

Biography - Senator John Thune (R-SD)

John Thune grew up in Murdo, South Dakota. His interest in politics was sparked at a young age after making five of six free throws during a freshman high school basketball game. He was greeted by a spectator who said, "I noticed you missed one." That spectator happened to be well-known sports enthusiast and U.S. Representative Jim Abdnor. The introduction was the start of a friendship that ignited John's career in public service.

John received his undergraduate degree at Biola University and his Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of South Dakota. Upon completion of his Master's Degree in 1984, he married Kimberley Weems, a native of Doland, South Dakota.

John's attraction to public service took him to Washington, D.C. to work for that sports enthusiast and then-U.S. Senator Jim Abdnor. He then served at the Small Business Administration under an appointment from President Ronald Reagan.

In 1989, John and his family returned to South Dakota, where he served as the Executive Director of the South Dakota Republican Party. In 1991, Governor George S. Mickelson appointed him the State Railroad Director, a position he held until 1993, when he became Executive Director of the South Dakota Municipal League.

In 1996, with a shoestring budget and the support of family and friends, John won his first term as South Dakota's lone member of the U.S. House of Representatives. John was reelected to a second term by the largest margin in South Dakota history. He returned again to Washington in 2001 to serve his third term in the House.

John then honored his 1996 campaign pledge to serve only three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. After a narrow loss in a U.S. Senate race in 2002, he won his current U.S. Senate seat in 2004, when he made history by defeating a sitting U.S. Senate party leader for the first time in 52 years.

In 2010, John was elected to serve a second term in the U.S. Senate in a rare unopposed race. He was only the third Republican and the only South Dakotan to run unopposed for the U.S. Senate since direct elections were created in 1913.

Senator Thune serves on the Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee, the Budget Committee, the Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee, and the Finance Committee. Thune also served as the Chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee from 2009 – 2011 and now serves as Chairman of the Senate Republican Conference.

John and his wife Kimberley live in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and have two grown daughters, Brittany and Larissa. In his free time, John enjoys spending time with his family, pheasant hunting, and running.