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226 Bordeaux St - Chadron, NE 69337  
308-432-5545 fax 308-432-5601  
E-mail: [kcsr@chadrad.com](mailto:kcsr@chadrad.com)

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**(S.D.)-Judge Finds Candidacy Lawsuit Malicious, Frivolous**



By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 03/22/2013 01:39 PM

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) - A South Dakota judge has found that a lawsuit challenging the candidacy of a state lawmaker was frivolous and was filed for malicious purposes.

Rapid City businesswoman Stephanie Strong earlier lost a lawsuit that sought a court order removing Rep. Brian Gosch of Rapid City from the November ballot.

In a hearing Friday, Circuit Judge Kathleen Trandahl said the timing of Strong's actions indicated she filed the lawsuit in an attempt to prevent Gosch from being elected, not to protect voters' rights. Gosch is speaker of the South Dakota House of Representatives.

The judge says she will consider Gosch's request to have Strong pay for his cost of defending against the lawsuit.

Strong did not appear at Friday's hearing. She did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment.