

## S.D. Crops Progress Despite Rain, Strong Wind

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Despite rain and strong winds last week, farmers and ranchers in South Dakota had five days for fieldwork and brought the harvest season closer to the end.

The U.S. Agriculture Department says in its weekly crop and weather report that 95 percent of winter wheat has been planted, which is behind last year and the five-year averages of 98 percent. Twenty-three-percent of winter wheat has emerged, behind last year's estimate of 90 percent and the five-year average of 88 percent.

Sunflower was 92 percent harvested, above last year's 78 percent and average of 42 percent.

Cattle conditions were rated at 67 percent good to excellent, 29 percent fair and 4 percent poor.

## Judge Tosses Lawsuit Against Daugaard

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A circuit court judge has ruled that Gov. Dennis Daugaard's contract with a national recruiting firm can stand.

Judge Mark Barnett on Thursday dismissed a lawsuit filed against the governor that aimed to invalidate a \$5 million contract awarded to Manpower.

KELO-TV reports that Careers Unlimited Staffing, Employment Edge and Reagan Enterprises argued the contract violated state and federal laws and the U.S. Constitution. The agencies said the governor overstepped his authority and put them at a competitive disadvantage.

Manpower's contract was to recruit 1,000 skilled out-of-state workers to fill positions in financial services, information technology, engineering and manufacturing. The Legislature approved the plan.

The judge says the plaintiffs didn't have enough of a case. Lawyer Steven Sanford tells the *Argus Leader* his clients haven't yet decided if they'll appeal.

## Pipe Bomb Found In Omaha Park Blown Up

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A pipe bomb found in a city park in south-central Omaha has been detonated.

Omaha police say officers were sent to Seymour Smith Park around 3:45 p.m. Tuesday. The pipe bomb had been found in a wooded area of the city park, near the skate park area.

Bomb squad member say the pipe was filled with an explosive powder. A 300-foot safety perimeter was cleared, and the bomb was detonated a little after 6 p.m.

Officers haven't determined how or why the bomb ended up in the park.

## Some Omaha Schools Won't Display Tribute

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Millard Public Schools district in Omaha won't allow its schools to display a traveling tribute to Nebraska's fallen soldiers.

Bill Williams and his wife, Evonne, launched "Remembering Our Fallen" in January 2011. It honors the servicemen and women with Nebraska ties who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The tribute has made weeklong visits to courthouses, libraries, hospitals and at least 10 schools. It's at Syracuse High School in southeast Nebraska this week.

District spokeswoman Rebecca Kleeman told the Lincoln Journal Star that logistics were a problem. And she said the district is concerned about setting a precedent.

Kleeman says the district's lawyers say that if the "Remembering Our Fallen" tribute is displayed, any group with an opposing viewpoint could demand similar space for a similar duration.

## South Dakota's Child Obesity Rate Rises

PIERRE (AP) — Childhood obesity in South Dakota rose slightly during the 2011-2012 school year, with more than 15 percent of kids younger than 19 reported as obese.

The South Dakota Department of Health reports that 15.9 percent of children younger than 19 are obese in South Dakota, up slightly from 15.2 percent the previous year.

Health officials say obesity rates are up among all age groups. Still, South Dakota's rate is below the national obesity rate of 19.6 percent for children 19 and under.

State Nutritionist Kristin Biskeborn called the increase disappointing. She says overweight and obese children become obese adults who develop more chronic disease than their peers who had healthy weights as children.

## Names Of Omaha Shooting Victims Released

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Police have released the names of a teenager who was fatally wounded and a young woman who also was shot in northeast Omaha.

The dead girl was identified as 16-year-old Eriana Carr. The other victim was identified as 20-year-old Nakia Johnson. Police say Johnson remained in stable condition Wednesday at Nebraska Medical Center.

Officers who were sent to reports of a shooting about 8:15 p.m. Tuesday found the two victims.

No arrests have been reported. The investigation is continuing.

## Officials Probe 2 Deaths In Neb. Panhandle

ALLIANCE, Neb. (AP) — Authorities are investigating the deaths of two men whose bodies were found at different locations on different days in the Nebraska Panhandle city of Alliance.

Alliance Police Chief John Kiss says the body of a 40-year-old man was discovered Monday evening in the basement of his home. Kiss says the body of the second man was found Tuesday morning, leaning up against a fence elsewhere in town.

Their names haven't been released.

It's unclear whether authorities suspect crimes were involved in the men's deaths.

Kiss and Box Butte County Attorney Kathleen Hutchinson didn't immediately return messages Wednesday from The Associated Press.

## Gov. Daugaard Casts Early Ballot In Pierre

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard has cast his ballot early for this year's general election.

The Republican governor and first lady Linda Daugaard voted early Wednesday at the Hughes County Courthouse in Pierre.

Daugaard says he often votes early in elections because it's convenient to cast a ballot on a day that fits his schedule.



