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DNC taps SC for 2028 leadoff state



Political commentator Bakari Sellers said candidates who understand the power of prayer could do well with South Carolina voters, citing Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro among other candidates. HANNAH BEIER/REUTERS FILE

Potential presidential contenders courting state’s voters

Swapna Venugopal Ramaswamy
USA TODAY

Since 1992, anytime a Democrat has won the White House, South Carolina primary voters have picked the winning candidate. Bill Clinton, Barack Obama and Joe Biden were the top vote-getters in the state on their roads to the presidency.

As Democrats seek a path back to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. in 2028, South Carolina will again be the first state in the nation to hold a Democratic presidential primary – or at least the state sanctioned by party leaders to vote first. The Democratic National Committee of-

ficially confirmed Aug. 15 that South Carolina is the party’s choice to replace Iowa and New Hampshire, the traditional leadoff states, in two years to better reflect the party’s diverse voters.

Many potential presidential candidates are already making pilgrimages to the state, even though the primary won’t happen until Jan. 22, 2028.

That includes multiple trips by California Gov. Gavin Newsom for the South Carolina Democratic Party’s “On the Road” series, an initiative designed to



Newsom

connect national and regional Democratic figures to local communities.

Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly participated in a South Carolina Democratic Party town hall event in 2025. Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear was a speaker earlier in 2026. Former Vice President Kamala Harris, Democrats’ unsuccessful 2024 candidate, participated in a private fundraiser this year. Maryland Gov. Wes Moore and New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, the latter a 2020 presidential candidate, took part in this year’s “On the Road” series.

“Everybody comes here to test the

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Iowa companies paying Russia millions in taxes

Phillip Sitter
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

DES MOINES – Iowa businesses are among those that have paid millions of dollars to the Russian government years into its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, even as several of Iowa’s federal lawmakers have pushed for expanded sanctions.

Two agricultural manufacturers in Des Moines, that also run facilities in Russia, have said they comply with applicable laws. The Treasury Department clarified in 2022 there are no sanctions

on the production, sale or transport of agricultural commodities or equipment related to Russia. But beyond compliance with sanctions, other U.S. lawmakers have recently called for steps to cut off corporate cash flows.

Titan International paid more than \$3.2 million in taxes to Russia in 2025, according to U.S. financial records. Titan has its North American headquarters in Des Moines. Titan also owns an agricultural and industrial tire company with a sanctioned public wealth fund whose sanctioned CEO is close with

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Titan stated in its annual report for 2023 it had stopped any additional investments into Voltyre-Prom and “emphasizes that neither this operation, nor any other Titan operations, sell any products to the Russian military or other government agencies.” PROVIDED BY VOLTRE-PROM

Trump dials up pressure on allies

South Korea is latest to be put on notice

Francesca Chambers
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump is putting another U.S. ally he says was insufficiently supportive of the Iran war on notice, directing the Pentagon to scale back joint military exercises with South Korea, a country he has pressed to pay more for its defense.

“We can’t go around and protect all of these countries, especially when they’re not there to help us,” Trump said Aug. 17 in the Oval Office.

South Korea is the latest in a string

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