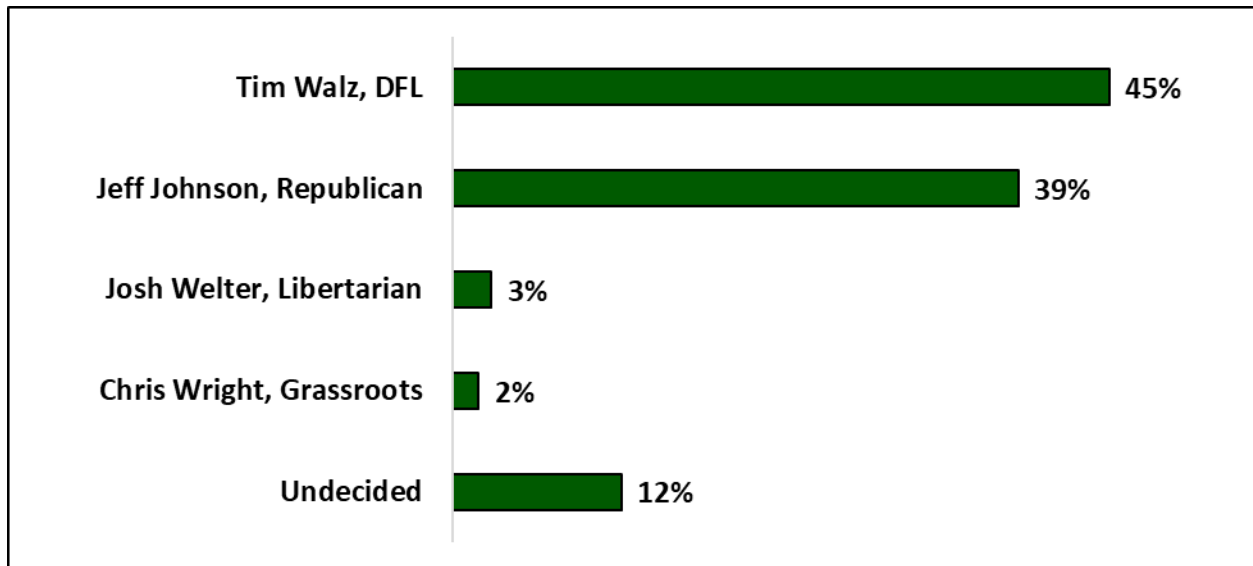


# The Minnesota Governor's Race

Findings from the MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll

October 21, 2018

**Tim Walz leads Jeff Johnson in the governor's race by six points, but twelve percent of voters remain undecided**



Question: "If the 2018 general election for Minnesota governor were held today, would you vote for..."

Source: MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll, October 15-17, 2018. N=800 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in November; overall margin of error = +/-3.5 percentage points.

## Key findings

Results from the MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll of 800 likely voters show:

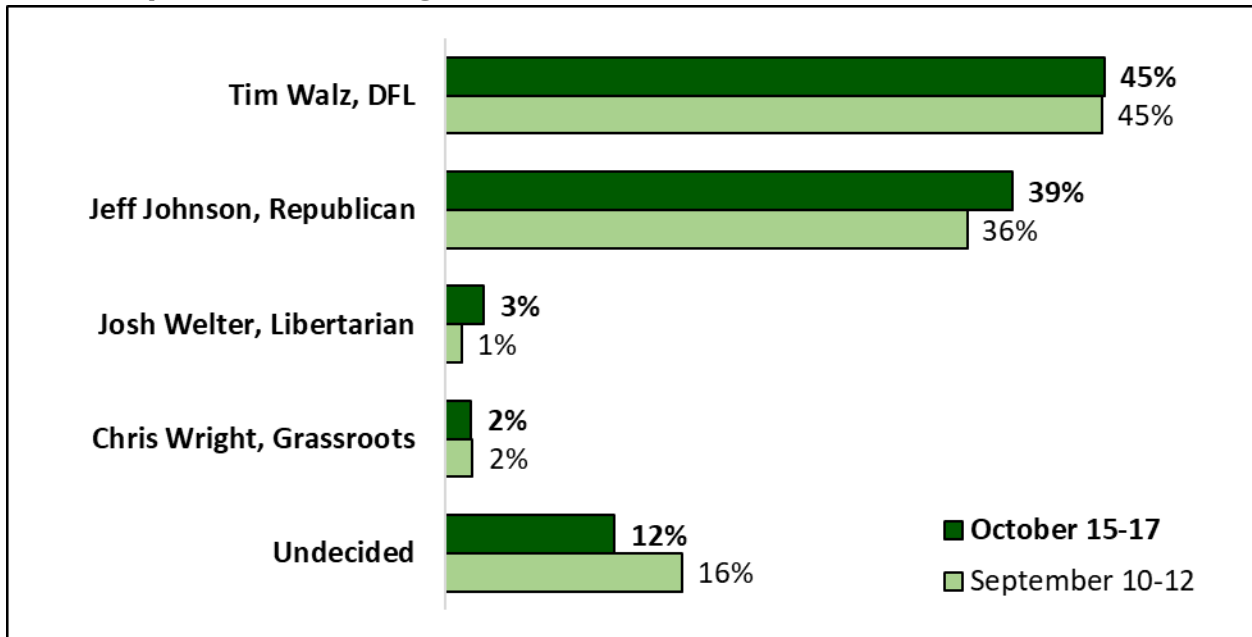
- **Democratic U.S. Representative Tim Walz currently leads Republican Hennepin County Commissioner Jeff Johnson in the race for the governor's office by a six-percentage-point margin, but 12 percent of likely voters remain undecided.**
  - Five percent of likely voters indicate that they prefer third party candidates, with three percent favoring Libertarian Josh Welter and two percent favoring Grassroots candidate Chris Wright.
  - Walz's six percentage point lead is down slightly from his nine-point lead in last month's Minnesota Poll.
  - Since September the proportion of likely voters who are undecided has decreased from 16 to 12 percent.
  - Similar to September, Walz has an advantage among women, younger voters, those living in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, and Democrats. He now also has a significant lead among those in households with annual incomes under \$50,000.
  - Similar to September, Johnson has an advantage among older men and Republicans. Additionally, Johnson now has a significant lead among those living in the metro suburbs (nine counties surrounding Hennepin and Ramsey counties)
    - Support for Johnson also has grown among younger men and those living in Southern Minnesota—groups which were led by Walz in September and are now statistically tied.
- Democratic candidate Tim Walz has somewhat higher favorability ratings than is the case for Republican candidate Jeff Johnson, although that gap has narrowed.
  - Similar to the September Minnesota Poll, Walz has maintained a higher percentage of favorable ratings than Johnson among women, young voters (age 18 to 34), and those with lower household incomes, those living in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, and Democrats.
    - Walz's overall favorable rating has barely moved since September, while the proportion indicating they have an unfavorable opinion of Walz grew from 13 percent to 23 percent.
  - In addition to Republicans, Johnson now has a significantly higher percentage of favorable ratings than Walz among those living in Northern Minnesota.
    - Overall, the portion indicating that they have a favorable opinion of Jeff Johnson increased from 26 percent in September to 32 percent in October.

- For both candidates the proportion indicating neutral opinions as well as the proportion indicating they did not recognize the name (given out of context as one of the first questions on the survey) decreased somewhat.
- **A majority of likely voters indicated that they support raising the state tax on gasoline and other fuels by 10 cents per gallon to fund road and bridge construction and maintenance projects.**
  - **Overall, 56 percent of likely voters support an increase, and 36 percent are opposed.** This split was similar among most groups represented in the survey: the majority of both men and women, younger and older Minnesotans, those from higher and lower income households, and those living in all four regions of the state indicated support for a gas tax increase.
  - Republicans and those planning to vote for Jeff Johnson are the only two groups where the majority is opposed to such a measure.
  - A strong majority of Democrats, independents, and those planning to vote for Tim Walz indicated support for increasing the gas tax.

The remainder of this brief details these findings in tables and graphs. Please see the appendices for survey background and methods, respondent characteristics, regional definitions, and exact question wording.

## Current candidate preference

**Tim Walz leads Jeff Johnson in the governor's race by six percentage points, down slightly from nine points one month ago**



Question: "If the 2018 general election for Minnesota governor were held today, would you vote for..."

