

South Dakota



14 Overall Rank

C+ Overall Grade

South Dakota	Overall Rank	To Governor	To State Senate	To State House	To Parties	To PACs
Individual Giving	27	14	22	21	29	28
		\$4,000/year	\$1,000/year	\$1,000/year	\$10,000/year	\$10,000/year
PAC Giving	1	1	1	1	1	
		Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	
Party Giving	1	1	1	1		
		Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited		
Union Giving	50	50	50	50		
		Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited		
Corporate Giving	50	50	50	50		
		Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited		

Inflation Adjustment: No

Fortunately for those in South Dakota who favor political freedom, The Mount Rushmore State fended off a significant attack to its citizens' First Amendment rights in early 2017. A ballot measure championed by former Democratic Senate candidate Rick Weiland (Initiated Measure 22) was narrowly approved in the 2016 general election by just over 11,000 votes. Among other speech chilling regulatory provisions, several of which were likely unconstitutional, the measure would have lowered South Dakota's existing limits on individual giving to candidates for State Senate and State House and imposed new limits on contributions from parties and PACs to candidates. Because this measure contained unconstitutional provisions, however, the Legislature acted quickly to

repeal the Initiative before it could take effect. If the measure had become law, South Dakota would have dropped precipitously in the Index rankings, going from 14th to 38th.

As it stands, South Dakota is the third best state for political freedom, among those that have limits. If the state does seek to improve, however, it could look to its neighbors in Nebraska, Iowa, and North Dakota, which, along with eight other states in the country, have no limits on individual giving to candidates. At the very least, South Dakota should consider adjusting its limits for inflation, in order to prevent the limits from becoming more restrictive over time.