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POLITICAL APPROVAL RATINGS

2017 GROUND LEVEL SURVEY OF MINNESOTANS

FROM AMERICAN PUBLIC MEDIA®

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DECEMBER 13, 2017

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Acknowledgements

Funding for this project was provided by the Blandin Foundation, the Bush Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, and the Knight Foundation Donor Advised Fund at The Miami Foundation, as well as donors and members of Minnesota Public Radio.

The survey was designed with input from several members of the MPR Newsroom, including Nancy Cassutt, Mike Edgerly, Mike Mulcahy, and Bill Wareham.

SSRS of Glenn Mills, Pennsylvania, provided data collection services.

We would like to thank all of the Minnesotans who took part in the survey.

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Background

This report summarizes responses to the series of questions in the 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans regarding approval of four political figures, as well as the Minnesota State Legislature. The questions were posed in this manner: “Do you approve or disapprove of the following? How about the way [insert item from the list below]?”

A. Mark Dayton is handling his job as Governor of Minnesota
B. The Minnesota State Legislature is handling their job
C. Amy Klobuchar is handling her job as one of Minnesota’s U.S. Senators
D. Senator Al Franken is handling his job as one of Minnesota’s U.S. Senators
E. Donald Trump is handling his job as President

To avoid any possible question-order effects, the order of items A through D were randomly scrambled, with items C and D kept together, though in alternating order.

Item E, Trump approval, was asked last and followed with the open-ended question: “Can you tell me the one main reason that you (approve/disapprove) of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?” Responses were recorded verbatim, and then coded into categories for quantitative analysis. A comprehensive listing of verbatim responses to that question is available: https://www.apmresearchlab.org/stories/2017/11/13/ground-level.

This survey was conducted August 22 to September 14, well before sexual harassment allegations against Senator Al Franken surfaced. The first allegations came to light on November 16, and on December 7, 2017, Senator Franken announced his intention to resign from the U.S Senate floor.

This report is one in a series on the findings from the MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans. For additional information, including detailed methods reports and survey findings, please see:
https://www.apmresearchlab.org/stories/2017/11/13/ground-level

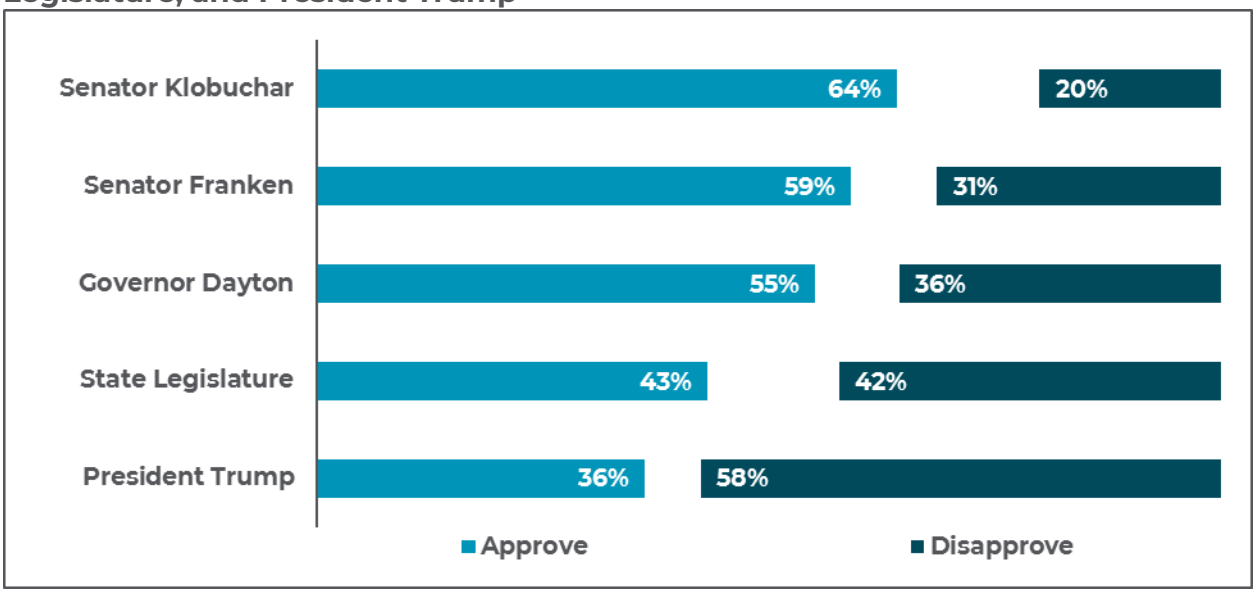
Please find MPR News’ extensive coverage of the survey findings, and related discussions and events, at https://www.mprnews.org/topic/ground-level

Overall findings

At the time of the survey (August 22 through September 14, 2017):

- Senator Klobuchar enjoyed a relatively high overall approval rating, with 64 percent indicating that they approved the way she was handling her job as U.S. Senator—the highest rating of all political figures asked about in the survey
- The approval ratings of Senator Franken and Governor Dayton were statistically tied, with over half of Minnesotans indicating that they approved the way each was conducting his position.
- An equal proportion of Minnesota adults approved and disapproved of the way the state legislature was conducting its work (with 15 percent unsure or not willing to answer).
- President Trump had a relatively low approval rating, with only 36 percent indicating they approved of the way he was conducting his job.

Figure 1: Approval of Minnesota's governor, U.S. Senators, the Minnesota State Legislature, and President Trump



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

For context, the *StarTribune*, the largest circulation newspaper in Minnesota, conducted a poll of 800 registered voters in late April 2017 and found that Senator Klobuchar had an approval rating of 72 percent, followed by Governor Dayton's approval rating at 62 percent and Senator Franken's at 58 percent.[1] At the time of the Ground Level Survey (August 22 – September 14),

[1] See http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-poll/420599213/

FiveThirtyEight estimated President Trump's approval rate to be in the high 30s, based on the results of several national polls.[2]

A more recent poll of adult Minnesotans (conducted November 20-21, 2017, immediately following allegations of sexual harassment were leveled against Senator Franken) placed his approval rating at 36 percent. That same poll placed Senator Klobuchar's approval rating at 56 percent, Governor Dayton's at 42 percent, and President Trump's approval rating (among Minnesotans) at 31 percent.[3]

Reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance in the Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans

Ground Level survey respondents who responded either positively or negatively to the question regarding whether they approved of President Trump's job performance were given the opportunity to provide "the one main reason that you (approve/disapprove) of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?" Ninety-four percent of all survey-takers were asked this follow-up question.

Most of those eligible for this question provided a response, although 30 people indicated that they did not know, or refused to provide an answer. The responses of those who answered were recorded verbatim and coded into categories for analysis.[4]

Regardless of whether people approved or disapproved of President Trump's job performance, we found that nearly all responses could be assigned to one of two major categories:

- Seventy-four percent of all comments were about the President's **personal characteristics and behavior**, including 68 percent of comments coming from those who approved of the President's job performance, and 79 percent of those who disapproved.

- Nineteen percent of all comments were about President Trump's **policies**, including 24 percent of comments from those approving of the President's job performance, and 15 percent of those disapproving.

In addition to coding responses into these broad themes, we coded each response into one of the 100 more specific categories of comments made by respondents.

Among those who *approved* of President Trump's job performance, the most common responses had to do with the *different or non-traditional* nature of his presidency:

> *"I think he is different. Politicians are in their positions for so long that they need something. He is stirring the pot. Trump is not a politician. He is different."*
>
> *"I just think that he's doing things differently than the other politicians and is doing things in a different way than other politicians do things."*

[2] See https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/trump-approval-ratings/
[3] KSTP/SurveyUSA poll of 600 Minnesota adults, conducted November 20 and 21, 2017. See http://kstp.com/news/survey-franken-job-approval-plummets-many-say-he-should-resign/4678569/
[4] All comments are available: https://www.apmresearchlab.org/stories/2017/11/13/ground-level

"[He is] going against the grain."

The next most common reasons given for approving of the President's job performance had to do with his *follow-through* (e.g., *"He's keeping all of his promises."*) and the way he is handling the economy (e.g., *"He is trying to put more jobs here in the United States, to put more people here to work."*).

Among those who *disapproved* of President Trump's job performance, the most common responses had to do with a perceived *lack of competence*. For example:

"I do not think he knows what he is doing."

"[I] don't think he is qualified or understands our country."

"I think he is incompetent."

The next most common reasons given for disapproving of the President's job performance had to do with his *communication style* (e.g., *"He thinks out loud, that is not something he should do. He should go over it before he says it. He doesn't think of the public as a whole."*) and a perceived *lack of tolerance* (e.g., *"He's racist. That's the biggest problem I have is that he is racist."*).

Figure 2: Primary reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance

Among those who approve	*Number of responses*	Among those who disapprove	*Number of responses*
• Different/ non-traditional	*65*	• Lack of competence	*117*
• Follow-through	*59*	• Communication style	*78*
• Economy*	*45*	• Lack of tolerance	*69*
• Communication style	*41*	• Self-centered	*63*
• Giving effort	*38*	• Demeanor	*58*
• Competent	*26*	• Dishonest	*56*
• Patriotic	*25*	• Use of social media	*41*
		• Immigration*	*33*
		• Values	*33*
		• Lack of trustworthiness	*29*
		• Foreign Policy*	*25*
		• Leadership	*25*

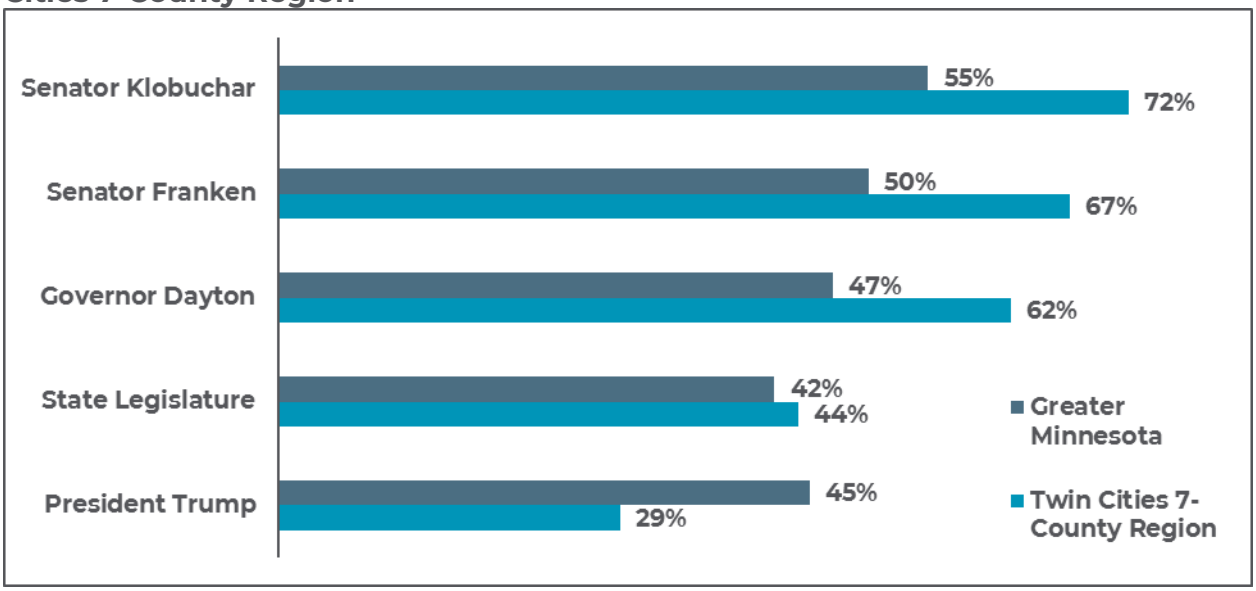
Notes: Table shows all response categories with at least 25 responses. Categories were derived from verbatim responses. (*) Indicates responses that relate to policies; all others refer personal characteristics and behavior.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

Findings by geographic regions of Minnesota

See the Technical Notes at the end of this document for the definitions of geographic regions.

Approval ratings for Senator Klobuchar, Senator Franken, and Governor Dayton are all significantly higher in the Twin Cities 7-County Region than they are in Greater Minnesota. However, the likelihood of approving of the State Legislature is statistically even in the state's two major regions. Of the five political figures asked about in the survey, only President Trump garners more approval in Greater Minnesota than the Twin Cities; the President is approved by 45 percent of adults in Greater Minnesota, compared with 29 percent of Twin Cities residents.

Figure 3: Proportion approving job performance, by Greater Minnesota and Twin Cities 7-County Region

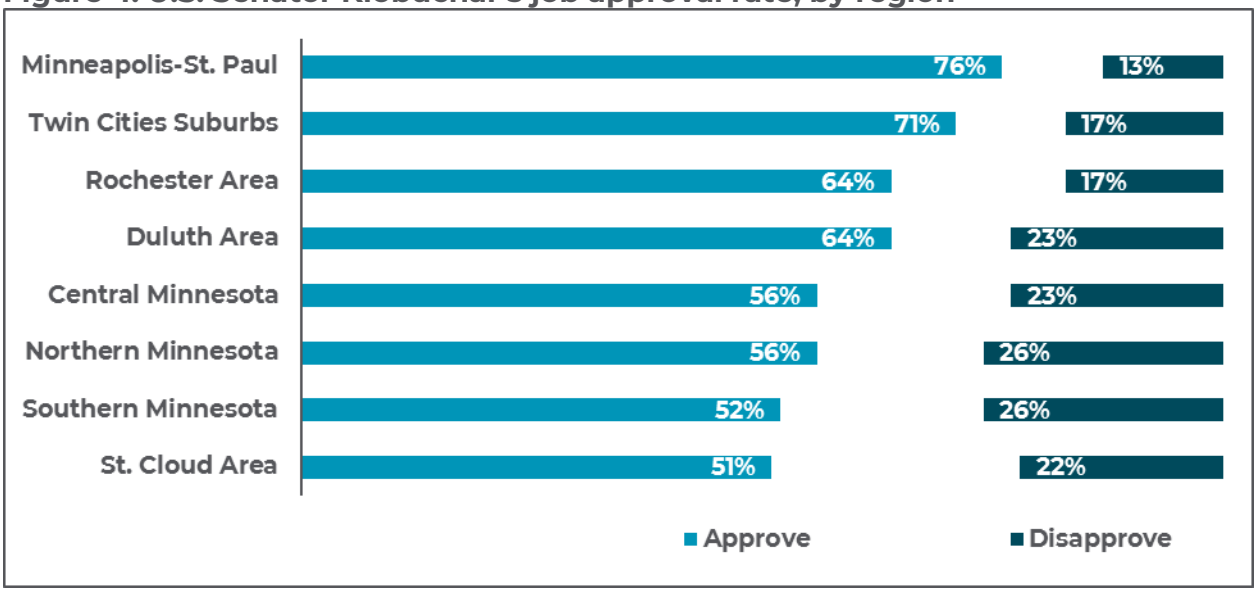


Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

U.S. Senator Klobuchar

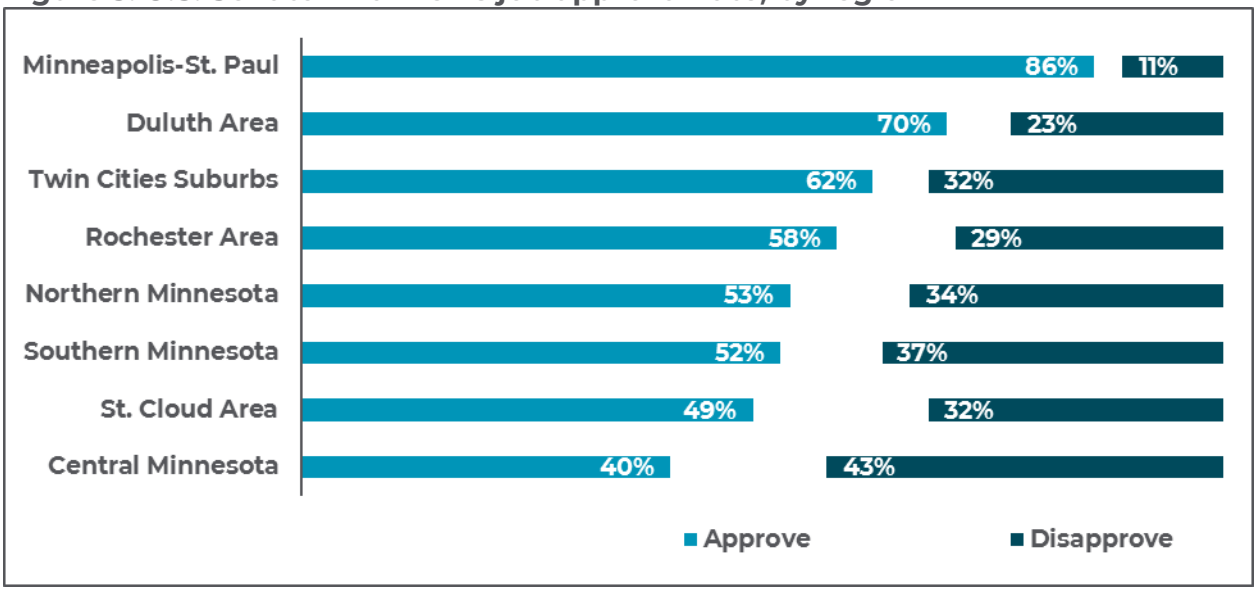
Democrat Amy Klobuchar has been serving as a U.S. Senator since 2007. At the time of the survey her approval ratings were particularly high in Minneapolis-St. Paul and the Twin Cities Suburbs, and lowest in Southern Minnesota and the St. Cloud Area. However, in no region of the state did her approval dip below half.

Figure 4: U.S. Senator Klobuchar's job approval rate, by region



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

Figure 5: U.S. Senator Franken's job approval rate, by region



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

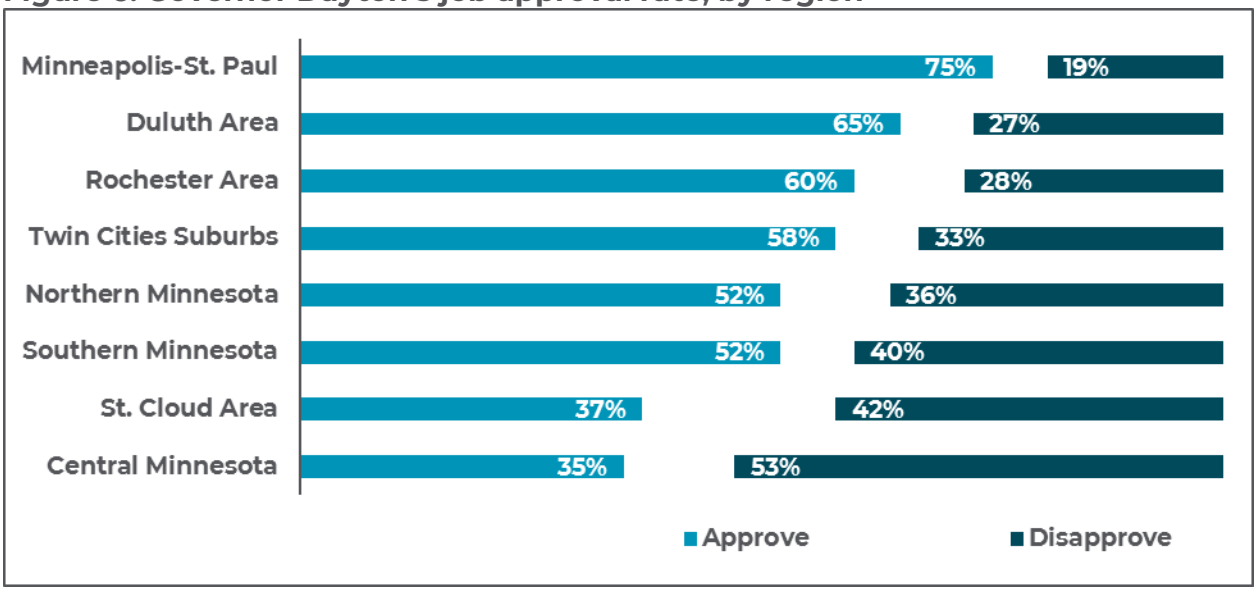
U.S. Senator Franken

Democrat Al Franken had been serving as U.S. Senator since 2009. At the time of the survey his approval ratings were especially high in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Senator Franken's job approval rating was particularly low in Central Minnesota, where the proportion disapproving of his performance was statistically tied with the proportion approving of it.

Governor Dayton

Democrat Mark Dayton has been serving as Minnesota's Governor since 2011. His approval ratings were particularly high in Minneapolis-St. Paul, and lowest—falling below 40 percent—in Central Minnesota and the St. Cloud Area.

Figure 6: Governor Dayton's job approval rate, by region



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

State Legislature

At the time of the survey, Republicans controlled both chambers of Minnesota's Legislature, with a 20-seat majority in the House of Representatives, and a 1-seat majority in the state Senate. There are no notable differences among the eight regions of Minnesota included in the Ground Level Survey in terms of approval ratings for the State Legislature. In all areas of the state Minnesotans were roughly split in the share approving and disapproving the Legislature's overall job performance.

President Trump

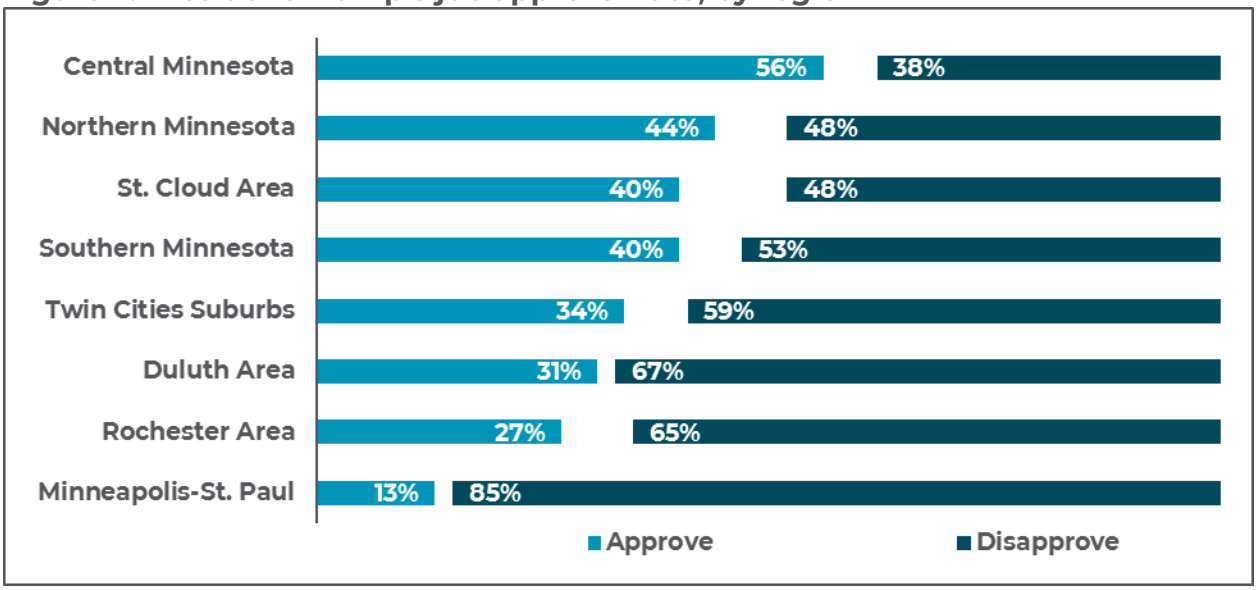
When the Ground Level Survey began, Republican Donald Trump had been serving as U.S. President for 215 days. At the time of the survey his approval rating was highest in Central Minnesota, which was the only region in the Ground Level Survey where President Trump's approval rating exceeded 50 percent. His approval rating was very low in the region comprising Minneapolis and St. Paul; the 13 percent approval rating he received from that area is the lowest approval rating for any region in this survey.

While President Trump's overall approval rating in the Ground Level survey was nine percentage points lower than his vote total 10 months earlier (36% compared with 45%), his approval ratings largely mirror the actual voting patterns among the regions developed for the

purpose of the Ground Level survey.[5] In some regions, however, the gap between the actual voting patterns and the President's approval rating was particularly notable. In Southern Minnesota the President's approval rating was 17 percentage points lower than the proportion who voted for him in November of 2016; in the Rochester Area approval was 14 percentage points lower than the vote; and that same gap was 13 percentage points in the St. Cloud Area.

The gap between votes cast and approval given at the time of the survey was less pronounced in Northern Minnesota (10 percentage points), Twin Cities Suburbs (8 points), Central Minnesota (7 points), the Duluth Area (3 points). In Minneapolis and St. Paul, the President Trump's approval rating was nearly identical to the proportion of votes cast for him in November 2016.

Figure 7: President Trump's job approval rate, by region



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

Reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance, by region

The reasons that survey respondents gave for either approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance varied somewhat by region. Among those approving of President Trump's job performance, the President's *follow-through* was emphasized in three regions. President Trump's status as a *different or non-traditional* leader was emphasized in two regions, as was his *competence* and the effect he was having on the *economy*.

On the other hand, a perceived *lack of competence* was mentioned by at least five percent of respondents in each region as a primary reason for disapproving of President Trump's job performance. A perceived *lack of tolerance* was mentioned by at least five percent of

[5] See *Geographic regions: definitions and characteristics,* figure 12, page 21 (available at https://www.apmresearchlab.org/stories/2017/11/13/ground-level).

respondents in five regions. Minneapolis-St. Paul was the only region where at least five percent of respondents mentioned a specific policy reason—*foreign policy*—for disapproving of the President's job performance.

Figure 8: Primary reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance, by region

Region	Reason for approval	Reason for disapproval
Central Minnesota	• Different/ non-traditional • Economy* • Giving effort • Communication style • Competence • Business background	• Lack of competence • Dishonesty
Northern Minnesota	• Follow-through • Different/ non-traditional	• Lack of competence • Lack of tolerance • Demeanor
St. Cloud Area	• Economy*	• Lack of competence • Self-centered • Lack of tolerance • Communication style
Southern Minnesota	• Follow-through	• Lack of competence • Communication style
Twin Cities Suburbs	• Follow-through	• Communication style • Self-centered • Lack of competence • Lack of tolerance • Dishonest
Duluth Area	• Competent	• Lack of competence • Communication style • Lack of tolerance
Rochester Area	• *None*	• Lack of competence • Self-centered • Demeanor
Minneapolis-St. Paul	• *None*	• Lack of competence • Lack of tolerance • Foreign policy* • Demeanor

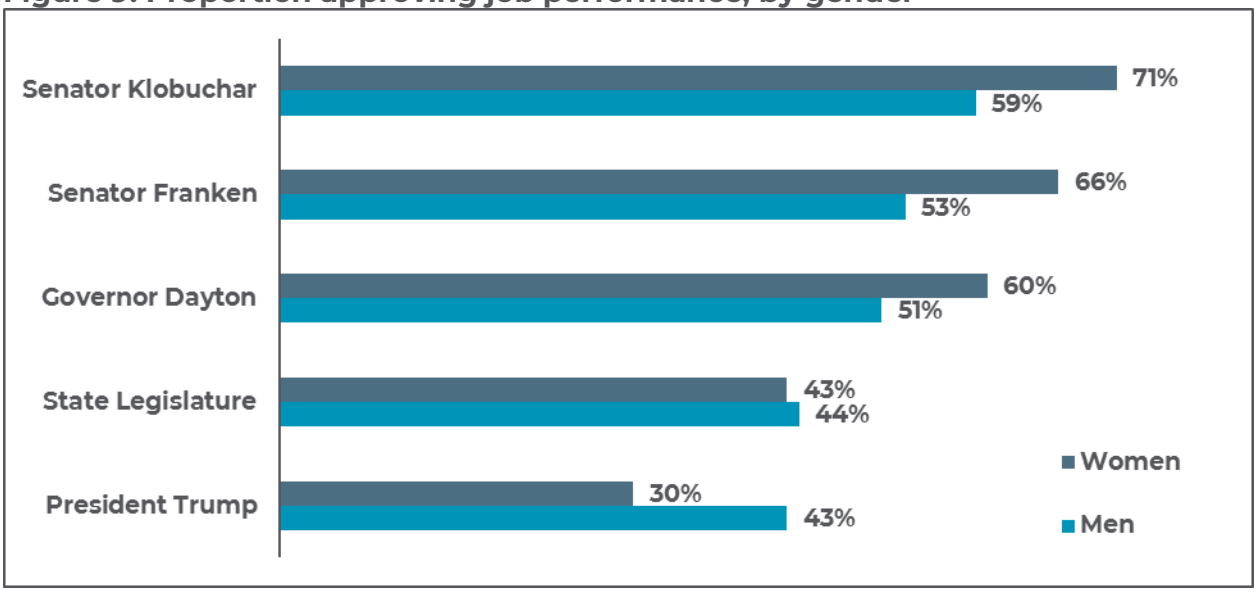
Notes: Table shows all categories that included at least 5 percent of respondents from each region, ordered from most to least common. Categories were derived from verbatim responses.
(*) Indicates responses that relate to policies; all others refer personal characteristics and behavior.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

Findings by gender

At the time of the survey, a significantly higher proportion of women than men approved of all three Democrats they were asked to evaluate: Senator Klobuchar, Senator Franken, and Governor Dayton. A statistically identical proportion of women and men approved of the Minnesota State Legislature.

President Trump garnered a significantly higher approval rating among men than women, although the proportion of men who approved of the President's job performance was lower than the proportion of men that approved of either U.S. Senator or the Governor.

Figure 9: Proportion approving job performance, by gender



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

When asked why they either approved or disapproved of President Trump's job performance, the most common reasons for the evaluation differed for women and men. Several women mentioned their perceptions of the President as *lacking tolerance* and *lacking competence*, his *communication style*, his *demeanor*, and their perception of Trump as *self-centered*.

As noted in the table below, men mentioned some of the same reasons for disapproving of President Trump's job performance. Additionally, more than five percent of men approved of the President's job performance and indicated that they liked that he was a *non-traditional* politician.

Figure 10: Primary reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance, by gender

	Reason for approval	Reason for disapproval
Women	• *None*	• Lack of tolerance • Communication style • Lack of competence • Demeanor • Self-centered
Men	• Different/ non-traditional	• Lack of competence • Communication style

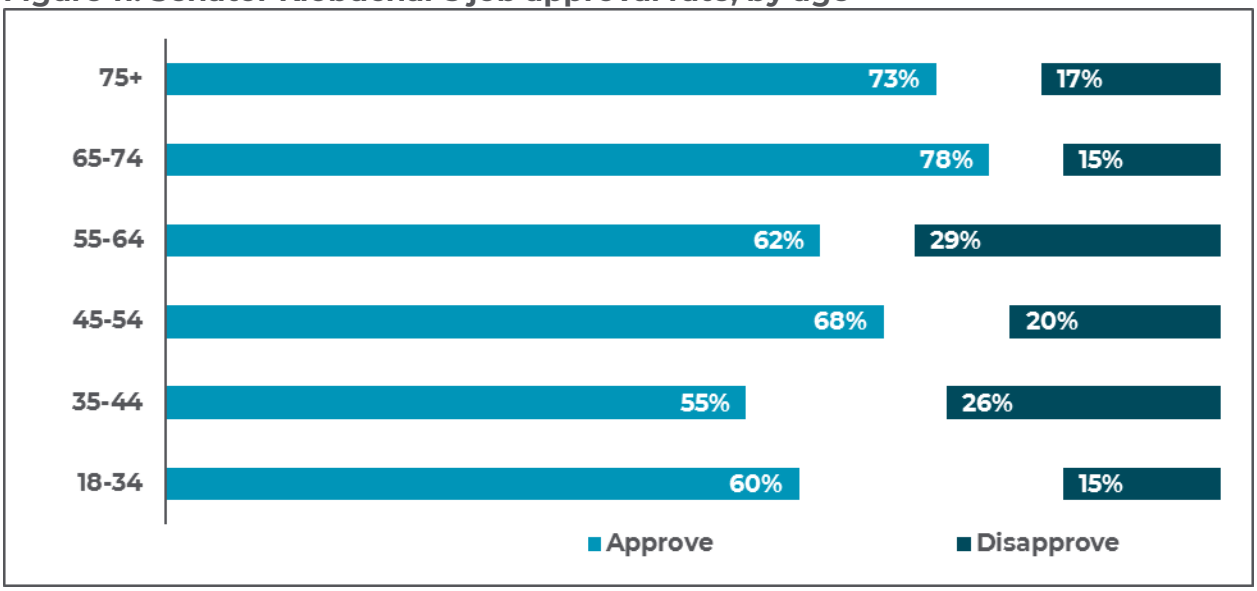
Notes: Table shows all categories that included at least 5 percent of respondents from each group, ordered most to least common. Categories were derived from verbatim responses.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

Findings by age groups

U.S. Senator Klobuchar

At the time of the survey, Senator Amy Klobuchar's approval rating was especially high among Minnesotans age 65 or older, with about three quarters in that age range indicating that they approved of her job performance. Curiously, the proportion disapproving was highest in the age group immediately younger (age 55-64, statistically tied with 35-44). The youngest age group includes the highest proportion who answered "don't know" or refused to answer this question.

Figure 11: Senator Klobuchar's job approval rate, by age



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

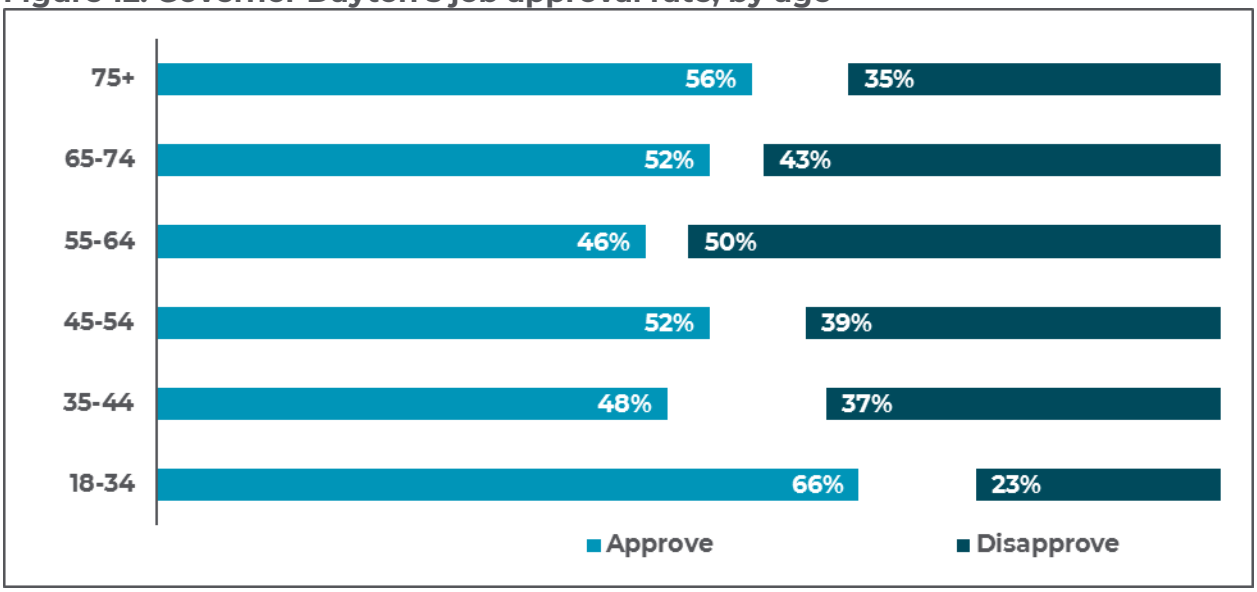
U.S. Senator Franken

At the time of the survey there were no significant differences between age groups in terms of the approval ratings for Senator Franken. The one exception was among the youngest group (18-34): a lower proportion disapproved than was the case with other age groups (21% compared with 31%-38% for other groups).

