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Letter: 'Stifled in South Dakota'

Robert F. Lyons, Kennebunkport, Maine Published Jan. 31, 2017



As I sat down for my second cup of coffee of the morning, the *New York Time's* headline glared out at me: Voice of the people stifled in South Dakota ([editorial, Jan. 27](#)). But the ultimate salt in the wound to my native S.D. soul came in this statement: "Anyone wondering why South Dakota is ranked 47th in the nation for public accountability by the nonpartisan Center for Public Integrity need look no further than these multiple efforts to subvert the public will."

As legislators rush to repeal a vital ethics reform referendum approved by voters in November, those majority Republicans might pause to read of the state's history: "Perhaps its official name, Dakota, taken from the Sioux language and meaning 'an alliance of friends,' is equally characteristic. South Dakota believes in its state motto, 'Under God the People Rule'; it was the first State to introduce the initiative and referendum in State affairs." (South Dakota Guide 1938, Federal Writers Project). To its three nicknames: the Blizzard, the Prairie, and the Coyote State, will a fourth now be added: South Dakota, the Ethics Snuffer State?