

(S.D.)-Sen. Tim Johnson Expected To Announce Retirement

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SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) - The anticipated retirement announcement from South Dakota Sen. Tim Johnson gives Republicans one of their best chances of picking up a seat in their quest to regain control, as the veteran moderate Democrat steps aside.

The 66-year-old chairman of the Senate Banking Committee is expected to say today that he will not seek a fourth term in the Senate next year.

Johnson becomes the fifth Senate Democrat to call it quits. He faced a potentially difficult challenge from popular Republican Gov. Mike Rounds and is still coping with the constraints of a 2006 brain hemorrhage that left his speech impaired and limited his mobility.

The absence of the well-funded former congressman who has never lost an election pushed the race to the top of the priority list, Republican strategists said.

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