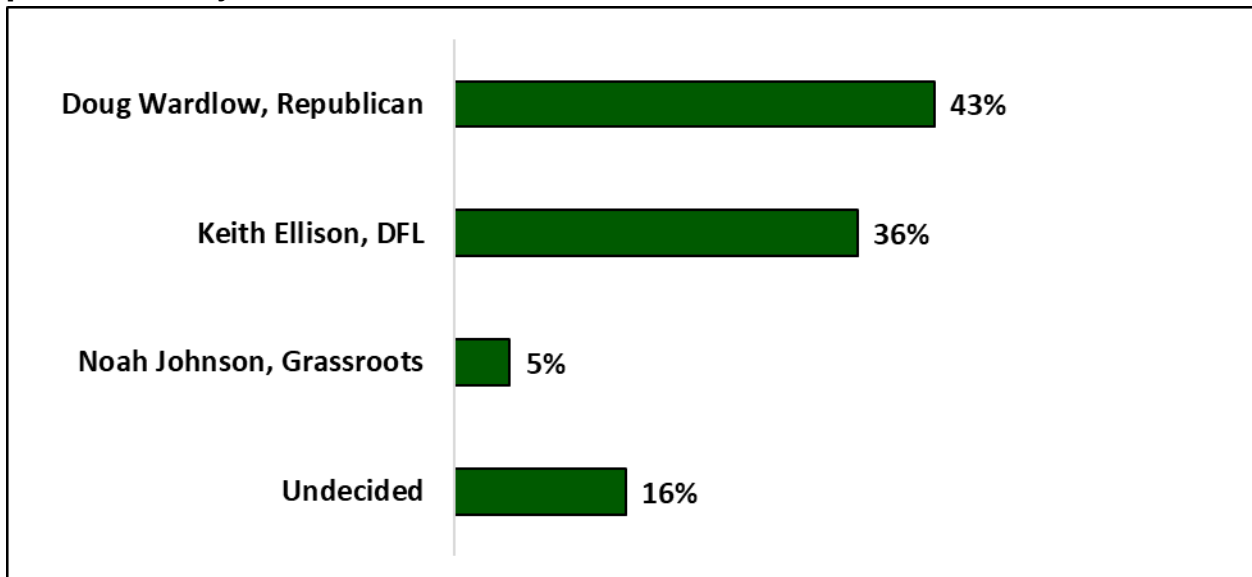


# The Minnesota Attorney General's Race

Findings from the MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll

October 23, 2018

**Doug Wardlow leads Keith Ellison in the attorney general's race by seven points, but 16 percent of likely voters remain undecided**



Question: "If the 2018 general election for Minnesota attorney general 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:

- **Republican former state Representative Doug Wardlow leads in his race with Democratic U.S. Representative Keith Ellison for the Minnesota’s Attorney General’s office by seven percentage points, but 16 percent of likely voters are undecided.**
  - This result reverses the five-point lead held by Ellison in the September Minnesota Poll.
  - Wardlow leads among men, all age groups but the youngest (18-34), those with annual incomes of \$50,000 or more, all regions of the state except Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, and Republicans as well as independents.
  - Ellison leads in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, as well as among Democrats, although one in five Democrats indicated they are not sure who they will vote for.
  - Five percent of likely voters indicate support for Noah Johnson, the Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis candidate for Minnesota attorney general.<sup>2</sup>
- **Ellison leads Wardlow in favorable ratings, unfavorable ratings, and name recognition.**
  - Without the context of a political race, or mention of party affiliation, 56 percent of likely voters do not recognize Doug Wardlow’s name. While this is down from 69 percent in September, 37 percent of Republican voters still do not recognize Wardlow’s name.
  - Besides Democrats, Ellison’s highest favorability ratings come from those living in Hennepin and Ramsey counties (31%). His *unfavorable* ratings are 40 percent or higher among men, those living in the suburbs, and independent voters.
- **The race for attorney general remains overshadowed by allegations of domestic abuse brought forward by Ellison’s former girlfriend.**
  - The proportion of likely voters indicating that they believe the allegations has grown from 21 percent in September to 30 percent in the October Minnesota Poll.
  - Half of likely voters are not sure whether they believe the allegations.
  - Men, especially men age 50 or older, are more likely to believe the allegations than are women.

