

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Recall Petition Filed Against Deadwood City Commissioner Blake Joseph

Deadwood, SD — September 26, 2025 — Residents of Deadwood have formally filed a petition to recall City Commissioner **Blake Joseph**. The petition cites misconduct, criminal acts while in office, oppression, and gross partiality as grounds for removal under South Dakota law.

If certified, the recall will move to a public vote where citizens will decide whether to conclude Commissioner Joseph's term early, rather than allow him to remain in office until June 2027.

Pattern of Legal and Ethical Concerns

Commissioner Joseph has faced a series of legal issues and public controversies since taking office:

- **Open Container Charge (Aug. 2025):** Cited for possessing an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle after being pulled over for speeding.
 - **Bench Warrant Issued (July 2025):** Failed to appear for a scheduled trial related to a careless driving charge, resulting in a cash-only bench warrant.
 - **Court Delays:** The case has been rescheduled multiple times, including continuances under disputed circumstances and an attorney withdrawal.
 - **Protection Orders:** Multiple temporary protection orders have been filed against Joseph during his time in office, reflecting repeated concerns brought before the courts.
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Misconduct Around Schools

- **Volunteer Ban:** A local elementary school barred Joseph from volunteering after multiple students reported behavior that made them feel uncomfortable. The school emphasized its responsibility to ensure a safe environment.
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Abuse of Office and Retaliatory Actions

- **Misuse of Title:** In response to the school's actions, Joseph publicly announced plans for a \$30 million defamation lawsuit against the district. He signed the announcement as "Commissioner," blurring the line between personal disputes and public office. To date, no evidence exists that such a lawsuit has been filed.
- **City Response:** City leadership issued a statement clarifying that his actions did not represent the city and requested that commissioners refrain from using their titles outside official city business.

Upcoming Trial

Joseph is scheduled to appear in court on Monday, September 29, 2025, for pending charges that remain unresolved.

A Call for Accountability

“This recall is about accountability and trust,” said a petition organizer. “The people of Deadwood deserve leaders who uphold the law, respect their office, and reflect the values of the community. Many Deadwood residents believe that Commissioner Joseph has failed in each of these duties. This vote will give citizens the chance to decide whether Commissioner Joseph should serve out his term or be removed early.”

Next Steps

With the petition filed, election officials will move forward with the certification process. Once certified, a recall election will be scheduled, allowing voters to determine whether Joseph continues in office or is recalled nearly two years before his term would otherwise expire.

All statements herein reflect information contained in public records and public statements.

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