Source: MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll, September 10-12 and October 15-17, 2018. N=800 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in November; overall margin of error = +/-3.5 percentage points.

## Preference for Minnesota's next governor, by group

	October 15-17				September 10-12	
	Tim Walz, DFL	Jeff Johnson, Republican	Other <sup>a</sup>	Undecided	Tim Walz	Jeff Johnson
<b>ALL</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>39%</b>	5%	12%	<b>45%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>SEX</b>						
Male	<b>38%</b>	<b>47%</b>	4%	11%	40%	40%
Female	<b>52%</b>	<b>32%</b>	5%	12%	<b>50%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>AGE GROUP</b>						
18-34	<b>57%</b>	<b>34%</b>	4%	6%	<b>63%</b>	<b>17%</b>
35-49	46%	37%	5%	12%	42%	33%
50-64	43%	42%	3%	11%	39%	41%
65+	39%	40%	5%	16%	42%	45%
<b>AGE by SEX</b>						
Male, 18-49	41%	45%	4%	11%	<b>43%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Male, 50 or older	<b>35%</b>	<b>48%</b>	5%	12%	<b>37%</b>	<b>48%</b>
Female, 18-49	<b>58%</b>	<b>28%</b>	6%	8%	<b>58%</b>	<b>23%</b>
Female, 50 or older	<b>47%</b>	<b>34%</b>	4%	15%	44%	39%
<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>						
Under \$50,000	<b>51%</b>	<b>30%</b>	5%	14%	41%	36%
\$50,000 or more	41%	44%	5%	11%	44%	40%
<b>REGION <sup>b</sup></b>						
Hennepin/Ramsey	<b>60%</b>	<b>27%</b>	4%	9%	<b>55%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Metro Suburbs	<b>36%</b>	<b>45%</b>	7%	12%	39%	42%
Southern Minnesota	45%	43%	2%	10%	<b>48%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Northern Minnesota	35%	45%	5%	16%	35%	43%
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>						
DFL/Democrat	<b>92%</b>	<b>1%</b>	4%	4%	<b>85%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Independent/other	33%	38%	6%	24%	<b>40%</b>	<b>26%</b>
Republican	<b>2%</b>	<b>84%</b>	3%	10%	<b>2%</b>	<b>89%</b>

Question: "If the 2018 general election for Minnesota governor were held today, would you vote for..."

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll, 2018. N=800 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in November; overall margin of error = +/-3.5 percentage points.

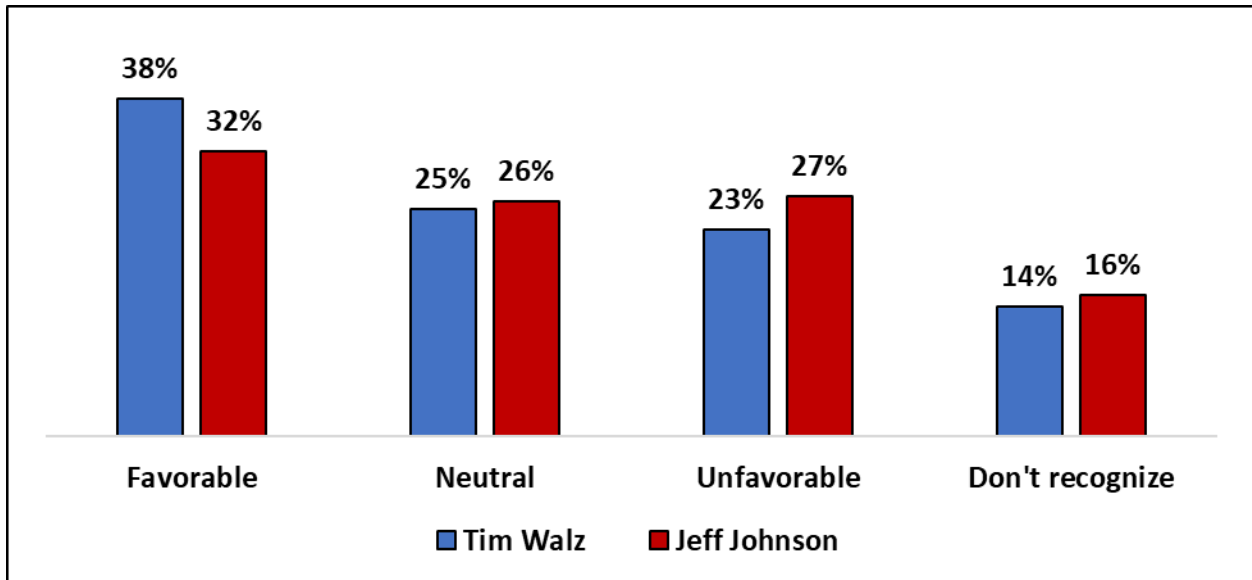
<sup>a</sup> Other includes Libertarian Josh Welter, who is currently preferred by three percent of voters, and Chris Wright of the Grassroots party, who is currently the candidate preferred by two percent of voters.