Governor Dayton

The proportion of Minnesotans approving of Governor Dayton's job performance was notably higher among those age 18 to 34, and the proportion disapproving was notably lower, than all other age groups in this survey.

Figure 12: Governor Dayton's job approval rate, by age

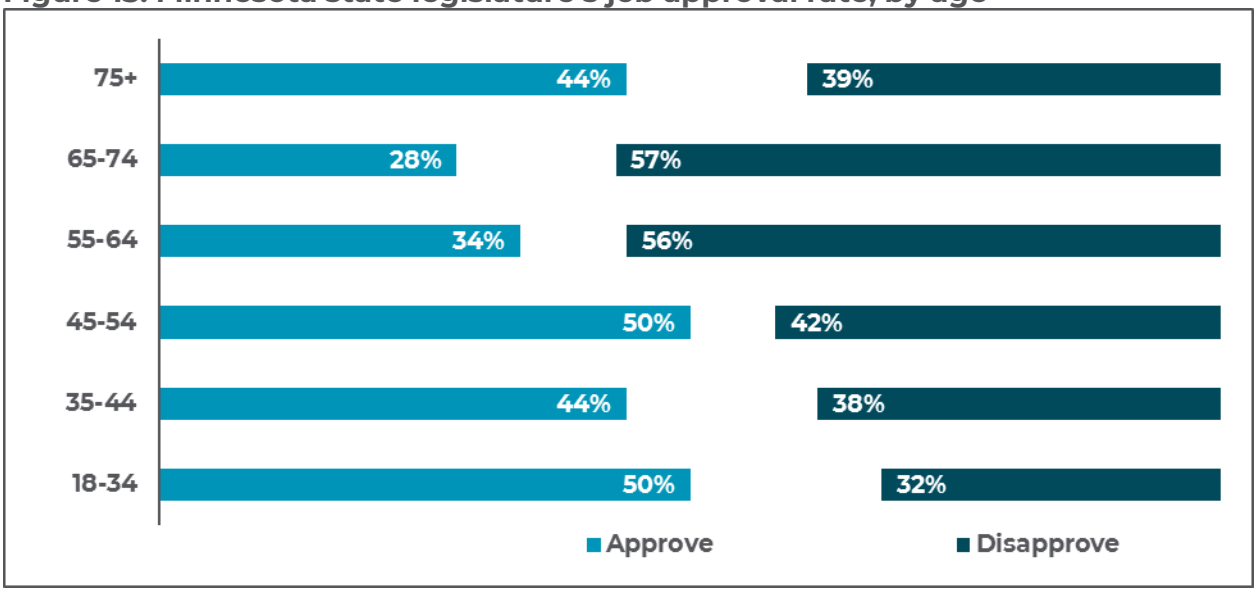


Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

State Legislature

Although the approval and disapproval rates for the Minnesota State Legislature were fairly evenly split across regions of the state, the same cannot be said for age groups. The *dis*approval rate was particularly high among Minnesotans age 55 to 74, with well over half of that age group disapproving of the performance of the state's law-making body.

Figure 13: Minnesota state legislature's job approval rate, by age

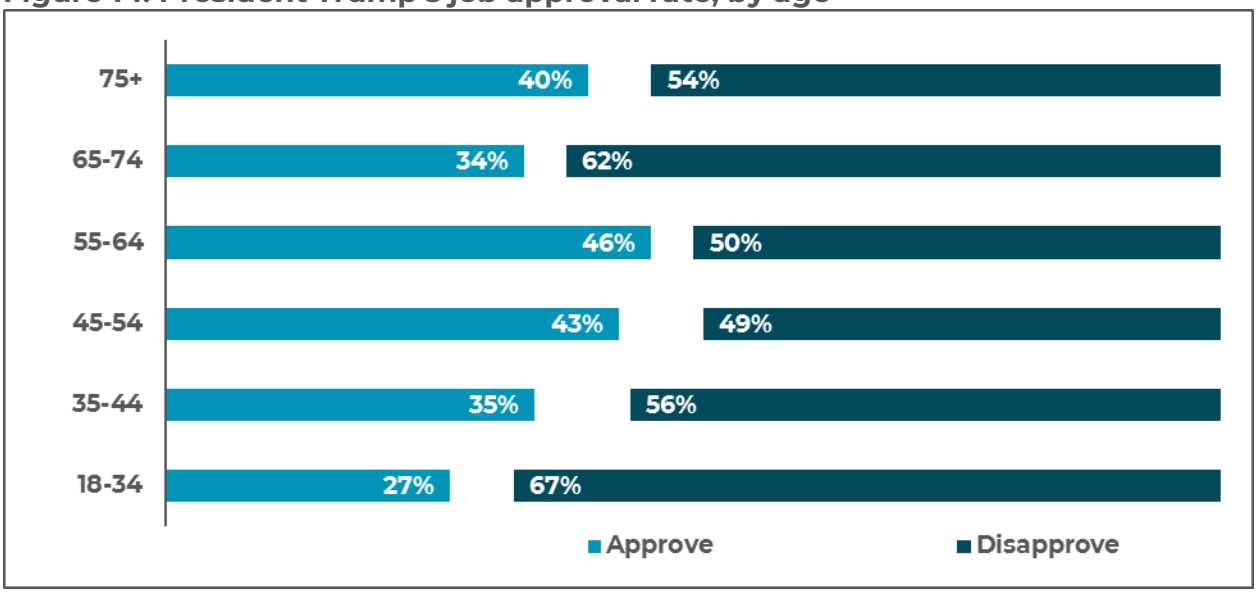


Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

President Trump

At the time of the survey, in late August to mid-September, President Trump's approval rating was significantly higher among Minnesotans age 45 to 64, and age 75 and older, than was the case for those age 18 to 34.

Figure 14: President Trump's job approval rate, by age



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

Reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance, by region

At least five percent of both the oldest (age 75 or older) and middle-aged (35-44) survey respondents pointed to President Trump's *effort* as their reason for approving of his job performance. Several respondents in the age 45 to 54 group emphasized President Trump's background as a *businessman* and his effect on the *economy* as primary reasons for their approval.

Among the three older age groups, the top reasons given among Trump disapprovers included *lack of competence*, *self-centered*, and *communication style*. *Dishonesty* was a top mention among respondents age 65 and above, and *lack of tolerance* was a primary reason given for disapproving of the President's job performance by Minnesotans age 18 to 34.

Figure 15: Primary reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance, by age

	Reason for approval	Reason for disapproval
75+	• Giving effort	• Dishonesty • Lack of competence • Self-centered • Communication style
65-74	• Different/non-traditional • Less government*	• Dishonesty • Communication style • Self-centered • Lack of competence
55-64	• Follow-through	• Communication style • Lack of competence • Self-centered
45-54	• Different/ non-traditional • Economy* • Businessman • Follow-through	• Lack of competence
35-44	• Different/non-traditional • Giving effort	• Values • Communication style • Foreign policy*
18-34	• *None*	• Lack of competence • Lack of tolerance • Demeanor

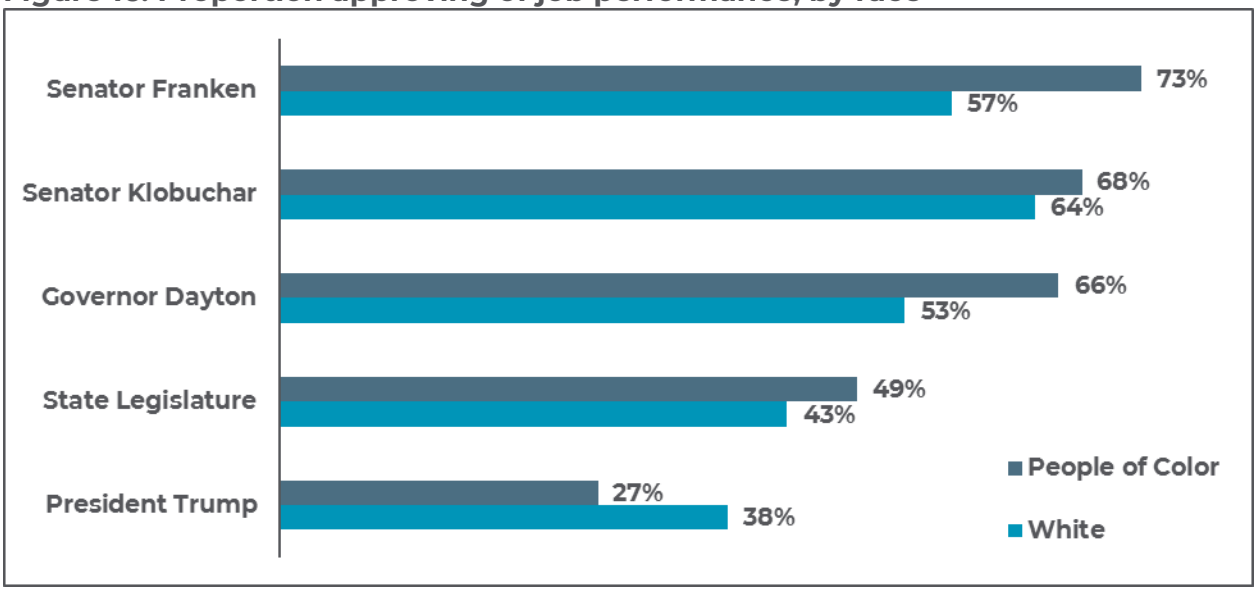
Notes: Table shows all categories that included at least 5 percent of respondents from each region, ordered most to least common. Categories were derived from verbatim responses. (*) Indicates responses that relate to policies and politics; all others refer personal characteristics and behavior.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

Findings by race groups

While Minnesota's population is rapidly becoming more diverse, non-Hispanic Whites still comprise 84 percent of Minnesota's adult (age 18 or older) population. The sample for this survey closely approximates the state's population, and thus 243 People of Color are represented in the results.[6] That number provides a representative reflection of the state's populations of color overall, but only allows very limited representation of findings for specific racial and ethnic groups. Specifically, in addition to Whites, the results sometimes support reliable findings about the state's two largest Populations of Color, Blacks and Hispanics.

At the time of the Ground Level Survey, there was not a statistically significant difference in the proportion of non-Hispanic Whites and People of Color approving of the job performance of Senator Klobuchar or the State Legislature. On the other hand, Minnesotans of Color were significantly more likely to approve of Senator Franken and Governor Dayton, and significantly less likely than White Minnesotans to approve of President Trump's job performance.

