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**(S.D.)-Noem Returns Donation From Convicted Tax Evader**



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 10/10/2012 10:30 AM

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (ASSOCIATED PRESS) - U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem has returned \$4,000 in campaign contributions from a man convicted of felony tax evasion.

A federal jury convicted Rapid City surgeon Edward Picardi after a three-week trial on 13 charges that he filtered millions of dollars of income through offshore accounts to avoid paying taxes.

Picardi and his wife gave Noem a combined \$4,000 in the past two years and another \$4,500 in 2010. The South Dakota Democratic Party called on Noem to return the money.

Noem campaign manager Tom Erickson says the campaign immediately returned the \$4,000 after learning of Picardi's conviction. He says the \$4,500 donated in the previous election cycle already was spent.

Noem is a Republican. Democrat Matt Varilek is trying to unseat her.