<sup>b</sup> See Appendix 2 for definition of regions.

Note: **Bolded percentages** indicate a statistically significant difference (95 percent confidence level or higher) in preference for leading candidates within the survey noted at top of column.

## Name recognition and favorability ratings

**A somewhat higher proportion of likely voters express a favorable opinion of Walz than Johnson**



Source: MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll, October 15-17, 2018. N=800 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in November; overall margin of error = +/-3.5 percentage points.

Question: "Do you recognize the name \_\_\_\_\_? (IF YES) Do you have a favorable, unfavorable or neutral opinion of \_\_\_\_\_?"

Note: This was the first series of questions asked in the survey, and did not include reference to a specific title, office, or political party.

## Leading candidates for Minnesota’s next governor: Current name recognition and favorability, by group

	October 15-17				September 10-12	
	Favorable		Not Recognized		Favorable	
	Tim Walz DFL	Jeff Johnson Republican	Tim Walz DFL	Jeff Johnson Republican	Tim Walz	Jeff Johnson
<b>ALL</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>32%</b>	14%	16%	<b>37%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>SEX</b>						
Male	34%	38%	14%	15%	33%	30%
Female	<b>40%</b>	<b>26%</b>	14%	16%	<b>41%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>AGE GROUP</b>						
18-34	<b>44%</b>	<b>27%</b>	13%	14%	<b>51%</b>	<b>12%</b>
35-49	38%	30%	14%	14%	<b>37%</b>	<b>28%</b>
50-64	38%	32%	16%	17%	32%	27%
65+	32%	36%	15%	17%	33%	33%
<b>AGE by SEX</b>						
Male, 18-49	36%	36%	13%	13%	<b>37%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Male, 50 or older	33%	39%	16%	17%	29%	34%
Female, 18-49	<b>45%</b>	<b>22%</b>	14%	15%	<b>48%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Female, 50 or older	37%	30%	15%	17%	<b>36%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>						
Under \$50,000	<b>44%</b>	<b>26%</b>	13%	16%	<b>34%</b>	<b>24%</b>
\$50,000 or more	34%	35%	16%	15%	36%	30%
<b>REGION <sup>a</sup></b>						
Hennepin/Ramsey	<b>50%</b>	<b>22%</b>	10%	15%	<b>42%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Metro Suburbs	29%	35%	19%	17%	33%	30%
Southern Minnesota	41%	36%	13%	14%	<b>43%</b>	<b>24%</b>
Northern Minnesota	<b>26%</b>	<b>37%</b>	17%	16%	31%	32%
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>						
DFL/Democrat	<b>69%</b>	<b>3%</b>	12%	14%	<b>66%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Independent	34%	34%	<b>6%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Republican	<b>4%</b>	<b>63%</b>	25%	21%	<b>5%</b>	<b>57%</b>

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll, 2018. N=800 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in November; overall margin of error = +/-3.5 percentage points.

Question: “Do you recognize the name \_\_\_\_\_? (IF YES) Do you have a favorable, unfavorable or neutral opinion of \_\_\_\_\_?”

Notes: This was the first series of questions asked in the survey, and did not include reference to a specific title, office, or political party. **Bolded percentages** indicate a statistically significant difference (95 percent confidence level or higher).

<sup>a</sup> See Appendix 2 for definition of regions.