Figure 16: Proportion approving of job performance, by race



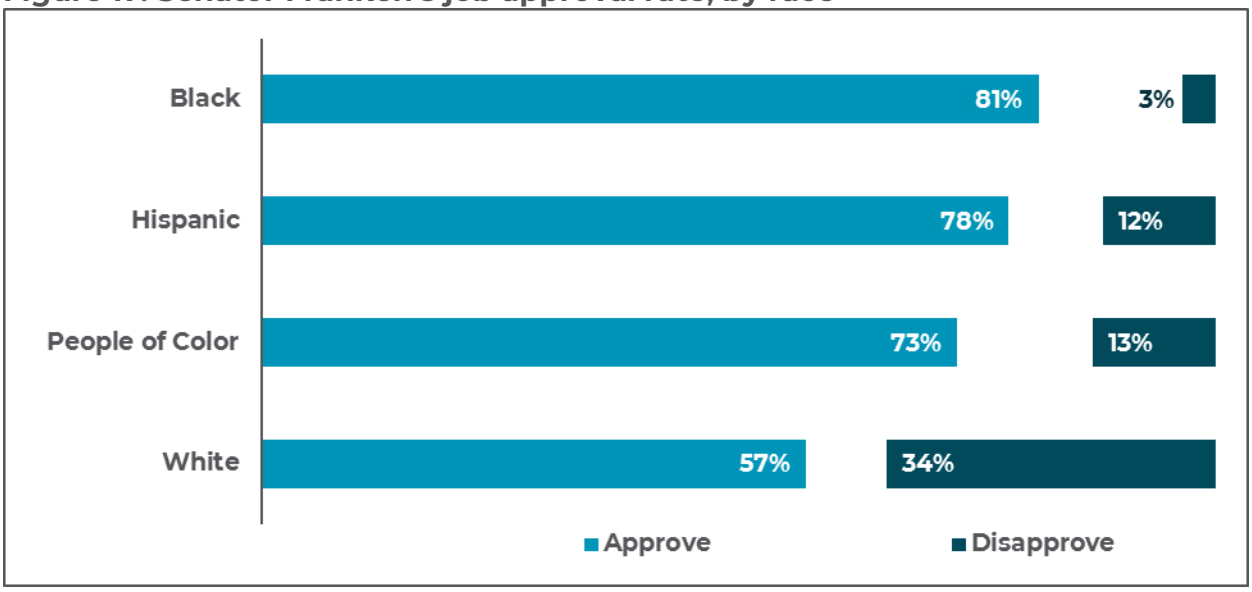
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that there is not a statistically significant approval rating between Whites and People of Color for either Senator Klobuchar or the State Legislature.

[6] Race is among the weighting factors in the survey. The 243 adult Minnesotans of color represented in the weighted survey results are based on interviews with 193 individuals, yielding a maximum margin of error of plus or minus 8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level.

U.S. Senator Franken

In one of the highest approval ratings of the entire survey, 81 percent of African Americans in Minnesota approved of Senator Franken's job performance at the time of the survey. Statistically, this high approval rating is tied with the high approval rating that Senator Franken received among Hispanic Minnesotans. White Minnesotans were significantly less likely to approve of Franken's job performance, although his approval rating among Whites was well over half.

Figure 17: Senator Franken's job approval rate, by race

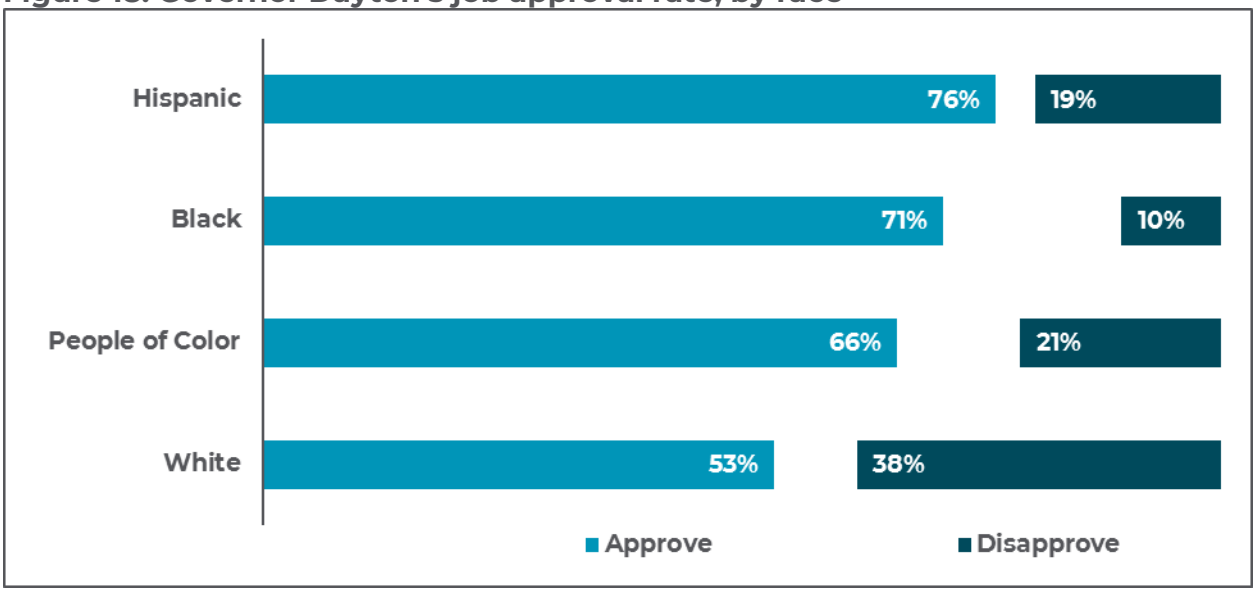


Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note: "People of Color" includes Black and Hispanic Minnesotans. The percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

Governor Dayton

At the time of the survey Governor Dayton's approval rating among People of Color, including Black and Hispanic Minnesotans, was higher than it was among White Minnesotans. A far higher proportion of White Minnesotans disapproved of the Governor's job performance than was the case among the state's Populations of Color.

Figure 18: Governor Dayton's job approval rate, by race

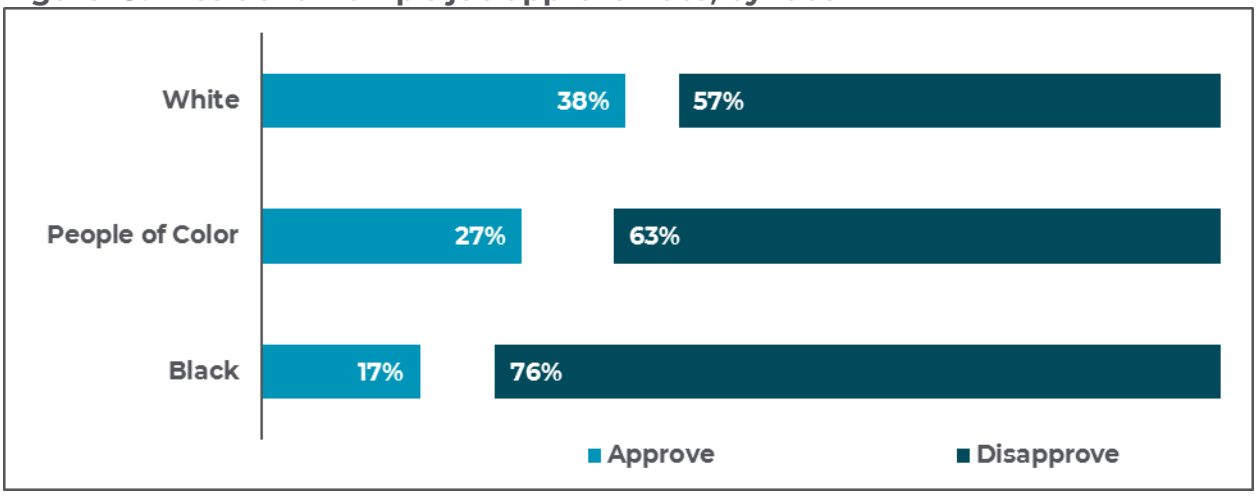


Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note: "People of Color" includes Black and Hispanic Minnesotans. The percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

President Trump

While no broad race group gave a majority of its support to President Trump, approval ratings among White Minnesotans (38%) exceeded those of all People of Color (27%) and were roughly double the exceedingly low approval rates among Black Minnesotans (17%).

Figure 19: President Trump's job approval rate, by race



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note: "People of Color" includes Black and Hispanic Minnesotans. The percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

Over five percent of White Minnesotans indicated that they approved of Trump's performance as President because he is a *different or non-traditional leader*. Over five percent of People of Color indicated that they approved of President Trump's job performance due to his *follow-through.* Among Whites, top reasons for disapproving of President Trump's job performance included his *communication style*, *self-centeredness*, and *demeanor*. Among People of Color, *lack of tolerance* and *lack of trustworthiness* topped the list. *Lack of competence* was a top mention among both groups.

Figure 20: Primary reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance, by race

	Reason for approval	Reason for disapproval
White	• Different/non-traditional	• Lack of competence • Communication style • Self-centered • Demeanor
People Of Color	• Follow-through	• Lack of competence • Lack of tolerance • Lack of trustworthiness

Notes: Table shows all categories that included at least 5 percent of respondents from each region, ordered most to least common. Categories were derived from verbatim responses. Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

Findings by income groups

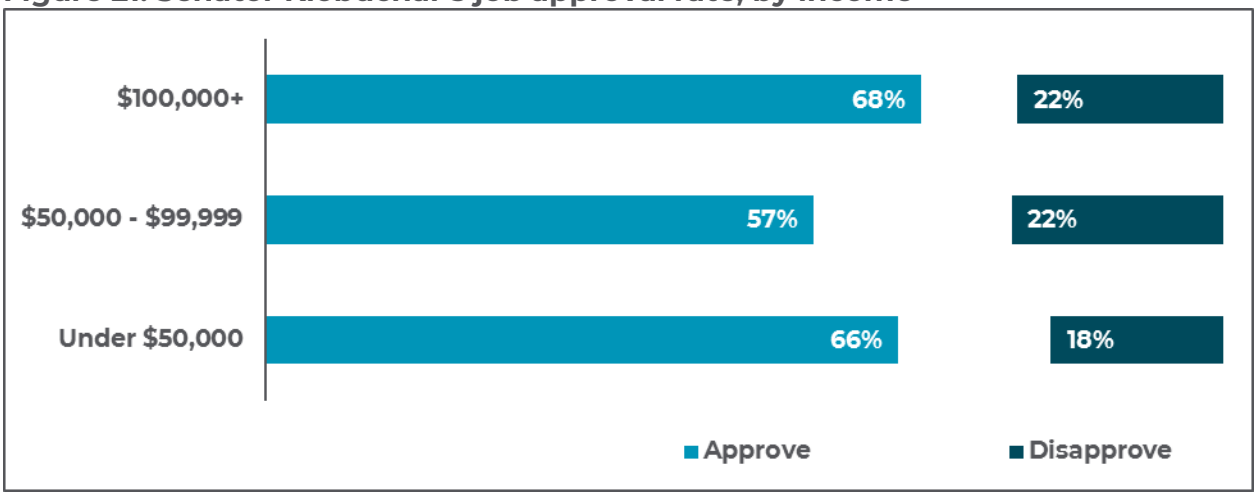
For purposes of analysis, respondents were grouped into three broad income categories: the lower income group included those indicating that their total annual family income (before taxes) was under $50,000; the middle-income group included those with annual family incomes of $50,000 to $100,000; the high-income group included those making over $100,000 annually.

Political approval did not vary dramatically by income in Minnesota at the time of this survey. In fact, there were no significant differences by income in the approval rating of either the Minnesota State Legislature or President Trump. There were, however, some differences among the three income groupings in the approval ratings for Senators Klobuchar and Franken, as well as Governor Dayton.

U.S. Senator Klobuchar

At the time of the survey, about two-thirds of Minnesotans in the higher- and lower-income groups approved of Senator Amy Klobuchar's job performance, whereas her approval rating was approximately ten percentage points lower among the middle-income group.