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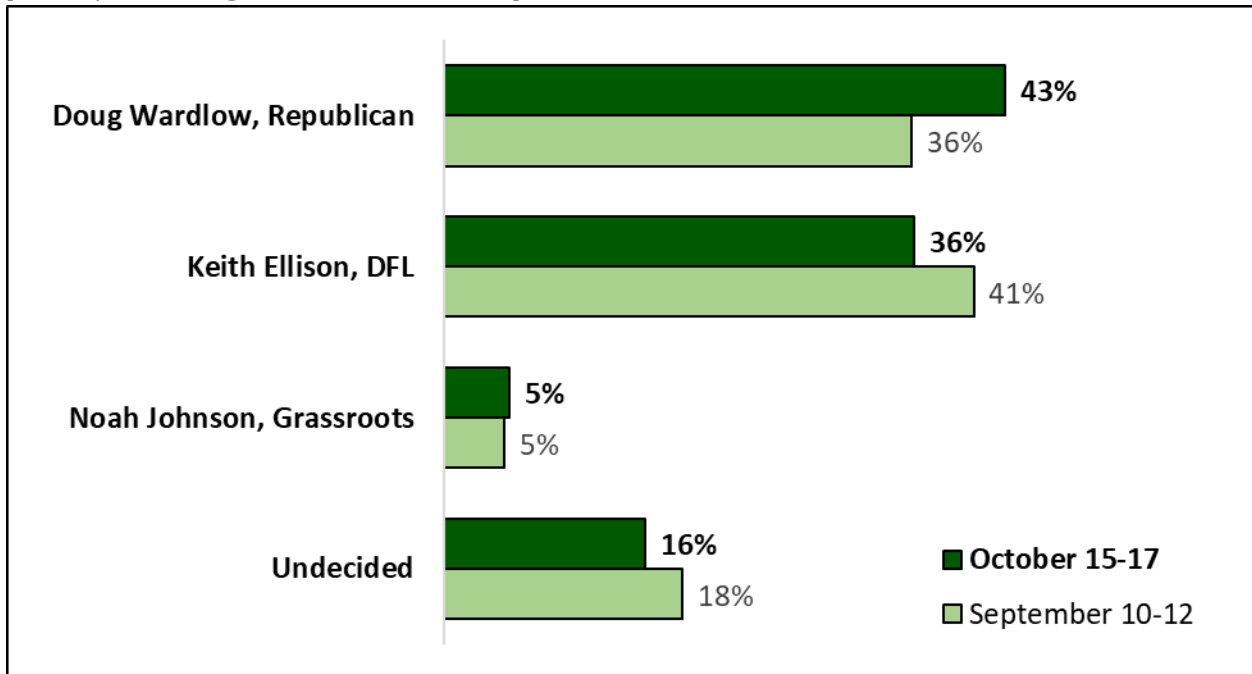
<sup>2</sup> On October 15 Noah Johnson endorsed Keith Ellison (see <https://blogs.mprnews.org/capitol-view/2018/10/third-party-ag-candidate-throws-support-to-dfler-ellison/>, and <http://www.startribune.com/legal-marijuana-now-candidate-endorses-keith-ellison-for-attorney-general/497572521/>)

- Thirteen percent of Democrats believe the allegations, as do 33 percent of independents and nearly half of Republicans.

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

**Doug Wardlow leads Keith Ellison in the attorney general's race by seven percentage points, reversing Ellison's lead in September**



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

Source: 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.

