July 30, 2018

To: Interested Parties
From: Brian Stryker / Zac McCrary
Re: Sutton for Governor poll results

Rancher Billie Sutton narrowly trails Congresswoman Kristi Noem (42% Sutton / 46% Noem / 13% undecided) despite the deep Republican lean of South Dakota voters. He is competitive with Noem because voters know and like him, and he takes a lead in polling when voters hear profile information about both candidates to simulate voters getting to know them better.

Key Findings

- **Sutton trails Noem by only four points (42% Sutton / 46% Noem), improving since our last poll.** That represents a 9-point shift toward Sutton since October polling showing a 13-point Noem lead.

- **Sutton has crossover appeal which helps him overcome the state’s partisan lean.** Even though our poll sample is majority Republican by registration (32% Democratic / 52% Republican / 16% unaffiliated) and gives Trump a favorable rating (55% favorable / 42% unfavorable), Sutton is competitive because he appeals to the state’s rural, Republican electorate.
  
  o Sutton wins a real share of registered Republicans (21%) and leads among unaffiliated voters by 19 points (54% Sutton / 35% Noem).
  o Those who voted for Marty Jackley in the GOP primary are also driving Sutton’s ability to run well with Republicans. Fewer than half of Jackley primary voters are in the Noem column (31% Sutton / 49% Noem / 20% undecided).
  o Conservative-leaning voters view Sutton favorably including Republicans (44% favorable / 23% unfavorable) and voters who are favorable to President Trump (40% favorable / 24% unfavorable), part of why South Dakotans statewide view Sutton favorably by a 3:1 margin (49% favorable / 17% unfavorable)

- **Sutton takes a six-point lead when voters hear information about both candidates.** Sutton pulls ahead (48% Sutton / 42% Noem / 11% undecided) when voters hear balanced profile information about both candidates (See Appendix A).

The following findings and recommendations are based on telephone poll of n=500 November 2018 South Dakota voters conducted July 19-25, 2018 via landline and cellphone. The poll’s margin of error is +4.4% and higher for subgroups.
APPENDIX A – PROFILES READ

Billie Sutton, a Democrat from Burke, is a State Senator, small-town banker, who also has a family cattle operation. He is a former pro rodeo rider, who was paralyzed from the waist down after a rodeo accident. In the Senate, Sutton has worked to root out corruption in Pierre and is running for Governor to end politics as usual and change the way we do business in Pierre, so everyone is represented - not just the special interests. That means bringing both parties together and working across party lines to make healthcare more affordable, create more good-paying jobs, and improve public schools and job training to grow the economy.

Kristi Noem, a Republican from Castlewood, is the current Congresswoman, a small business owner, and a lifelong farmer and rancher. In Congress, Noem has taken a no-nonsense conservative approach to problem solving, making every decision with South Dakota families in mind. In Congress, she's fought wasteful government spending and voted to cut taxes on South Dakota families. As Governor, she will fight to create jobs, protect South Dakotans from tax increases and wasteful spending, tackle the special interest corruption, and strengthen education. She'll also protect our right to own guns and stand up for her pro-life values.