

Know Before You Go: MN-08 District Primer

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In the last election, Democrat Rick Nolan won this district by only 2,000 votes (1%).

That's too close! With your help, we're going to keep this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

About the Democratic Candidate

Introduction: Democrat **Joe Radinovich**, from Crosby, MN, was nominated in the August primary as the party's candidate in MN-08. Radinovich became interested in politics because of budget cuts to rural schools like the one he attended in Crosby-Ironton. He's served as a state representative and managed current MN-08 Congressman's Rick Nolan's last campaign. A former union organizer from a blue-collar family, he also ran Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey's successful election campaign and worked as his chief of staff.

Issues: A proponent of Medicare-for-All, Radinovich believes that healthcare is a right. Radinovich also wants to eliminate special interest money from politics by promoting legislation to reform campaign finance and ensure that elections are free and fair. Investing in childcare, and early childhood education are also important to Radinovich. He supports debt-free higher education at community and technical colleges. He also wants to invest in infrastructure, especially in rural areas. He has stated he would defend the agricultural interests of the district's many farmers.

Recent Elections: Incumbent Representative Rick Nolan has held his seat since 2013, but his margin of victory has shrunk with each election. In 2014, Nolan defeated Republican Stewart Mills by 2% in a tight race. In 2016, he defeated Mills by an even narrower margin -- less than 1 point -- while Donald Trump won the district by 15 points.

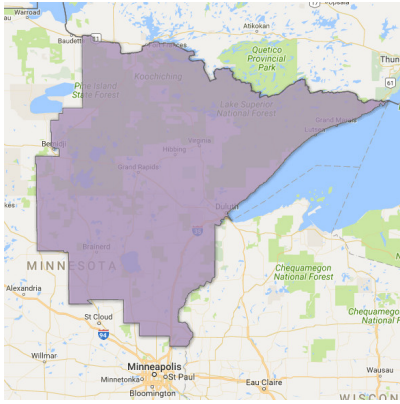
About the Republican Candidate

Introduction: Republican **Pete Stauber**, from Duluth, MN, is a former hockey player and a police officer. He was a city councillor for eight years in Hermantown and is currently a St. Louis Minnesota County Commissioner. His wife is an Iraq war veteran. Stauber has been strongly supported by Donald Trump.

Issues: Stauber is fiercely anti-choice, putting women's health and privacy at risk. He wants to separate government from healthcare, leaving market forces to determine the quality, affordability, and availability of medical care. He is also a staunch pro-gun advocate, saying he will fight any and all attempts to strengthen current gun laws. He wants to sustain the GOP tax cuts and promote jobs in mining, a major industry in the district.

Strengths: His strengths lie in his support for tax cuts and legislation to support mining jobs that are critical to the district. He supports assisting active-duty military and veterans. His law enforcement background as well as his wife's involvement with veteran affairs should both resonate with voters.

Potential Weaknesses: He supports the unpopular Republican tax cuts that have benefited corporations at the expense of working people. His push to repeal the ACA is also unpopular, as is his regressive stance on reproductive rights. His policy positions are generally vague and shallow.



MN-08: Facts & Stats

Population Centers

- Duluth, 86,110
- Hibbing, 16,204
- Brainerd, 13,371
- Cloquet, 12,075
- Grand Rapids, 11,127
- North Branch, 10,221

2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 139K (39%)
- Trump: 195K (54%)

2016 House Results

- Nolan (D): 179K (50%)
- Mills (R): 177K (50%)
- Other: 1K (0%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 28K
- Eligible, not registered: 91K

2014 House Results

- Nolan (D): 129K (49%)
- Mills (R): 125K (47%)
- Other: 11K (4%)

MN-08: Better Know the District

Geography

MN-08 covers the entirety of 17 counties and part of an 18th. It includes two national forests and 14 state forests. Lake Superior flanks the northeast edge of the district, and Duluth is an important trading port. The northern edge of District 8 borders Ontario, Canada. The Mississippi runs through the center of MN-08, and there are many other rivers, lakes, and waterways throughout the district. MN-08 is home to a few large population centers, and many very small towns.

Citizenry

MN-08 is overwhelmingly white (98%). The median age of district residents is 42 years old, making it the oldest district in Minnesota. Opioid use and deaths from overdose have increased in recent years in Minnesota, and rates of use are highest in the northeast corner. Three of the state's six counties with the highest rates of overdose are in MN-08.

Elections

This district has elected a Democrat to Congress every year since 1947, with the one exception of the 2011 election. As in other parts of the Midwest, Democrats are seeing their support wane here. Congressional margins for the past five congressional races were R +1.6; D +9, D +1.4, D +0.6. The presidential margins, on the other hand, were D +5, D +7, D +8, D +6, R +15.

Higher Education

There are at least 14 colleges in MN-08. Most are two-year community or technical colleges; Lake Superior College in Duluth is the largest of these, with over 8,000 students. There are two four-year colleges with graduate programs: the University of Minnesota-Duluth (more than 10,000 students), and College of St. Scholastica (more than 4,400 students).

Industries

Historically, MN-08 was involved in farming, railroads, mining, paper mills, flour mills, steel mills, ship-building, trading, and manufacturing. Farming, particularly on small family plots, remains a large part of MN-08's economy. Hibbing is home to the largest open-pit mine in the world. Manganese, copper, nickel, and titanium have also been discovered in mineable quantities. Polymet, a Minnesota-based mining company, has been working on a plan to develop the area, but it is unclear whether there is enough to profit from the mining of these minerals. There are many modern manufacturing companies in MN-08, including USG (the maker of Sheetrock and high-tech ceiling tiles), Clow Stamping Company, and Nortech Systems Manufacturing. Many of MN-08's mining, mill, and manufacturing towns have very high unemployment rates, some as high as 9%.