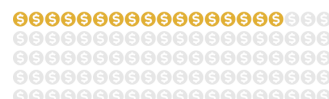
The **top 1%** take home **17% of all the income in SD.**

(U.S. average: 21%)

1% of the families



17% of the income

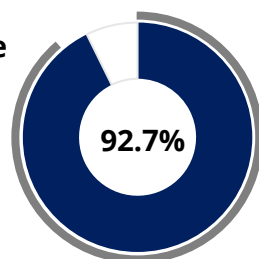


## Education <sup>[3]</sup>

**High school degree or higher**

persons 25+ yrs. old

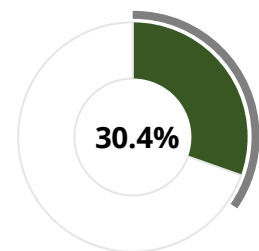
U.S. average: 89.1%



**Bachelor's degree or higher**

persons 25+ yrs. old

U.S. average: 34.3%





## More information on South Dakota\*



### State information

Official state website: <https://sd.gov/>



## Media



South Dakota Political News

<https://www.politico.com/news/south-dakota>



South Dakota Political Podcast

[https://podcasts.feedspot.com/south\\_dakota\\_political\\_podcasts/](https://podcasts.feedspot.com/south_dakota_political_podcasts/)



## Democrats and Republicans in the state

### Democratic Party



<http://www.sddp.org>



[www.youtube.com/@SoDakDems](http://www.youtube.com/@SoDakDems)



<http://twitter.com/SoDakDems>



<https://www.instagram.com/sodakdems/>



no official site

### Republican Party

<http://southdakotagop.com/>

[www.youtube.com/@southdakotarepublicanparty9884](http://www.youtube.com/@southdakotarepublicanparty9884)

<http://twitter.com/sdgop>

<https://www.instagram.com/southdakotagop>

no official site

\* Please note, these are third-party resources, Teach About U.S. is not responsible for this content.

### Sources:

1. State map: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
2. Voting history text: adapted from [270towin.com](http://270towin.com)
3. Ethnicity, economy, and education data: [U.S. Census Bureau](#)
4. Religion data: [Pew poll: How religious is your state?](#)
5. Poverty and unemployment rate: [Poverty Rates by State & Unemployment Statistics Map](#)
6. Wealth and income inequality data: [Economic Policy Institute – The Unequal States of America](#)