AM 1450

**MORNING COFFEE**

WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY

**Thursday, November 2**

7:40 am Yankton Conv/Vis Bureau (Lisa Scheve)

8:20 am Yankton Chamber (Carmen Schramm)

**Friday, November 3**

7:40 am YAPG (Mike Dellinger)

8:20 am YAA (Jackie Quinn)

## Decision 2012 | S.D. House Race

# Noem, Varilek Stress Differences

BY CHET BROKAW

Associated Press

PIERRE — Republican Rep. Kristi Noem and Democratic challenger Matt Varilek seem to be fighting for more than South Dakota's lone U.S. House seat. They're seeking to outdo each other in a battle to claim the title as the true South Dakotan in the race.

Noem tells voters she's one of them, having lived her entire life in South Dakota, working on the family farm and running small businesses until she was elected to Congress two years ago. Her take on Varilek? Those two degrees from British universities proves he's not one of us.

Varilek argues that he understands middle-class South Dakotans because he grew up in a low-income household, worked his way through college flipping burgers and toiling on farms, and learned much while working for several U.S. senators. He has hammered Noem for missing many House committee meetings and failing to get a farm bill passed.

On Tuesday, voters will decide which candidate's background will best represent their needs in Washington, D.C., in a race that has grown increasingly competitive in recent weeks.

Noem enjoys an advantage as a Republican in a state where registered GOP voters far outnumber Democrats, and she has raised about three times as much campaign money as Varilek has. But Varilek has fought back with campaign ads that some say are working to undermine Noem's footing.

Bob Burns, a retired political science professor at South Dakota State University, said a Varilek win would be an upset — "it's an uphill battle to win a statewide race as a Democrat in South Dakota in modern times," he said — but the race could be close because Varilek has run a good campaign that has put Noem on the defensive.

In that battle, Noem and Varilek have spent a lot of time arguing about whose background best qualifies them to help decide what direction the nation takes on taxes, Medicare and farm policy.

Noem cut short her college career to return to her family's farm and ranch after her father died in 1994, but finally graduated this year with a bachelor's degree in political science from South Dakota State University. She still lives on part of the family ranch near Castlewood with her husband and three children, and

over the years also operated a hunting lodge and restaurant before being elected to the South Dakota House of Representatives for two terms in 2007-2010, serving as assistant leader of the Republican majority for the last two years.

Noem drew national attention in the Republican surge of 2010, when she defeated Democratic Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, a rising star in the Democratic Party at the time.

"My experiences running businesses and raising my family here in the state have told me that the people need a representative in Washington, D.C., that knows how they feel in their everyday life," Noem told The Associated Press.

Varilek grew up in Tabor and Yankton before getting a bachelor's degree from Carleton College in Minnesota and master's degrees in economic development from Scotland's University of Glasgow in 1999 and Cambridge University in England in 2002. He worked as an analyst for an energy commodities brokerage and later worked briefly for Democratic Sens. Tom Daschle of South Dakota and Byron Dorgan of North Dakota before joining Democratic Sen. Tim Johnson's staff in 2005.

These are credentials the state GOP attacked in an anti-Varilek campaign video that went viral — largely because some viewed it as strangely anti-education and, in fact, a better ad for Varilek than for Noem.

Living in Sioux Falls with his wife and two young daughters, Varilek was Johnson's economic development director from 2007 until he entered the House race in 2011.

"I have had to work hard my whole life like most South Dakotans have. I commit to the people of South Dakota that I will work my tail off for them in the U.S. Congress," Varilek told The Associated Press.

Varilek frequently criticized Noem for missing many meetings of the House Agriculture Committee and other panels.

"South Dakotans of all political backgrounds understand you've got to show up to earn your salary. She hasn't been showing up," Varilek said.

Noem countered that she serves on many committees that often meet at the same time. She said she's had 800 meetings with constituents and has a 99 percent voting record in committees.



Noem



Varilek

"I wake up every day and decide which committee I need to go to that is in the best interests of South Dakota," she told the AP.

The Republican congresswoman accused Varilek of following President Barack Obama on taxes, Medicare and other issues.

Noem opposes raising tax rates, particularly in a shaky economy, but supports closing loopholes and exemptions to raise more federal revenue. Varilek favors raising taxes on families earning more than \$250,000, a move he said would cut the deficit while protecting key programs.

Varilek said Noem's refusal to raise taxes on millionaires shows she "favors the wealthiest individuals and corporations above all else."

Noem said Varilek's plan would tax many small business owners into laying off employees.

"That's devastating for us and our way of life," Noem said.

On Medicare, Varilek wants to preserve traditional health plan for retired people while curbing costs through efficiencies. Noem supports preserving existing Medicare for those 55 and older, while giving younger people the option of keeping traditional Medicare or getting private insurance subsidized by the government.

Meanwhile, Varilek has questioned Noem's effectiveness because she failed to get the farm bill through the House. Noem countered that she did everything she could to get the bill passed before Congress recessed for the election, but a vote had to be delayed because it would have failed.

Noem said Congress cut spending in the past two years and she helped gain House passage of disaster programs for livestock producers, got additional money to help fight the infestation of mountain pine beetles destroying trees in the Black Hills and helped block cuts to Ellsworth Air Force Base in western South Dakota.