## Preference for Minnesota's next attorney general, by group

	October 15-17				September 10-12	
	Doug Wardlow, Republican	Keith Ellison, DFL	Noah Johnson, Grassroots	Undecided	Doug Wardlow, Republican	Keith Ellison, DFL
<b>ALL</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>36%</b>	5%	16%	<b>36%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>SEX</b>						
Male	<b>49%</b>	<b>33%</b>	5%	13%	43%	36%
Female	38%	39%	5%	18%	<b>30%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>AGE GROUP</b>						
18-34	38%	48%	3%	12%	<b>16%</b>	<b>62%</b>
35-49	<b>43%</b>	<b>33%</b>	6%	18%	37%	36%
50-64	<b>45%</b>	<b>36%</b>	7%	13%	40%	35%
65+	<b>46%</b>	<b>31%</b>	4%	19%	45%	38%
<b>AGE by SEX</b>						
Male, 18-49	<b>48%</b>	<b>35%</b>	6%	11%	33%	41%
Male, 50 or older	<b>50%</b>	<b>31%</b>	5%	15%	<b>51%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Female, 18-49	34%	43%	3%	19%	<b>23%</b>	<b>53%</b>
Female, 50 or older	41%	37%	6%	17%	36%	40%
<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>						
Under \$50,000	35%	42%	5%	18%	38%	37%
\$50,000 or more	<b>48%</b>	<b>33%</b>	5%	14%	39%	40%
<b>REGION <sup>a</sup></b>						
Hennepin/Ramsey	<b>29%</b>	<b>49%</b>	4%	17%	<b>29%</b>	<b>52%</b>
Metro Suburbs	<b>51%</b>	<b>27%</b>	5%	17%	40%	35%
Southern Minnesota	<b>49%</b>	<b>36%</b>	3%	13%	36%	36%
Northern Minnesota	<b>48%</b>	<b>30%</b>	9%	13%	44%	35%
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>						
DFL/Democrat	<b>3%</b>	<b>76%</b>	1%	20%	<b>0%</b>	<b>85%</b>
Independent/other	<b>47%</b>	<b>21%</b>	14%	17%	<b>36%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Republican	<b>86%</b>	<b>3%</b>	2%	9%	<b>80%</b>	<b>2%</b>

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

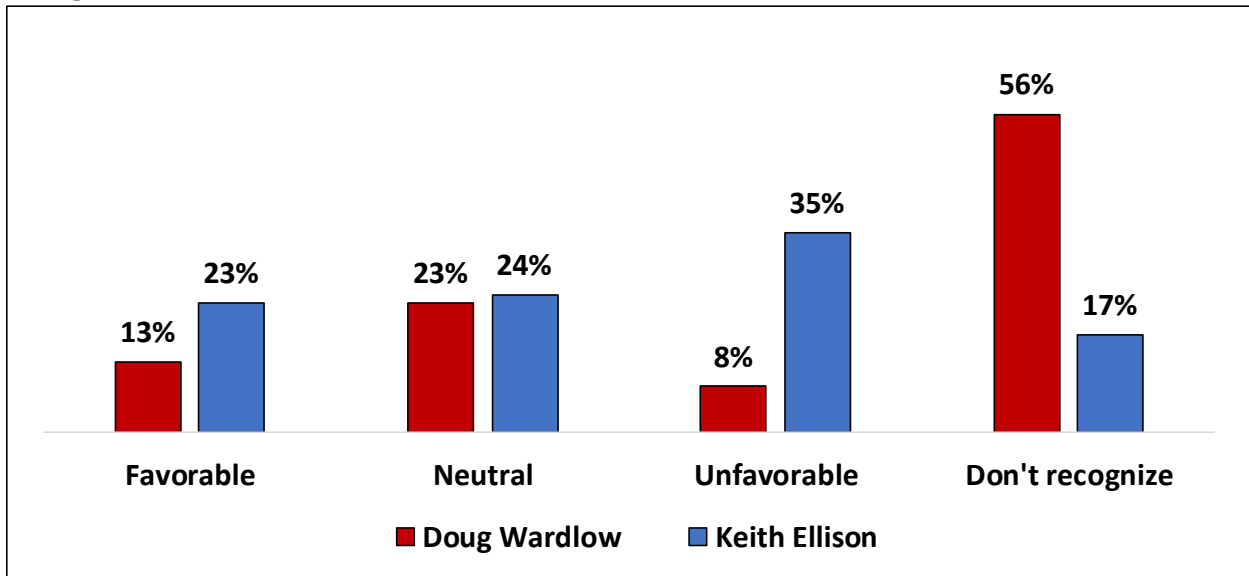
Source: APM Research Lab analysis of MPR News | Star Tribune Minnesota Poll, 2018. N=800 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in November; overall margin of error = +/-3.5 percentage points.

