



# South Dakota Secretary of State

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## **SECRETARY OF STATE MONAE L. JOHNSON EXPLAINS SOUTH DAKOTA'S PRIMARY ABSENTEE VOTING**

Facts regarding South Dakota's primary absentee voting:

- The candidate petition filing deadline was the last Tuesday in March.
- In 2026, there were five Tuesdays in March which resulted in the deadline date being March 31.
- Current law allows candidates to send their petitions via registered mail if they are post marked by 5:00pm CT, March 31.
- Registered mail and petition challenges delay the finalization of ballots.
- After a petition is filed, there is a 5-business day petition challenge window.
- We had a record number of statewide candidate petitions filed (12 in all), which necessitated staff working during the Easter holiday, including on Easter Sunday.
- We have a federal ballot, which is new to South Dakota.
- City/School contests are now required to be on the Primary ballot (HB 1130).
- Absentee voting is to begin April 17.
- We provided guidance to the auditors early Wednesday, outlining the option for them to use sample ballots to accommodate absentee voting until they receive their ballots. The two statutes that apply are SDCL [12-19-3](#) and [12-16-17](#).

"I stand in support of our county auditors and the excellent work they do every day. There is no such thing as working 8-5 when it comes to elections and we should all be grateful for their dedication to the election process," Secretary Johnson stated.