Figure 21: Senator Klobuchar's job approval rate, by income

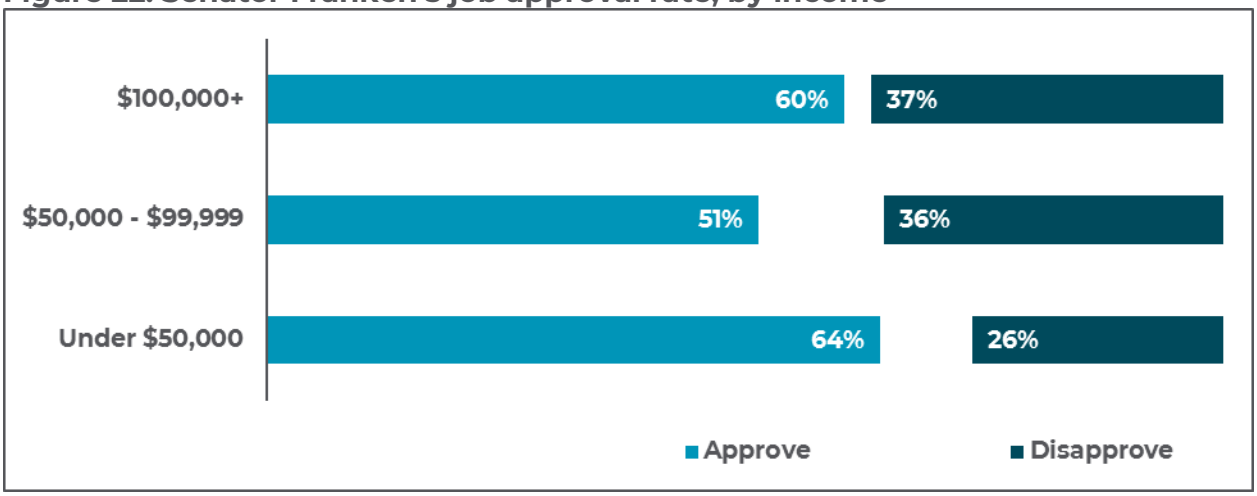


Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

Senator Franken

In a pattern similar to Senator Klobuchar's, Senator Franken's approval rating dipped among the middle-income category. Unlike Senator Klobuchar, however, Senator Franken's disapproval rating among the middle- and upper-income groups was significantly higher than the 26 percent disapproval rating among the lower-income group at the time of this survey.

Figure 22: Senator Franken's job approval rate, by income

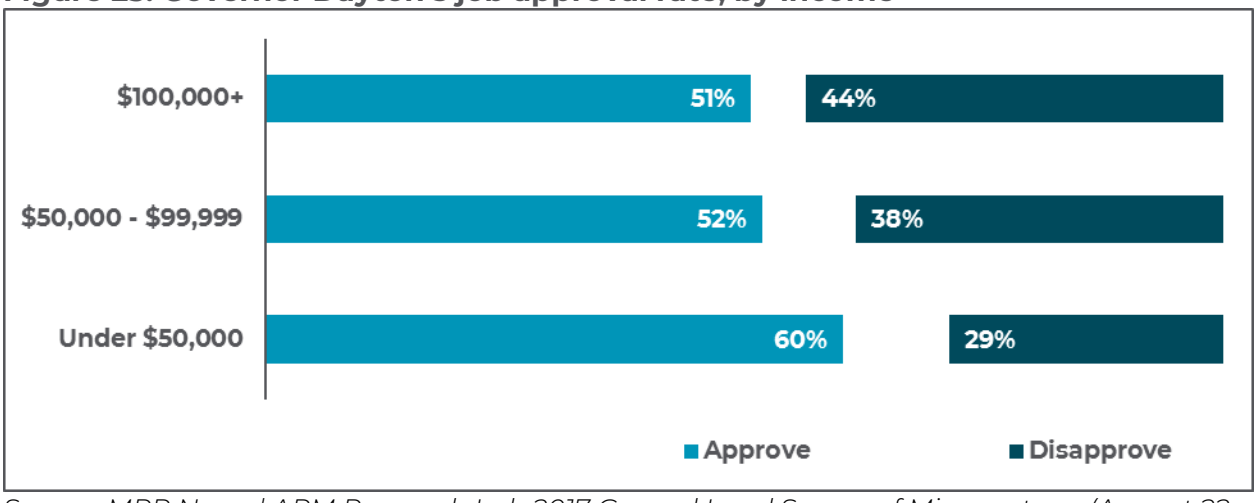


Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

Governor Dayton

Over half of Minnesotans in all three income groups approved of Governor Dayton's job performance. The three groups differentiated when looking at *disapproval*, with higher income Minnesotan's significantly more likely to disapprove than was the case for the lowest income group.

Figure 23: Governor Dayton's job approval rate, by income



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

Findings by educational attainment

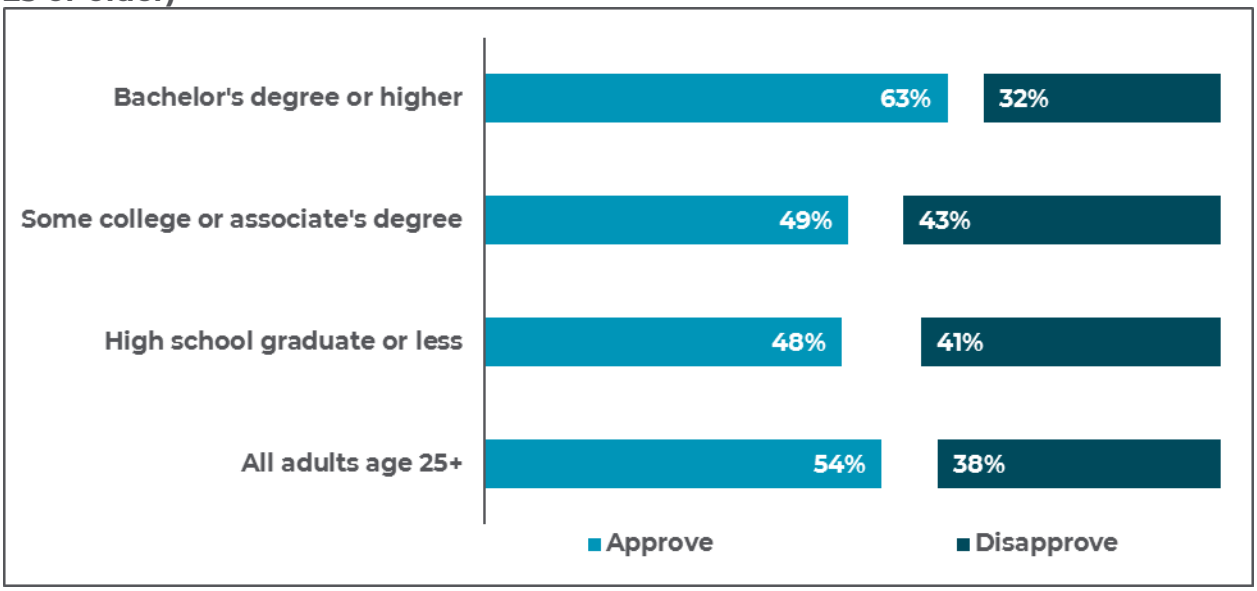
When evaluating whether political approval ratings varied by educational attainment we include only those who are age 25 or older since younger Minnesotans may still be finishing their degrees.

In late summer 2017 no significant differences existed between the proportion approving the job performance of either Senator Klobuchar or Senator Franken based on respondents' level of education. There were differences in the ratings of Governor Dayton, the State Legislature, and President Trump when examined through the lens of education.

Governor Dayton

Minnesotans with a bachelor's degree or higher were more likely to approve of Governor Dayton's job performance than was the case for those who had not attained a four-year degree.

Figure 24: Governor Dayton's job approval rate, by educational attainment (age 25 or older)

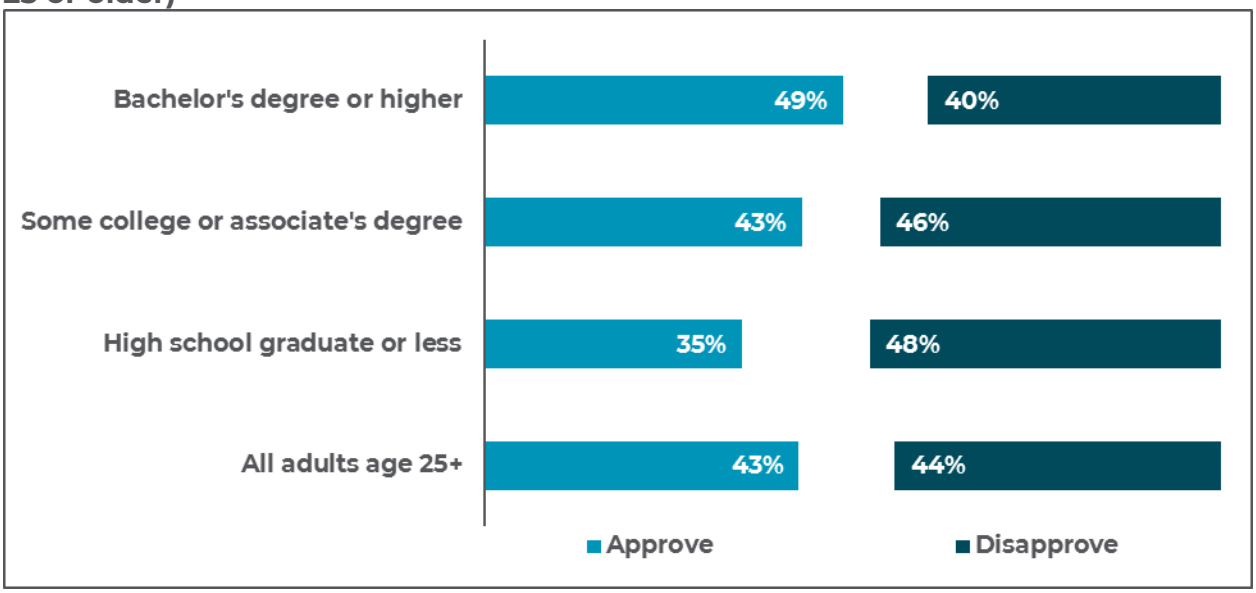


Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

State Legislature

The only significant difference in the graph below is between those with a high school degree or less education and those with at least a bachelor's degree; the proportion approving of the Legislature's job performance is higher among those with higher educational attainment.

Figure 25: State Legislature's job approval rate, by educational attainment (age 25 or older)

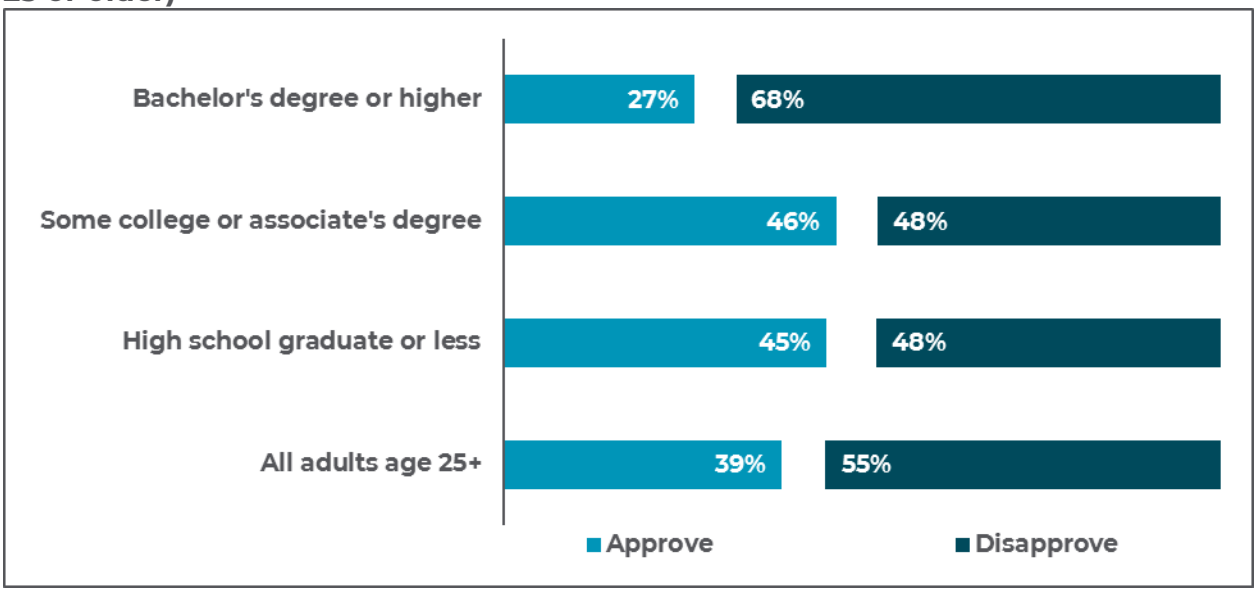


Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

President Trump

Only 27 percent of those with a bachelor's degree or higher indicated that they approved of the President's job performance at the time of this survey. That is a significantly smaller proportion than was the case for either those with some college or an associate's degree, or those with a high school diploma or less education.