<sup>a</sup> 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

### Keith Ellison leads Doug Wardlow in favorable ratings, unfavorable ratings, and name recognition



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 attorney general: Current name recognition and favorability, by group

	Favorable		Unfavorable		Not Recognized	
	<i>Doug Wardlow, Republican</i>	<i>Keith Ellison, DFL</i>	<i>Doug Wardlow</i>	<i>Keith Ellison</i>	<i>Doug Wardlow</i>	<i>Keith Ellison</i>
<b>ALL</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>SEX</b>						
Male	17%	21%	<b>7%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Female	<b>8%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>AGE GROUP</b>						
18-34	<b>15%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>15%</b>
35-49	<b>11%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>19%</b>
50-64	<b>11%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>18%</b>
65+	14%	21%	<b>7%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>AGE by SEX</b>						
Male, 18-49	16%	23%	<b>7%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Male, 50 or older	18%	19%	<b>7%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Female, 18-49	<b>9%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Female, 50 or older	<b>7%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>						
Under \$50,000	<b>9%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>16%</b>
\$50,000 or more	<b>14%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>REGION <sup>a</sup></b>						
Hennepin/Ramsey	<b>10%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Metro Suburbs	17%	17%	<b>8%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Southern Minnesota	<b>14%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Northern Minnesota	<b>10%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>						
DFL/Democrat	<b>0%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Independent	17%	13%	<b>7%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Republican	<b>23%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>23%</b>

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 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. Neutral responses are not shown. Statistically significant differences between the two candidates are shown in **bold** (95 percent confidence level or higher).

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

## Domestic abuse allegations

### Belief in domestic abuse allegations, by group

	October 15-17			September 10-12	
	Yes, believe	No, do not believe	Not sure	Yes, believe	No, do not believe
<b>ALL</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>21%</b>	49%	21%	22%
<b>SEX</b>					
Male	<b>36%</b>	<b>20%</b>	44%	25%	19%
Female	25%	22%	53%	<b>18%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>AGE GROUP</b>					
18-34	28%	21%	51%	15%	24%
35-49	27%	21%	52%	20%	19%
50-64	<b>33%</b>	<b>18%</b>	49%	21%	21%
65+	32%	25%	43%	27%	24%
<b>AGE by SEX</b>					
Male, 18-49	<b>32%</b>	<b>21%</b>	47%	22%	18%
Male, 50 or older	<b>40%</b>	<b>18%</b>	41%	28%	20%
Female, 18-49	23%	21%	56%	<b>14%</b>	<b>23%</b>
Female, 50 or older	25%	23%	51%	21%	25%
<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>					
Under \$50,000	28%	25%	47%	19%	23%
\$50,000 or more	<b>33%</b>	<b>19%</b>	48%	22%	22%
<b>REGION <sup>a</sup></b>					
Hennepin/Ramsey	24%	25%	51%	<b>16%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Metro Suburbs	<b>36%</b>	<b>20%</b>	44%	23%	19%
Southern Minnesota	29%	22%	49%	16%	24%
Northern Minnesota	<b>33%</b>	<b>14%</b>	53%	<b>32%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>					
DFL/Democrat	<b>13%</b>	<b>31%</b>	56%	<b>5%</b>	<b>29%</b>
Independent/other	<b>33%</b>	<b>16%</b>	51%	20%	19%
Republican	<b>48%</b>	<b>14%</b>	38%	<b>41%</b>	<b>15%</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: "The ex-girlfriend of Keith Ellison, the Democratic nominee for attorney general, has alleged that he committed an act of domestic violence against her. Do you believe her allegation, or not?"

Note: Statistically significant differences are shown in **bold** (95 percent confidence level or higher) within the survey noted at top of column.

<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>3</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%)	800 (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>3</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	
	<i>Number</i>	Percent <sup>d</sup>	<i>Number</i>	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
7) Keith Ellison	1	2	3	4
8) Doug Wardlow	1	2	3	4

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

- 1- Keith Ellison, the Democratic-Farmer-Labor candidate
- 2- Doug Wardlow, the Republican candidate
- 3- Noah Johnson, the Grassroots – Legalize Cannabis candidate
- 4- Undecided (**DO NOT READ**)

15 -- The ex-girlfriend of Keith Ellison, the Democratic nominee for attorney general, has alleged that he committed an act of domestic violence against her. Do you believe her allegation, or not?

- 1- Yes, believe
- 2- No, do not believe
- 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

The APM Research Lab is a division of American Public Media aimed at informing the public by producing credible research- and analysis-based content. Our mission is to foster an engaged democracy by inspiring curiosity, inquiry and discussion through fact-driven, credible research and analysis. Values: Independent, Useful, Informative, Non-partisan.

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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