

MINNESOTA PRIMARY ELECTION RECAP

Minnesota held its Primary Election on August 14, 2018 when 876,000 voters turned out to select final Republicans and Democrats to challenge each other in the General Election on November 6. The primary turnout was the highest since 1994.

The General Election and campaign leading up to it will have major implications to the State of Minnesota with both U.S. Senate seats and all eight Congressional seats up for re-election, along with the governor's office, attorney general, and all 134 members of the Minnesota House of Representatives. One of the Minnesota Senate's 67 seats will also be up for election with the resignation of Lt. Governor and former State Senator Michelle Fischbach from Paynesville, MN. Democrats need to gain 20 seats in the House and one seat (the Special Election) in the Senate to successfully flip the majority from Republican to Democratic.

Governor: Hennepin County Commissioner Jeff Johnson defeated former Governor Tim Pawlenty in the Primary Election among Republicans by a percentage of 52.6 to 48.9. This was a bit of a surprise to many election observers, especially with Pawlenty's ability to raise large sums of money to back his campaign. Johnson, however, was the party-endorsed candidate (Pawlenty did not compete for the endorsement) and Johnson also leveraged his grassroots support network that he resurrected from four years ago when he ran unsuccessfully against Mark Dayton for governor. On the Democratic side, Congressman Tim Walz maximized votes in Greater Minnesota as well as Hennepin County to earn 41.7 percent of the vote and defeat endorsed candidate State Rep. Erin Murphy (32.1%) and Attorney General Lori Swanson (24.2%).

Attorney General: With current Attorney General Lori Swanson jumping into the race for governor at the last minute, there was a scramble of candidates running to succeed her. Congressman Keith Ellison prevailed in the primary with 49.8 percent of the vote, followed by State Rep. Deb Hilstrom, former Commerce Department Commissioner Mike Rothman, and then former Ramsey County attorney Tom Foley. Ellison will face Republican Doug Wardlow.

U.S. Senate: Incumbents Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith both prevailed in primary races for the DFL, and will face Republicans State Rep. Jim Newberger and State Senator Karin Housley, respectively, in the General Election.

US Congress: In District 1, vacated by Congressman Walz, repeat candidate Jim Hagedorn defeated State Senator Carla Nelson in the GOP Primary and will face Dan Feehan, a Democrat from North Mankato. In District 5, with Congressman Ellison's departure to run for Attorney General, current State Rep. Ilhan Omar defeated former MN House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher and State Senator Patricia Torres Ray in a heavily Democratic district which Omar is expected to retain. In District 8, vacated by Congressman Nolan, one of three Minnesota members of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, former State Rep. Joe Radinovich defeated current State Rep. Jason Metsa and TV Anchor Michelle Lee and will face party endorsed Republican Pete Stauber in the General Election. Races in the 1st, 2nd (Cong. Jason Lewis, incumb.), 3rd (Cong. Erik Paulsen, incumb.), and 8th Districts are expected to all be too close to call in the General Election.

Minnesota House of Representatives: there were a few notable upsets of party endorsed candidates or incumbents in the Primary Election for the Minnesota House. In District 55A, incumbent Rep. Bob Loonan (R-Shakopee) lost to the party endorsed candidate, but incumbent Cal Bahr (R-East Bethel) held

off his predecessor former Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) for the primary in District 31B. Candidates were also finalized in multiple other districts where previous Representatives announced they were not running again, including the districts of Majority Leader Joyce Peppin (34A), Commerce Committee Chair Joe Hoppe (47B), and others.