## Gas tax preferences

### Support for a ten cent per gallon gas tax increase, by group

	Support	Oppose	Not sure
<b>ALL</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>36%</b>	8%
<b>SEX</b>			
Male	<b>55%</b>	<b>39%</b>	6%
Female	<b>57%</b>	<b>33%</b>	9%
<b>AGE GROUP</b>			
18-34	<b>60%</b>	<b>33%</b>	7%
35-49	<b>55%</b>	<b>38%</b>	7%
50-64	<b>56%</b>	<b>36%</b>	8%
65+	<b>55%</b>	<b>37%</b>	9%
<b>AGE by SEX</b>			
Male, 18-49	<b>56%</b>	<b>37%</b>	7%
Male, 50 or older	<b>54%</b>	<b>40%</b>	6%
Female, 18-49	<b>58%</b>	<b>34%</b>	8%
Female, 50 or older	<b>56%</b>	<b>33%</b>	11%
<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
Under \$50,000	<b>56%</b>	<b>35%</b>	9%
\$50,000 or more	<b>57%</b>	<b>37%</b>	6%
<b>REGION <sup>a</sup></b>			
Hennepin/Ramsey	<b>62%</b>	<b>32%</b>	7%
Metro Suburbs	<b>54%</b>	<b>39%</b>	7%
Southern Minnesota	<b>55%</b>	<b>35%</b>	10%
Northern Minnesota	<b>52%</b>	<b>40%</b>	8%
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>			
DFL/Democrat	<b>72%</b>	<b>20%</b>	8%
Independent/other	<b>62%</b>	<b>28%</b>	10%
Republican	<b>32%</b>	<b>61%</b>	6%
<b>GOVERNOR PREFERENCE</b>			
Tim Walz, DFL	<b>75%</b>	<b>17%</b>	8%
Jeff Johnson, Republican	<b>38%</b>	<b>55%</b>	7%

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll, October 15-17, 2018. N=800 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in November; overall margin of error = +/-3.5 percentage points. Question: "Do you support or oppose raising the state tax on gasoline and other fuels by 10-cents per gallon to fund road and bridge construction and maintenance projects?"

Note: **Bolded percentages** indicate a statistically significant difference (95 percent confidence level or higher).

<sup>a</sup> See Appendix 2 for definition of regions.



## Appendix 1: Survey background and methods

This survey is the result of a collaboration between Minnesota Public Radio News and the Star Tribune. It is a continuation of the Star Tribune's periodic "Minnesota Poll."<sup>2</sup>

Mason-Dixon Polling & Strategy, Inc. of Jacksonville, Florida, designed and executed the survey, including sample construction and screening procedures, data collection, and analysis. The poll was conducted from October 15 through 17, 2018. A total of 800 registered Minnesota voters were interviewed statewide by telephone. All indicated they were likely to vote in the November general election.

Those interviewed were randomly selected from a phone-matched Minnesota voter registration list that included both land-line and cell phone numbers. Quotas were assigned to reflect voter turnout by county.

Mason-Dixon provided the following information regarding survey cooperation:

	Human contacted (potential respondent)	Agreeing to participate	Of those agreeing, number qualifying (screened in) and completing survey
Land-line	1,580	577 (37%)	479 (83%)
Mobile	1,895	417 (22%)	321 (77%)
TOTAL	3,475	994 (29%)	300 (80%)

The data were not weighted. The overall margin for error is no more than  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points. This means that there is a 95 percent probability that the "true" figure would fall within that range if all adults were surveyed. The margin for error is higher for any subgroup, such as a sex or age grouping, as shown in Appendix 2.

