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Minnesotans Invested in Midterm Elections, More So for Dems...
Smith with Advantage Over Housley for U.S. Senate...
Pawlenty Trails in Gubernatorial Bid

For Immediate Release

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This NBC News/Marist Poll Reports:

Many Minnesota registered voters (64%) perceive the midterm elections to be very important, and a majority of voters (55%) say their vote will send a message that more Democrats are needed to check and balance President Trump's power. In contrast, 35% say their ballot will signal more Republicans are needed to advance the president's agenda.

By an 18-point margin, independent voters (51% to 33%) report their vote will signal the need to check the authority of President Trump. More than six in ten white voters with a college degree (65%) and women (62%) share this opinion. White voters without a college degree divide (45% to 45%). A plurality of men (47%) also think the president's power needs to be balanced.

Minnesota voters tell the NBC News/Marist Poll they prefer Democratic (48%) control of Congress as opposed to Republican control (36%). 16% are undecided. This opinion closely reflects the generic congressional ballot question on which 48% of registered voters in the state opt for the Democratic candidate and 37% plan to vote for the Republican candidate.

"If there is a blue wave in November, Minnesota looks like it will be part of the Democratic victory," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Minnesota voters want to send a message to Washington that they're not happy with the current party alignment."

Women, by almost two to one (55% to 28%), would like the Democrats to control Congress. By a smaller margin, men prefer Republicans to maintain control (45% to 40%). By 27 points, white voters with a college degree prefer Democratic control (59% to 32%). The plurality of those without a college degree would like the GOP to remain in control (44% to 35%). On the question of congressional control, independents currently lack consensus. 36% prefer Democratic control, 37% want Republican control, and 28% are undecided.

Similar demographic patterns are found on the congressional generic ballot question. White voters with a college degree (59% to 30%) and women (54% to 31%) favor the Democratic candidate by more than 20 points. White voters without a college degree prefer the Republican candidate (45% to 38%). Men divide (44% for the Republican to 42% for the Democrat). Independents have not coalesced. 37% of independents favor the Republican candidate in their district, 35% support the Democrat in their district, and 21% are undecided.

Statewide Democrats in Minnesota currently have the advantage. Senator Tina Smith (49%), seeking election after her appointment to fill Al Franken's seat in the Senate, leads Republican Karin Housley (35%) by double digits among registered voters in the state including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. 15% of voters are undecided.

Former Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty is well positioned to win the Republican nod in his bid to reclaim the state house. In the race for the Republican gubernatorial nomination, Pawlenty (51%) leads Jeff Johnson (32%) among the potential Republican electorate including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. 16% are undecided. 40% of the potential GOP electorate with a candidate preference for governor say they strongly support their candidate of choice. 44% of Pawlenty's supporters express firm commitment to him compared with 34% of Johnson's backers who say the same about their candidate.

In the Democratic-Farmer-Labor primary for governor, Lori Swanson (28%) and Tim Walz (24%) are closely matched among the potential electorate including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Erin Murphy receives 11%. Notably, 37%, the plurality, are undecided.

Among the potential Democratic-Farmer-Labor electorate with a candidate preference, 35% strongly support their candidate selection. Here, 39% of Walz's backers and 26% of Swanson's supporters say they are firmly committed to their choice of candidate.

But when it comes to November's general election, Pawlenty trails his potential Democratic-Farmer-Labor opponents. In hypothetical matchups for governor, Murphy (48%) has an eight-point advantage against Pawlenty (40%) among registered voters statewide. Walz (51%) has majority support and leads Pawlenty (40%) by 11 points. Swanson (51%) also garners a majority and leads Pawlenty (40%) by the same margin.

In Minnesota, Donald Trump's job approval rating is upside down (36% to 50%) among residents in the state. 40% of residents say they strongly disapprove of how the president is doing compared with 24% who strongly approve. Trump does slightly better when the economy enters the picture. 40% of residents credit Trump, in part, with an improved economy. 32% do not think Trump is responsible for improved economic conditions, and 23% do not perceive the economy to have improved. One percent say the economy has gotten worse.

60% of Minnesota residents, including 13% of Republicans and 56% of independents, do not think the president should be re-elected.

A majority of residents (56%) assert Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into possible wrongdoing and Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election is fair. 31% believe it is a "witch hunt" including 63% of Minnesota Republicans.