Figure 26: President Trump's job approval rate, by educational attainment (age 25 or older)



Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14). Note that the percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.

Reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance, by educational attainment

The top reasons given for approving of the President's performance among those with a high school diploma or less included the *effort* that they saw him bringing to the job, and his status as a *different or non-traditional* leader.

In addition to agreement regarding the primary reasons cited by respondents with other levels of educational attainment, several of those with a bachelor's degree or more education disapproved of President Trump's performance because of the *values* that they heard him espousing.

Figure 27: Primary reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance, by educational attainment

	Reason for approval	Reason for disapproval
Bachelor's degree or higher	• *None*	• Lack of competence • Lack of tolerance • Values • Communication style • Demeanor • Dishonesty
Some college or associate's degree	• Follow-through • Different/ non-traditional	• Lack of competence • Lack of tolerance • Communication style • Self-centered
High school graduate or less	• Giving effort • Different/ non-traditional	• Communication style • Dishonesty • Self-centered • Lack of competence

Notes: Table shows all categories that included at least 5 percent of respondents from each region, ordered most to least common. Categories were derived from verbatim responses. Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

Findings by political affiliation

In this survey we asked respondents: “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, or an Independent?” Those who identified as Independents, as well as the smaller group who volunteered some other affiliation, said they did not know, or refused to answer, were asked the follow-up question: “As of today do you lean more towards the Republican Party or more towards the Democratic Party?”[7]

Figure 28: Party affiliation, without and with leaners

Party affiliation (without leaners)		Party affiliation (with leaners)	
Republican	24%	Republican	40%
Democrat	32%	Democrat	46%
Independent	38%	Independent	14%

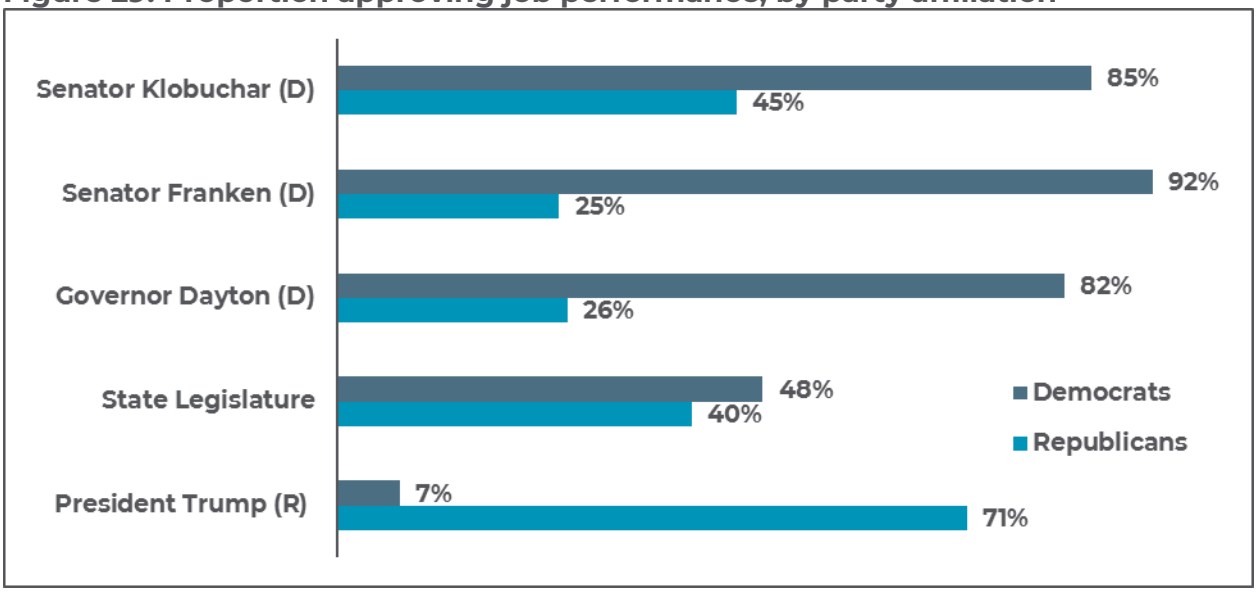
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

At the time of the survey over 80 percent of Minnesotans who either identified or leaned Democratic approved of three officials of their party (Senators Klobuchar and Franken and Governor Dayton). A somewhat lower proportion of Republicans (71%) approved of Republican President Donald Trump. In terms of “cross party” approvals: A much higher proportion of Republicans approved of the Democratic officials, especially Senator Klobuchar, than was the case for Democrats’ approving of President Trump.

It is notable that a higher proportion of Democrats indicated approving of the State Legislature than was the case for Republicans, even though both houses of the legislature had Republican majorities.

[7] To avoid possible order effects with answer categories, “Republican” and “Democrat” were rotated from one respondent to the next. Also note that in Minnesota the Democratic Party is formally titled the “Democratic-Farmer-Labor” or DFL Party.

Figure 29: Proportion approving job performance, by party affiliation

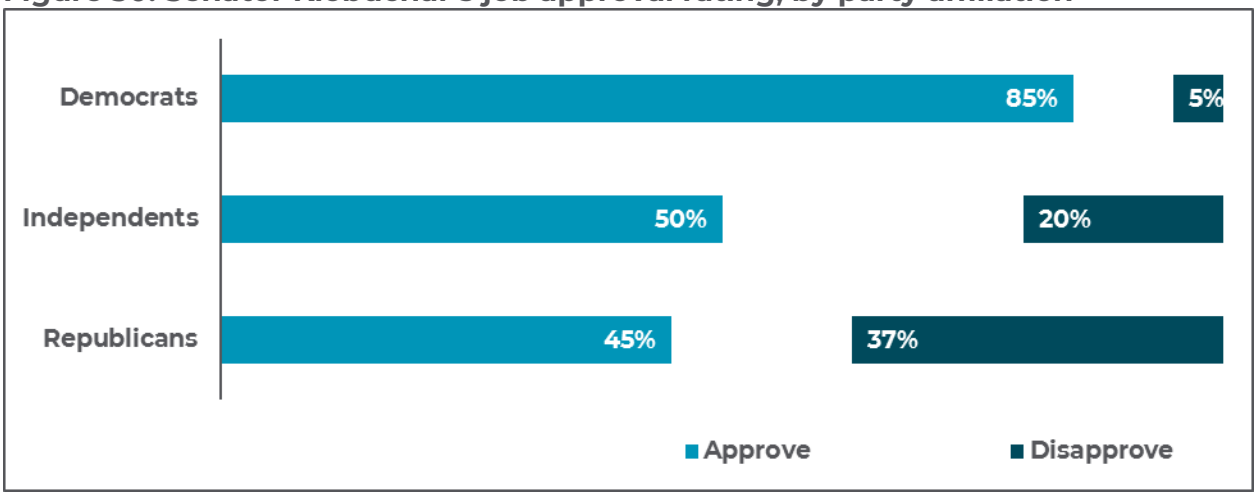


Note: "Republicans" and "Democrats" include those who indicated they lean toward one party or the other.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

U.S. Senator Klobuchar

The overwhelming majority of those who either identify or lean Democratic in Minnesota approved of Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar's job performance at the time of this survey. Perhaps more surprising is that nearly half of the state's Republicans approved of the Senator's performance, somewhat more than the proportion disapproving.

Figure 30: Senator Klobuchar's job approval rating, by party affiliation

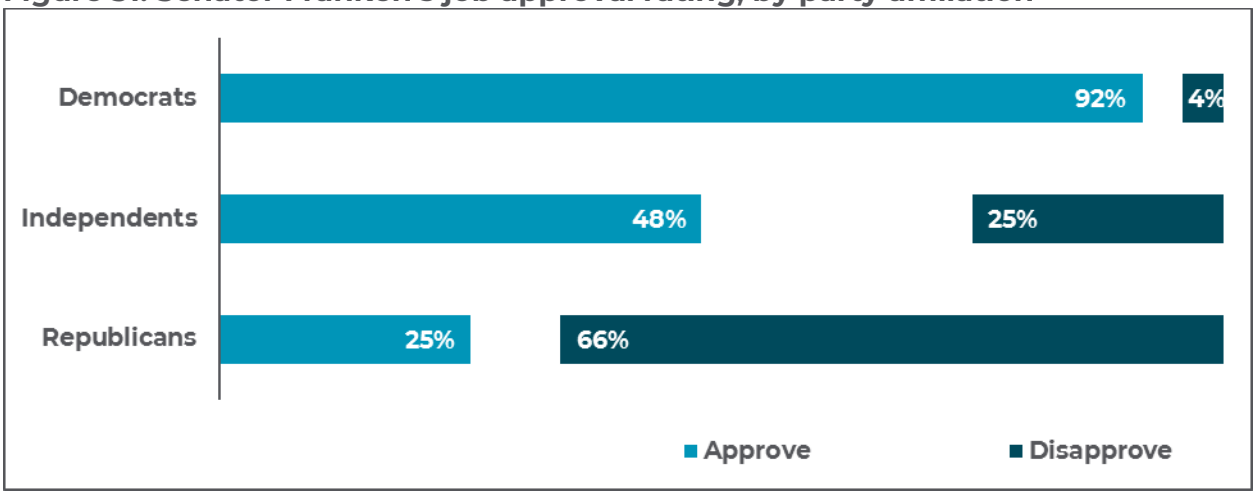


Notes: "Republicans" and "Democrats" include those who indicated they lean toward one party or the other. "Independents" include those who did not provide a party preference. The percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

U.S. Senator Franken

Like Senator Klobuchar, nearly all Minnesota Democrats approved of Democratic Senator Al Franken's job performance at the time of the survey. Senator Franken's approval rating, however, was much lower among Republicans; two-thirds of those identifying or leaning Republican in the state disapproved of Franken's performance.

Figure 31: Senator Franken's job approval rating, by party affiliation

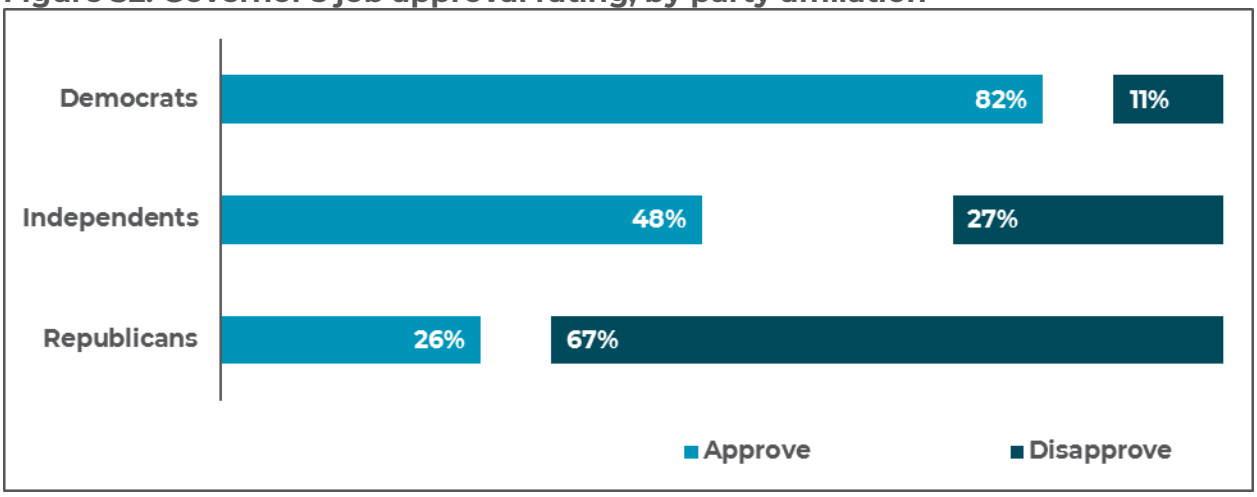


Notes: "Republicans" and "Democrats" include those who indicated they lean toward one party or the other. "Independents" include those who did not provide a party preference. The percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

Governor Dayton

In late summer and early fall 2017, Democratic Governor Dayton's approval rating by party affiliation was nearly identical to that of Senator Franken: the vast majority of Democrats approved of his job performance, and two-thirds of Republicans disapproved, with "Independents" (including those not declaring loyalty or even leaning toward the two major parties) falling in between.

Figure 32: Governor's job approval rating, by party affiliation

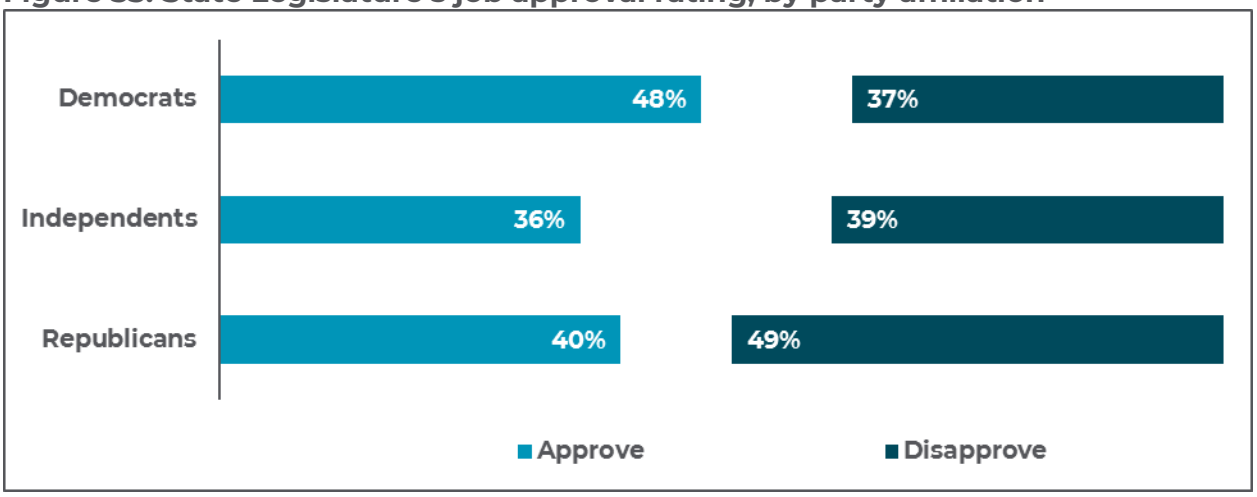


Notes: "Republicans" and "Democrats" include those who indicated they lean toward one party or the other. "Independents" include those who did not provide a party preference. The percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

State Legislature

At the time of the survey the proportion of Democrats approving of the Republican-controlled Minnesota State Legislature was higher than the proportion of either Independents or Republicans that approved of the body's performance. Also surprising, the disapproval rate was higher among Republicans than it was among either Independents or Democrats.

Figure 33: State Legislature's job approval rating, by party affiliation

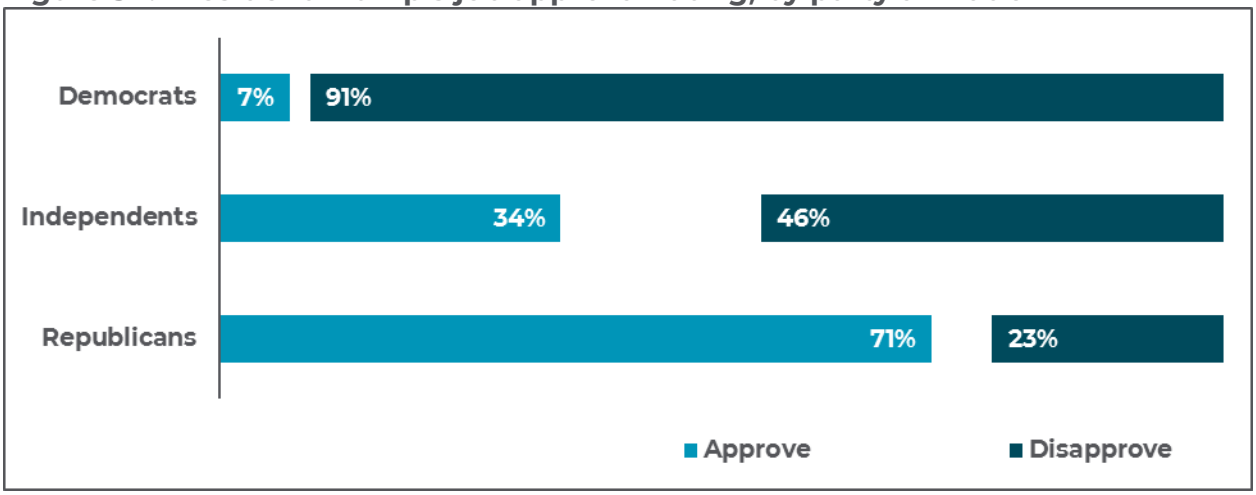


Notes: "Republicans" and "Democrats" include those who indicated they lean toward one party or the other. "Independents" include those who did not provide a party preference. The percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

President Trump

At the time of the survey Republican President Donald Trump had a 71 percent approval rating among Minnesota Republicans. Yet nearly one-quarter of Minnesotans either identifying or leaning Republican disapproved of the President's job performance, as did nearly half of Independents and 9 in 10 Democrats.

Figure 34: President Trump's job approval rating, by party affiliation



Notes: "Republicans" and "Democrats" include those who indicated they lean toward one party or the other. "Independents" include those who did not provide a party preference. The percentage refusing to answer the question or indicating "don't know" is not shown.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

The reasons that partisans gave for their respective approval or disapproval of President Trump's job performance were not surprising: Republicans commonly cited his *follow-through* and *communication style* as reasons for their support. Democrats commonly named *lack of competence* and *communication style* as explanations for their disapproval of President Trump.

Notably more than five percent of Republicans coalesced around a reason to disapprove of the President's job performance: his *communication style*. Also noteworthy, more than five percent of Minnesota Democrats indicated that they approved of President Trump's performance due to his work on the *economy*.

Figure 35: Primary reasons given for approving or disapproving of President Trump's job performance, by political affiliation

	Reason for approval	Reason for disapproval
Republicans	• Follow-through • Different/non-traditional • Economy* • Communication style • Giving effort	• Communication style
Independents	• Different/non-traditional • Follow-through • Giving effort • Economy*	• Demeanor • Self-centered • Leadership
Democrats	• Economy*	• Lack of competence • Lack of tolerance • Self-centered • Dishonest • Communication style

Notes: Table shows all categories that included at least 5 percent of respondents from each region, ordered most to least common. Categories were derived from verbatim responses. (*) Indicates responses that relate to policies and politics; all others refer personal characteristics and behavior.
Source: MPR News | APM Research Lab 2017 Ground Level Survey of Minnesotans (August 22-September 14).

Technical Notes

Graph notes: Readers are cautioned that not all observed differences in the graphs are statistically significant. Graphs do not show the percentage of survey respondents who said they "don't know" or otherwise didn't give a response. For this reason, graphs will not sum to 100%.

Race group definitions: All race groups shown are non-Hispanic. Excepting the White group, all individual race groups contain multiracial persons. For example, a survey respondent who indicated he was both Black and American Indian would appear in both race groups in data summaries.

Geographic regions definitions: The survey was conducted across Minnesota in eight regions—discrete geographies by which results are reported. Survey respondents were sorted into regions by disclosing their zip codes at the beginning of the survey. In the cases where zip codes crossed county boundaries, they were also asked which county they resided in. Each region's geographic definition is discussed below:

1. **Duluth Area**: Consists of the following 11 residential U.S. Postal Service zip codes in or nearby the city of Duluth, in portions of St. Louis County: 55802, 55803, 55804, 55805, 55806, 55807, 55808, 55810, 55811, 55812, and 55814. The Duluth Area stratum contains an estimated 117,100 residents (2% of the state population) and 47,400 households.

2. **Northern Minnesota**: Comprises 19 counties in northern Minnesota, excluding the embedded geography represented by the Duluth Area region. The counties are: Aitkin, Beltrami, Carlton, Clearwater, Cook, Hubbard, Itasca, Kittson, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau, and St. Louis. The Northern Minnesota stratum contains an estimated 379,200 residents (7% of the state population) and 158,700 households.

3. **St. Cloud Area**: Consists of the following 8 residential USPS zip codes in or nearby the city of St. Cloud, located in portions of Stearns, Sherburne, and Benton counties in Central Minnesota: 56301, 56303, 56304, 56369, 56374, 56377, 56379, and 56387. The St. Cloud Area stratum contains an estimated 126,800 residents (2% of the state population) and 48,100 households.

4. **Central Minnesota**: Comprises 23 counties in central Minnesota, excluding the embedded geography represented by the St. Cloud Area region. The counties that represent this region are: Becker, Benton, Cass, Chisago, Clay, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pine, Pope, Sherburne, Stearns, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin, and Wright. The Central Minnesota stratum contains an estimated 834,800 residents (15% of the state population) and 321,300 households.

5. **Minneapolis-St. Paul**: Represented by the actual boundaries of the adjacent cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, which contain portions of Hennepin and Ramsey counties. The Minneapolis-St. Paul region contains an estimated 695,000 residents (13% of the

state population) and 281,400 households.

6. **Twin Cities Suburbs**: Comprises seven counties home or adjacent to Minneapolis and St. Paul, excluding the Minneapolis-St. Paul region. The seven counties are Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington. The Twin Cities Suburbs region contains an estimated 2,257,100 residents (42% of the state population) and 868,800 households.

7. **Rochester Area**: Consists of the following four residential USPS zip codes in or nearby the city of Rochester, located in portions of Olmsted county in southern Minnesota: 55901, 55902, 55904, and 55906. The Rochester Area region contains an estimated 121,700 residents (2% of the state population) and 47,800 households.

8. **Southern Minnesota**: Comprises 38 counties located in southern Minnesota, excluding the Rochester Area stratum. The counties are Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Martin, Meeker, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Olmsted, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Rock, Sibley, Steele, Swift, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, Winona, and Yellow Medicine. The Southern Minnesota stratum contains an estimated 887,400 residents (16% of the state population) and 351,300 households.

Additionally, results have been reported by the Twin Cities 7-County Region versus Greater Minnesota. The former consists of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties, while the latter consists of the balance of Minnesota (80 counties).

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