The APM Research Lab provided consultation on the questionnaire and additional analysis of survey results, including this brief.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.startribune.com/the-minnesota-poll/468458743/>

## Appendix 2: Characteristics of survey sample

	Survey respondents <sup>a</sup>		Margin of error for within-group analysis <sup>b</sup>	All Minnesotans age 18+ <sup>c</sup>
	Number	Percent <sup>d</sup>	Percentage points ±	
<b>ALL</b>	800	100%	3.5	4,277,949
<b>SEX</b>				
Male	384	48%	5.0	49%
Female	416	52%	4.8	51%
<b>AGE GROUP</b>				
18-34	136	17%	8.4	29%
35-49	210	26%	6.8	24%
50-64	237	30%	6.4	26%
65+	210	26%	6.8	20%
Refused	7	--	--	
<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>				
Under \$50,000	225	36%	6.5	36%
<i>Under \$25,000</i>	106	17%	--	16%
<i>\$25,000-\$49,999</i>	119	19%	--	20%
\$50,000 or more	400	64%	4.9	64%
<i>\$50,000-\$74,999</i>	131	21%	--	19%
<i>\$75,000-\$99,999</i>	129	21%	--	14%
<i>\$100,000 or more</i>	140	22%	--	32%
Refused	175	--	--	
<b>REGION <sup>e</sup></b>				
Hennepin/Ramsey	255	32%	6.1	33%
Metro Suburbs	230	29%	6.5	28%
Southern Minnesota	160	20%	7.7	19%
Northern Minnesota	155	19%	7.9	20%
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>				
DFL/Democrat	306	38%	5.6	--
Independent	229	29%	6.5	--
Republican	265	33%	6.0	--
<b>INTERVIEW TYPE</b>				--
Land-line	479	60%	--	--
Cell phone	321	40%	--	--

<sup>a</sup> MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll. N=800 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in November.

<sup>b</sup> Maximum margin of error at 95 percent confidence level for results presented for the group. For example, if 50 percent of males prefer a given candidate, there is a 95 percent probability that the value for the entire population would be between 45 and 55 percent.

<sup>c</sup> Mason Dixon's methods for this survey are designed to mirror the population that will vote in November. The exact characteristics of that population are unknowable; we provide characteristics of all adults as a point of reference (APM Research Lab analysis of U.S. Census Bureau 2017 Population Estimates and American Community Survey).

<sup>d</sup> Percentages in this table are calculated as "valid percentages"; refusals are excluded from the denominator.

<sup>e</sup> Regional definitions are noted below

## Comparison with September Minnesota Poll

In comparing the characteristics of the survey sample noted in the table above from the Minnesota Poll conducted September 10-12, 2018 with those of the Minnesota Poll conducted October 15-17, 2018, there are no statistically significant differences in terms of describing the broader target population of likely voters. However, there are some minor differences that may influence the overall results, in addition to the changes in the actual opinions of the broader population. Note that the two surveys are independent of one another; Mason Dixon did *not* attempt to interview the same respondents.

There is a slight difference in the age profile of respondents, with a 2.0 percentage point decrease from September to October in the proportion represented in the youngest age category, 18-34. The oldest category (65+) also decreased slightly, while the two middle categories both increased by less than 2 percentage points.

There also was a 2.8 percentage point increase in the proportion of respondents indicating that they had annual incomes below \$25,000 and a decrease of nearly 5 percentage points in the portion of respondents who refused to answer the income question; proportions represented in the broader “Under \$50,000” and “\$50,000 or more” categories differed by less than one percentage points between the two surveys.

There are no regional differences between the two surveys as regions were used as quotas in the sampling for both iterations of the Minnesota Poll.

In the October poll, the percentage of respondents identifying as Republican and DFL or Democrat increased by 2.4 and 0.9 percentage points, respectively, while the percentage identifying as independent decreased by 3.3 percentage points. Note that party identification can change as respondents associate themselves with candidates.

	October 15-17		September 10-12	
	Number	Percent <sup>d</sup>	Number	Percent <sup>d</sup>
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>				
DFL/Democrat	306	38%	299	37%
Independent	229	29%	255	32%
Republican	265	33%	246	31%

<sup>a</sup> MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll. N=800 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in November.

## Regions

**Hennepin/Ramsey:** Likely voters in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties.

**Metro Suburbs:** Likely voters in Scott, Wright, Sherburne, Carver, Dakota, Anoka, Isanti, Chisago and Washington Counties.

**Southern Minnesota:** Likely voters in Goodhue, Rice, Le Sueur, Blue Earth, Waseca, Freeborn, Steele, Dodge, Mower, Fillmore, Olmstead, Houston, Winona, Wabasha, Rock, Nobles, Jackson, Martin, Faribault, Watonwan, Cottonwood, Murray, Pipestone, Lincoln, Lyon, Redwood, Brown, Nicollet, McLeod, Renville, Sibley, Meeker, Kandiyohi, Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Lac Qui Parle, Swift, Big Stone, Traverse, Stevens, Pope, Douglas, and Grant Counties.

