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Argus Leader

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6 more suspects found in Epstein files, officials say



Reps. Thomas Massie, R-Kentucky, and Ro Khanna, D-California, have been reviewing millions of confidential records related to Jeffrey Epstein. KENT NISHIMURA/REUTERS

Names blacked out in public release

Bart Jansen
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Two House members who led the effort to force the Justice Department to release more documents about accused sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein said they discovered at least six more suspected accomplices.

The department began Feb. 9 allowing lawmakers to review millions of records that remain confidential. Reps. Thomas Massie, R-Kentucky, and Ro Khanna, D-California, said they found additional suspects among names that had previously remained blacked out in

publicly released records.

“What we want is the men who Jeffrey Epstein trafficked women to – we want those names published,” Massie told reporters. “In two hours, we found six men whose names have been redacted who are implicated in the way that the files are presented.”

The revelations are part of the latest conflict between Congress and the Justice Department over the release of millions of documents about Epstein that remain confidential. Upcoming congressional hearings and depositions will focus on what has remained secret for years.

Congress approved a law in November that directed

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Sioux Falls School District opt-out at center of proposed bill

Morgan Matzen

Sioux Falls Argus Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

During “Stand with Public Education” day in the South Dakota capitol, six members of the Senate State Affairs committee voted for a bill that education lobbyists and school board members said would set a dangerous precedent.

Sen. Sue Peterson, R-Sioux Falls, brought Senate Bill 223 to give petitioners more time to gather fewer signatures to refer school district opt-outs to a vote. She said it’s a property tax relief bill with reasonable changes to refer opt-outs to the ballot.

Opt-outs allow school districts to raise additional operating funds beyond what they get in their existing tax levy, and in state aid, by “opting out” of those limitations to collect more taxes from property owners in the district.

Instead of having 20 days to get signatures from 5% of the total number of people registered to vote in the school district, SB 223 would give petitioners 40 days to collect signatures from either 5% of people who voted in the last school district election, or 50 voters, whichever is greater.

SB 223’s first hearing in the Senate State Affairs committee follows failure of Senate Bill 85 – Peterson’s bill to bring every opt-out to a mandatory election – in the House the week prior.

Much of the discussion for both bills centered on the most recent opt-out passed in the Sioux Falls School District – \$2.1 million over 10 years, or \$21 million total – and the failure of petition gatherers to get enough signatures to refer it to a vote. They needed 5,490 signatures, and only got 2,302 by the deadline. Peterson called it a “heroic effort.”

Both of Peterson’s bills were recommendations she proposed in South Dakota’s comprehensive property tax task force meetings in 2025, and both were opposed by the SFSD.

Sioux Falls School District opt-outs, by the numbers

The last school district election was in May 2025 and saw board president Nan Kelly re-elected and board member Elizabeth Duffy elected. Only 2.33% of eligible registered voters – 2,958 of 126,334 – cast ballots in that election, one of the lowest turnouts in recent memory.

If SB 223 had been in effect when the board passed the opt-out for fiscal year 2026 in June 2025, only 148 signatures would’ve been needed to refer the opt-out to an election.

That opt-out also coincides with other ones the district has passed since 2019, when its fund balance was at the lowest point it had been in 25 years. The board previously voted to opt out for \$1.5 million for 2020, \$1.6 million for 2021, \$1.7 million for 2022, \$1.8 million for 2023, \$1.9 million for 2024 and \$2 million for 2025.

In June 2025, district officials said that the new

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Former DTSF CEO first to qualify for Sioux Falls mayoral ballot

Angela George

Sioux Falls Argus Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

Sioux Falls mayoral candidate Joe Batcheller is officially on the ballot for the June 2 municipal election.

The former Downtown Sioux Falls CEO said city clerk Jermery Washington confirmed on Feb. 6 that Batcheller’s “grassroots campaign” had exceeded the 200 required petition signatures – submitting nearly 300.

He is the first candidate to qualify as the potential next head of South Dakota’s largest city.

Batcheller announced his run for mayor last summer, pitching his experience as an urban planner to improve transit and housing.

Just like the last two Sioux Falls mayors, the role would be Batcheller’s first foray into the political realm.

“For a first-time candidate, it’s encouraging to see so many people step up to help and add their name,” Batcheller said Feb. 9. “It tells me that voters are ready for leadership on affordability, safety and smart growth – and that they trust me to help move Sioux Falls in that direction.”

Other mayoral candidates announced are former city council members Christine Erickson, Marshall Selberg and Greg Jamison; return candidate David Zokaites; Sen. Jamie Smith; and Alex LaCroix.

Candidates have until March 24 to file petition signatures.



Joe Batcheller announced his candidacy for Sioux Falls mayor on Aug. 26, 2025.

TREVOR MITCHELL/SIOUX FALLS

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