"We've got some small successes, but our work is not done," Noem said.

Varilek said Congress is in a stalemate on key issues because Republicans have refused to compromise.

"I believe we need members of Congress willing to work together to find common ground," he said.

## Decision 2012 | Nebraska Senate

# Race Shows Signs Of Growing Tighter

BY MARGERY A. BECK

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — A Nebraska U.S. Senate race that once appeared headed for a blowout has gotten newfound attention with a frenzy of spending on political ads and some polls showing the race could be tightening.

With less than a week to go before Election Day, Republican Deb Fischer is banking on her association with the state's most popular Republicans — including Gov. Dave Heineman and U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns. She also has tried to tie opponent Bob Kerrey to President Barack Obama and other national Democrats in the deeply conservative state.

Kerrey is fighting back with a nod to Nebraska's history of electing conservative-leaning Democrats by reaching out to Republican and independent voters. His campaign has focused on voters' frustration with partisan gridlock in Congress and has promised to be legislator who can reach across the aisle to solve spiraling national debt and salvage Social Security and Medicare.

And between the two candidates is a new rush of ads funded by hundreds of thousands of dollars by outside groups hoping to determine the outcome of the race.

"I think the thing that says is, where a few months ago many Republicans nationally were not taking the Kerrey candidacy very seriously, now they're taking it very seriously," said Randall Adkins, political science professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. "Relative to other races that we see around the county, now this one is starting to look competitive."

Nebraska has a long history of electing Democrats despite the state's conservative leanings — as Kerrey himself showed in his first run for office when he defeated a sitting Republican governor in 1982. Kerrey later went on to twice be elected as U.S. senator.



Decision '12

And money is no guarantee of victory in Nebraska, either. In the most expensive Senate race in Nebraska history in 2006, Democratic incumbent Ben Nelson spent about \$7 million to Republican Pete Ricketts' nearly \$13 million — which included about \$12 million of his own money. Nelson beat Ricketts with more than 60 percent of the vote.

But the state has trended more conservative over the last decade. Nelson currently is the only Democrat in Nebraska's five-member federal delegation, and Republicans hold all of the state's constitutional offices. In the officially nonpartisan Nebraska Legislature, only 15 of the Legislature's 49 members identify themselves as Democrats.

A spate of polls in recent weeks have shown the race anywhere from a double-digit lead for Fischer to within a couple of percentage points. But most agree that the race appears to be tightening, as Republican-leaning super political action committees have announced plans this week to launch ads attacking Kerrey.

That includes a televised ad by American Crossroads, the group organized by Republican operative Karl Rove, which began airing Wednesday. The ad slams Kerrey, calling him "liberal" and "out of touch," for having voted against a federal balanced budget in 1994 and for supporting Obama's health care overhaul law.

Another ad by Faith Family Freedom Fund, a super PAC associated with Family Research Council Action, accuses Kerrey of backing "big government."

"I thought, 'I'm not sure I'd vote for that guy,'" Kerrey joked Wednesday after seeking the ads. "But I don't think it's over the top. The ads against me misrepresent things that I've said and things that I've done, but I don't see that it's outside the boundaries of what typically occurs in a campaign."

He said voters have the capacity to figure out Kerrey voted for tax increases in 1990 and 1993 supporting Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, but that "I also worked with (Republicans) to balance the budget."

Kerrey also says he isn't concerned about backlash from those who would see his campaign ads attacking Fischer as negative. The ads by his campaign and a super PAC supporting him, End the Gridlock, criticize Fischer and her husband for suing an elderly couple and neighbors for land that the Fischers had used for their cattle. The ad focuses on the 1995 lawsuit and the 104 acres owned by the late Les and Betty Kime. It includes Nebraskans speaking out against Fischer and questioning her character.

"It feels negative, because it was a bad thing that she did," Kerrey said.

Fischer's campaign maintains that the ads are an unfair attack on Fischer and her family. As for the new ads by conservative super PACs, Fischer campaign spokesman Aaron Trost said they likely "just want to even out the playing field," adding that the Democratic Party and End the Gridlock spent more than \$1.5 million attacking Fischer since the May primary.

Fischer plans to hold a rallies Thursday around the state with Heineman, Johanns and GOP Rep. Jeff Fortenberry. On Friday, former GOP presidential candidate and Arizona Sen. John McCain will be in Nebraska for a campaign appearance with Fischer.

"What Fischer is doing is what Republican candidates do in this state," Adkins said. "It's a very, very traditional way to close a campaign on a positive theme and use endorsements from politicians who have very high approval ratings."



## Kids Come First.

"The first thing our pioneers did was to build schools. Today, education is more important than ever — yet state government slashed the schools by \$50 million, shifting the costs to property taxpayers and hurting classrooms. That's wrong and I'll fight it."

—Bernie Hunhoff



HE'S PULLING FOR YOU

**Bernie Hunhoff**

STATE LEGISLATURE

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