**Northern Minnesota:** Likely voters in Benton, Stearns, Morrison, Todd, Wadena, Otter Tail, Wilkin, Clay, Becker, Hubbard, Beltrami, Lake of the Woods, Clearwater, Mahnomen, Norman, Polk, Red Lake, Pennington, Marshall, Roseau, Kittson, Cook, Lake, St. Louis, Koochiching, Itasca, Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Carlton, Pine, Kanabec, and Mille Lacs Counties.

**Metro:** Hennepin/Ramsey and Metro Suburbs combined.

**Greater Minnesota:** Southern and Northern Minnesota combined.

## Appendix 3: Question wording

### OCTOBER 2018 MINNESOTA POLL

Good evening. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ from Mason-Dixon Polling. We are conducting a statewide public opinion poll. Would you have a few minutes to participate?

SCREENER #1: Are you a registered voter in the state of Minnesota?

YES-SKIP TO SCREENER 3      NO-PROCEED

SCREENER #2: Are you planning to register at the polls on Election Day in order to vote?

YES      1-SKIP TO Q1                      NO-TERMINATE

SCREENER #3: In November, there will be a general election for Governor, two US Senate seats and other state and local offices. Which of the following best describes your plans for participating in that election?

I will vote by absentee ballot	1-PROCEED
I will definitely vote on Election Day	2-PROCEED
I will probably vote on Election Day	3-PROCEED
I may or may not vote	4-TERMINATE
I probably will not vote	5-TERMINATE
I definitely will not vote	6-TERMINATE
Not Sure ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	7-TERMINATE

Do you recognize the name \_\_\_\_\_? (IF YES) Do you have a favorable, unfavorable or neutral opinion of \_\_\_\_\_?

1=RECOGNIZE NAME, FAVORABLE OPINION  
2=RECOGNIZE NAME, UNFAVORABLE OPINION  
3=RECOGNIZE NAME, NEUTRAL OR NO OPINION  
4=DON'T RECOGNIZE NAME

(ROTATE ORDER)

	FAV	UNFAV	NEUT	DR
5) Jeff Johnson	1	2	3	4
6) Tim Walz	1	2	3	4

10 -- If the 2018 general election for Minnesota governor were held today, would you vote for:

- 1- Tim Walz, the Democratic-Farmer-Labor candidate
- 2- Jeff Johnson, the Republican candidate
- 3- Chris Wright, the Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis candidate
- 4- Josh Welter, the Libertarian candidate
- 5- Undecided (**DO NOT READ**)

28 -- Do you support or oppose raising the state tax on gasoline and other fuels by 10-cents per gallon to fund road and bridge construction and maintenance projects?

- 1- Support
- 2- Oppose
- 3- Not sure

30) In terms of your political party identification, do you generally consider yourself DFL or Democrat, Republican or an independent?

	DFL/Democrat 1	Republican 2	Independent/Other 3
31) What is your age?		18-34 1	
		35-49 2	
		50-64 3	
		65+ 4	
		Refused 5	

32) What is your annual household income?

<\$25,000	1
\$25,000-\$49,999	2
\$50,000-\$74,999	3
\$75,000-\$99,999	4
\$100,000+	5
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	6

33) NOTE SEX: Male 1 Female 2

34) NOTE REGION: Hennepin/Ramsey Counties 1  
Metro Suburbs 2  
Southern Minnesota 3  
Northern Minnesota 4

## About the APM Research Lab: Bringing Facts into Focus

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The APM Research Lab conducts research projects of all types — surveys, demographic analyses, literature reviews, and more — and informs the work of partner organizations and the broader public through traditional reports, as well as infographics, blog posts, interactives, presentations, and other platforms.

In addition to philanthropic support and partnership, we are happy to entertain requests for proposals and other contractual inquiries related to research and analysis.



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a p m r e s e a r c h l a b . o r g

[info@apmresearchlab.org](mailto:info@apmresearchlab.org) | 651-290-1219