



TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: JIM HOBART

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

DATE: AUGUST 5, 2026

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**Methodology**

*Public Opinion Strategies conducted a statewide survey of N=500 likely November 2026 general election voters in South Dakota. The survey was conducted by live interviewers from July 6-9, 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 and Brian Bengs is essentially unknown.***

Mike Rounds remains well-known and popular with South Dakota voters, with 93% name ID and an image of 51% favorable/34% unfavorable.

Conversely, Brian Bengs is essentially unknown, despite the investments he has already made in this race. Bengs' name ID is just 29%, with an image of 11% favorable/4% unfavorable.

Bengs will need to invest significant resources to become even a marginally credible candidate in this race.

- ***Rounds leads by more than twenty points in a head-to-head match up against Bengs.***

In an one-on-one match up with Bengs, Rounds has lead by 23 points (56% Rounds/33% Bengs). Rounds' definite vote sits at 35%, meaning the Senator's definite vote is higher than Bengs' total vote.

Rounds leads not just overwhelmingly with Republican voters, but also outpaces Bengs among Independents (47% Rounds/42% Bengs) and also wins 23% of the Democratic vote.

Notably, the 33% of the vote Bengs receives is nearly identical to the vote share of Rounds' Democratic opponent in 2020 (34%).

**The Bottom Line**

Brian Bengs is a lifelong liberal Democrat who ran as a Democrat against John Thune just four years ago and lost by more than forty points. South Dakota voters will not be fooled by his politically convenient switch to running as an Independent, especially given Bengs' liberal record of supporting abortion and backing restrictions on guns.

Senator Mike Rounds has a strong record of the type of conservative leadership that South Dakota voters expect and is extremely well-positioned to again win re-election and continue to deliver for South Dakota.