



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 later greeted by a spectator who said, “I noticed you missed one.” That spectator happened to be a well-known sports enthusiast and then-South Dakota U.S. Rep. 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. Sen. 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, then-Gov. George S. Mickelson appointed him to be 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 re-elected 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 House. After a narrow loss in a U.S. Senate race in 2002, he won his current Senate seat in 2004, when he made history by defeating a sitting Senate party leader for the first time in 52 years.

In 2010, John was elected to serve a second term in the Senate in a rare unopposed race. He was only the third Republican and the only South Dakotan to run unopposed for the Senate since direct elections were created in 1913. John was elected to a third term in 2016. In 2022, John became the second South Dakotan in history to be elected to a fourth term in the U.S. Senate.

For the 119th Congress, John serves on the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee; the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee; and the Finance Committee. He also serves as the Senate Majority Leader, and has previously served as the Senate Republican Whip from 2019-2024, chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee from 2009–2011, and chairman of the Senate Republican Conference from 2012-2018.

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