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MINNESOTA: Republicans Increasingly Mobilized for Midterms... Dems with Lead on Generic Congressional Ballot Question... Democrats with Wide Leads in Statewide Contests for Senate and Governor For Immediate Release

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This NBC News/Marist Poll Reports:

Despite heightened enthusiasm among Minnesota Republicans, majorities of registered voters statewide tell the NBC News/Marist Poll they perceive the midterm elections to be a check on the power of President Trump, prefer Democratic control of Congress, and are more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate in their district.

80% of registered voters in Minnesota, a double-digit increase since July (64%), consider this year's midterm elections to be of the utmost importance. While there has been a modest increase in the proportion of Democrats who are energized (86% from 80% in July), Republicans and independents have grown profoundly more engaged. 82% of Republicans report this year's elections are very important, an increase from 64% previously. 74% of independents, up from 55%, say the same.

A majority of voters (55%) say their midterm election vote will send a message that more Democrats are needed to balance the power of the president. 35% report their ballot will indicate more Republicans are needed to help pass the president's agenda.

On the question of congressional control, a majority of voters (51%) say they prefer the Democrats to be in power rather than the Republicans (42%). However, the 12-point advantage the Democrats had on this question has notched down to +9 points. The change is due, in part, to a coalescing within the Republican Party. 96% of Republicans, compared with 88% in July, say they prefer their own party to remain in control. Among Democrats, support for their own

party is little changed (96% from 95% in the previous poll). Independents help fortify the Democrats' advantage. A plurality of independents (46%) prefer a Congress controlled by Democrats, an increase from 36% previously.

"Minnesota Republicans have experienced a rallying effect, likely the result of the Kavanaugh confirmation process," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Yet, Democrats are more mobilized, have an advantage on congressional ballot questions, and are looking to sweep the two Senate contests and the race for governor."

The Democrats maintain their double-digit lead on the generic congressional ballot question statewide. 53% of registered voters say they are more likely to support the Democrat in their district. 41% report they are more likely to back the Republican. In July, the Democrats (48%) had an 11-point lead over the Republicans (37%).

The Democrats draw support from women (59%) and white voters with a college degree (58%). Men divide, 48% for the Republican and 46% for the Democrat. White men without a college degree are more likely to prefer the Republican, 58% to 36%, over the Democrat.

A plurality of Minnesota registered voters (45%) report they are more likely to favor a congressional candidate who opposed President Trump's nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. 29% say they are more likely to back a candidate who favored the appointment, and 23% think it makes no difference to their vote.

Democrats (83%) are more inclined to choose a candidate who opposed the Kavanaugh nomination, and 74% of Republicans are more likely to pick a candidate who favored the nomination. Independents, by two to one, (44% to 21%) are more likely to cast their ballot for a candidate who opposed the Kavanaugh appointment.

More than three in ten registered voters (31%) say the number one issue when deciding their vote for Congress is health care. The economy and jobs follows with 21%. Nearly half of Democrats (48%) and 29% of independents consider health care to be the most important voting issue. Republicans mention the economy and jobs (23%) the most.

CNGVTISSIR. NBC News/Marist Poll Minnesota Tables September 30th through October 4th, 2018

Minnesota Registered Voters											
Now, let me list some issues that may factor into deciding your vote for Congress in November. Please tell me which one of these items you think will be the most important factor in deciding your vote.											
	The economy and jobs		Federal taxes and spending		Abortion	Guns	Foreign policy and terrorism	Vol. All equally	Vol. None	Other	Unsure
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Minnesota Registered Voters	31%	21%	10%	10%	8%	7%	5%	6%	<1%	1%	2%

NBC News/Marist Poll Minnesota Registered Voters. Interviews conducted September 30th through October 4th, 2018, n=860 MOE +/- 4.2 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

In the race for U.S. Senate in Minnesota, likely voters, including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or already voted, favor incumbent Democratic-Farmer-Labor

candidate Amy Klobuchar (60%) to Republican Jim Newberger (32%). Green Party candidate Paula Overby receives 4%, and 4% are undecided. The contest is similar among registered voters. 59% support Klobuchar, and 32% back Newberger.

“Senator Klobuchar is well positioned to win re-election,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “She is widely popular and has a loyal following. Newberger is largely unknown.”

Two thirds of likely voters with a candidate preference for U.S. Senate (66%) say they strongly support their choice. Among Klobuchar’s supporters, 76% are firmly committed to her. 51% of Newberger’s backers express strong commitment to their candidate. 13% of likely voters in this contest are persuadable. They are either undecided or say they may vote differently.

In a head-to-head matchup between Klobuchar (63%) and Newberger (33%), Klobuchar leads by 30 points among likely voters statewide. Similar proportions of registered voters have these views.

Close to two in three likely voters (64%) have a favorable opinion of Klobuchar. 29% have an unfavorable one, and 6% have either never heard of Klobuchar or are unsure how to rate her. Newberger has low name recognition in Minnesota. 50% of likely voters have either never heard of Newberger or are unsure how to rate him. 30% have a favorable impression of the candidate, and 20% have an unfavorable one.

In the special election to fill the Senate seat of Al Franken, Democratic-Farmer-Labor candidate Tina Smith (54%) leads Republican Karin Housley (38%) among likely voters including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or already voted. Among registered voters, Smith (52%) leads Housley (39%) by 13 points. When the NBC News/Marist Poll reported this question in July, Smith had a similar 14-point advantage against Housley among registered voters.

62% of likely voters with a candidate preference in the Senate special election say they strongly support their choice. 64% of Smith’s backers, compared with 59% of those behind Housley, report they are firmly committed to their candidate selection. 18% of likely voters are persuadable in this contest.

Nearly twice the proportion of likely voters (51%) have a favorable rather than an unfavorable opinion (26%) of Smith. 23% have either never heard of Smith or are unsure how to rate her.

Housley is not as well known to likely voters. 42% say they have either never heard of Housley or are unsure how to rate her. 32% have a positive opinion of her, and 25% have an unfavorable one.

“Senator Smith is well on her way to be elected,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “She is favorably viewed by Minnesota voters unlike her opponent who has not gained traction.”

In the Minnesota governor’s contest, Democratic-Farmer-Labor candidate Tim Walz (51%) has a 15-point advantage over Republican Jeff Johnson (36%) among likely voters statewide including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or already voted. Libertarian candidate Josh Welter receives 6% of the vote. Among registered voters, Walz has 49% to 37% for Johnson and 7% for Welter.

63% of likely voters with a candidate preference for governor report they strongly support their candidate selection. Similar proportions of Walz (67%) and Johnson’s (64%) supporters say they will not waver in their commitment to their candidate. 17% of likely voters are persuadable in this contest.

A majority of likely voters (56%) have a favorable view of Walz. 24% have an unfavorable one, and 20% have either never heard of Walz or are unsure how to rate him. Johnson is not as popular. 38% have a favorable opinion of the candidate, 41% have an unfavorable one, and 21% have either never heard of Johnson or are unsure how to rate him.

55% of Minnesota adults, up from 50% in July, disapprove of the job President Trump is doing in office. 38%, little changed from last time, approve. Seven percent are unsure. 23% of Minnesotans who approve of Trump’s job performance strongly do so. 41% of those who disapprove strongly have this opinion. There is a 39-point gender gap in how voters perceive the job the president is doing. Men divide. 47% approve, and 44% disapprove. 65% of women in the state disapprove of President Trump’s job performance and only 29% rate him positively.

“President Trump’s recent campaign stop in Minnesota seems to have been more about competitive congressional seats than trying to score a statewide victory,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion.