

Minnesota Public Radio News and Humphrey Institute Poll

Dayton Starts with Edge in Democratic Primary and Fall Election

Report prepared by the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance
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According to a Minnesota Public Radio News and Humphrey Institute poll, Mark Dayton starts the election season leading his rivals in the Democratic Party primary among likely voters and Dayton may also enjoy a slight edge over the presumptive Republican gubernatorial candidate, Tom Emmer, among Minnesota adults. Dayton leads Emmer by a 35% to 31% margin, which is within the margin of error and is a toss-up in statistical terms. Emmer is deadlocked with the two other contenders for the Democratic Party's nomination, the Democratic Party's endorsed candidate Margaret Anderson Kelliher and Matt Entenza. These are fluid races in which a quarter or more have not made up their mind and the endorsed Independence Party candidate, Tom Horner, is drawing about 10%.

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar wins the popularity contest among Minnesota politicians, with a majority favoring her re-election in 2012 while Governor Tim Pawlenty's popularity sank to its lowest level in polling by MPR News/Humphrey and has reached a near record low according to other polls that date back to his 2003 inauguration.

The survey was conducted of 701 Minnesota adults between May 13 to May 16, 2010, which follows the endorsing conventions by the three major parties in Minnesota. The margin of error is +/-5.8 percentage points. For smaller subgroups the margin of sampling error is larger.

Dayton Leads in Democratic Party Primary Contest

Among likely voters, Mark Dayton (38%) leads Kelliher (28%) and Entenza (6%) in the contest for the August 10th primary to choose the Democratic Party's nominee.

Dayton Leads Contest for Democratic Primary Among Likely Voters

	Dayton	Kelliher	Entenza	DK / Refused/Other
Likely Voters	38%	28%	6%	28%
Women	36%	28%	4%	33%
Enthusiastic Voters	37%	29%	8%	26%
18-49 yrs old	37%	25%	5%	33%
50 yrs and over	38%	30%	8%	25%

Although Kelliher has hitched her campaign to her gender, Dayton holds a lead among women (36% to 28%). He also leads among likely voters who are enthusiastic about the gubernatorial contest and across age groups and income levels (data not shown). Entenza’s campaign has ignited little enthusiasm or other pockets of support to date.

More than a quarter of likely voters in the August primary have not latched onto a candidate, indicating that the race remains wide open.

Dayton May Hold Slight Advantage Over Emmer in General Election

Dayton may also enjoy a slight edge over the presumptive Republican gubernatorial candidate, Tom Emmer among Minnesota adults. Dayton leads Emmer by a 35% to 31% margin, which is within the margin of error of 5.8% and therefore is a toss-up in statistical terms.

Dayton and Emmer Close in General Election Matchup

	Dayton	Emmer	Horner	DK / Refused/Other
All Minnesotans	35%	31%	9%	25%
Republican	11%	64%	5%	21%
Independent	20%	18%	17%	45%
Democrat	64%	3%	10%	23%

The most striking and unusual pattern in the Dayton/Emmer match-up is that a third of Republicans are defecting from their Party’s candidate, an unusual pattern within the GOP electorate. Dayton is drawing 11% of Republicans as compared to the 3% of Democrats supporting Emmer. This may be a temporary blip as Emmer launches his campaign or a sign that his conservatism may pose a challenge to unifying his party against Dayton.

Dayton also holds advantages against Emmer among voters who are enthusiastic about November’s gubernatorial election (7 point edge), Minnesotans earning less than \$50,000 a year (14 point gap), those who see Minnesota heading in the right direction (12 points edge), and women (15 point gap). Emmer has a 9 point lead among men.

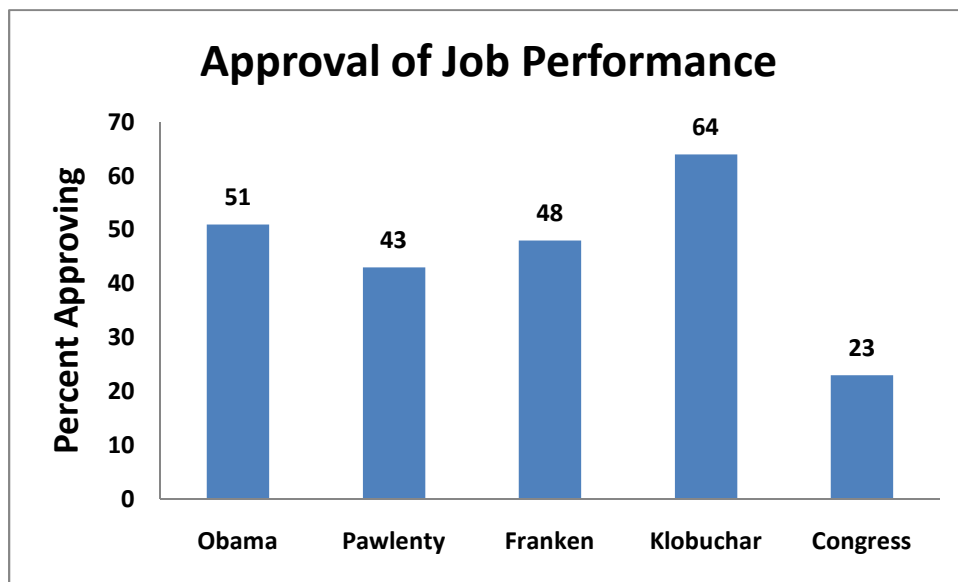
Emmer is deadlocked with the two other contenders for the Democratic Party’s nomination -- Kelliher and Entenza. Few large differences among sub-groups separated them at this point.

Emmer in Toss-Up Against Kelliher and Entenza in General Election

Emmer	Kelliher	Entenza	Horner	DK/Refused/Other
31%	29%		10%	30%
32%		28%	11%	29%

Klobuchar Most Popular, Pawlenty Disapproval Spikes

Senator Klobuchar is the most popular politician in Minnesota. Her approval rating of 64% tops the evaluations for President Barack Obama, U.S. Senator Al Franken, and Governor Tim Pawlenty. Approval for Congress is a meager 23%.



Klobuchar’s support is remarkable in today’s turbulent political climate and may foreshadow support for her re-election in 2012. When Minnesotans were asked about reelecting their representatives or searching for an alternative, 54% supported Klobuchar whereas only 31% said they would vote to re-elect their congressional representative. (The low support for members of Congress may, in part, reflect the fact that we did not mention a particular individual as we did with Senator Klobuchar.)

	Klobuchar	Member of Congress
Vote for re-election	54%	31%
Look for new representative	33%	44%

Governor Pawlenty's 43% approval rating is far below his 55% support in the MPR News/Humphrey Institute polls in 2008. A previous poll by Survey USA found the Governor's rating as weak as 40% in August 2005.

About the Survey

This survey is a collaboration between Minnesota Public Radio News and the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. The survey was analyzed by the Center. The research team was Lawrence R. Jacobs (Center Director) and Joanne M. Miller (Associate Professor, Department of Political Science). Geoff Sheagley provided research assistance.

The survey was fielded by the Information Specialists Group (ISG) and is based on a landline random digit dial survey in Minnesota. ISG called a sample of telephone exchanges that was randomly selected by a computer from a list of active residential exchanges within Minnesota. Within each exchange, random digits were added to form a complete telephone number, thus permitting access to both listed and unlisted numbers. Within each household, one adult was selected to be the respondent for the survey.

As is common with public opinion surveys, the data were weighted. In the first stage, the data were weighted based on the number of potential survey respondents and the number of landline telephone numbers in the household. In the second stage, data were weighted according to cell phone usage, as well as gender, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity to approximate the demographic characteristics of the population according to the Census.

The distribution of party identification among Minnesotan adults in the full sample is as follows:

	Minnesota Adults
Republican	42%
Independent	15%
Democrat	42%

701 adults living in Minnesota were interviewed by telephone between May 13 and May 16, 2010; the margin of sampling error is +/-5.8 percentage points. In theory, in 19 cases out of 20 the results among Minneapolis voters will differ by no more than +/-5.8 percentage points in either direction from what would have been obtained by interviewing all voters in the election. The response rate is 26 percent (based AAPOR response rate calculation 4).

Our calculation of sampling error uses a more cautious approach than is common in order to take account of design effects. The common approach calculates the margin of sampling error based primarily on the number of respondents, which would produce a margin of error of +/-3.7 percent for a sample size of 701. This approach implicitly assumes a 100% response rate, which of course never happens. Our calculation of the margin of sampling error takes into account the response rate and the effects of weighting, in particular, which produces a margin of error of +/-5.8 percent. This is reflected in our analysis of Dayton's 4 point lead over Emmer outside the margin of error and as a statistical "toss-up" even though we also suggest a "slight edge" for the Democrat. In our view, taking account of design effects errs on the side of caution and should enhance confidence in the reported results.

The results of the primary election focused on respondents who indicated that they planned to vote in the election, which produced a sub-sample of 246. The margin of sampling error was +/- 6.2 percent using the common approach and +/-8.75 after taking into account reasonable design effects. Dayton's 10 point lead over Keillher was outside this margin of sampling error.

In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of public opinion may introduce sources of error into the poll. Variations in the wording and order of questions, for example, may lead to somewhat different results.

Questions

Suppose that the election for Governor of Minnesota were being held today. Would you vote for [pairing of Republican Tom Emmer and endorsed Independence Party candidate Tom Horner in separate questions with each of the potential Democratic candidates – Mark Dayton, Matt Entenza, and Margaret Anderson Kelliher.]

Right now, are you inclined to vote to re-elect your Representative in the U.S. Congress in the next election, or are you inclined to look around for someone else to vote for?

[Among those indicating they planned to vote in Democratic primary:] Suppose that the Democratic Primary for Governor of Minnesota were being held today. Would you vote for Margaret Anderson Kelliher; Mark Dayton; or Matt Entenza?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Tim Pawlenty is handling his job as governor?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Al Franken is handling his job as US senator?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Amy Klobuchar is handling her job as US senator?

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar will be up for re-election in 2012. Do you think she has done a good enough job to deserve re-election, or do you think it's time to give a new person a chance?

Generally speaking, how enthusiastic are you about the upcoming election for Minnesota governor? Extremely enthusiastic, very enthusiastic, somewhat enthusiastic, not too enthusiastic, or not enthusiastic at all?

Generally speaking, would you say things in Minnesota are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?