

Analysis – Minnesota Primary, 8-14-18

“New Energy voters” are about equal in number for both parties.

Much has been made about the significantly higher turnout in the DFL primary as compared to the GOP primary. As one measure, the total vote for Governor was 582,816 for the DFL, and a much lower 320,262 for the GOP. This is almost a two to one ratio – it’s 64.5% DFL to 35.5% GOP. So... at first glance, it appears Minnesota is heading for a huge blue wave... right?

Actually we may not be. This is the first election in a long time where there were significant top-of-the-ticket contexts in the primaries for both parties. Although there was more “total action” on the DFL side – a three-way race for Governor, a high-profile (in media anyway) challenge to recently appointed Sen. Tina Smith, and a late-breaking scandal in the Attorney General’s race -- the main GOP race (Governor) was hotly contested, and widely seen as an upset. For this reason, as a “benchmark baseline,” we should first look at the most recent and representative competitive statewide primaries for each party. Our DFL “benchmark baseline” is the 2010 primary for Governor, when there was a significant statewide battle in the DFL primary (Mark Dayton beat the Convention-endorsed Margaret Kelliher by 1% in a three way race,) but no real context on the GOP side (disclosure: I finished second in the GOP primary, but with only about 8% of the vote statewide.) Our GOP “benchmark baseline” is the 2014 primary for Governor, where there was a significant statewide race in the GOP primary (Convention-endorsed Jeff Johnson won by 6%, with 30% in a four-way race,) – but no real contest on the DFL side (Gov. Dayton had no significant opposition, and there was no U.S. Senate seat on the ballot.) The best way to measure the increased energy for both parties is to compare the 2018 vote for Governor with the “benchmark baseline” for each party. Here’s what we find:

"New Energy voters" -- Increase from Baseline: GOP and DFL primarys for Governor			
	GOP		DFL
2018 primary total	320,262		582,816
	GOP (2014)		DFL (2010)
"Benchmark Baseline" Total:	184,110		442,137
"New Energy voters" -- Increase from Benchmark Baseline:	GOP		DFL
(2018 minus Benchmark Baseline)	136,152	up 74%	140,679
			up 32%

From this analysis it appears that the GOP and the DFL had about the same number of “New Energy voters” in their 2018 party primaries. On the one hand, obviously both party bases are highly energized. But we need to also be aware that in recent decades while Democratic primaries have often been contested, this is a rare event for Republicans, who have traditionally tried to discourage primary contests.

The next question is – what (if anything) can we determine, or guess, or figure out, about these “New Energy voters.”

The “Painter Factor” – a subset of the “Trump Factor”

On the DFL side, we have some additional data to consider – resulting from the DFL U.S. Senate special election candidacy of Richard Painter, a former Republican and also a former chief White House Ethics staffer (February 2005 to July 2007) in the George W. Bush Administration. Painter received 78,017 votes statewide – or more than half the total of DFL “New Energy voters.” On the one hand, it’s likely that at least some (if not many or most) of these voters are previous Republicans or independents who choose to vote in the DFL primary. In Minnesota any voter can vote in any major party’s primary... but you cannot “mix and match” – voting for candidates of more than one party. Some such previous Republican voters may have decided -- as Painter did -- to leave the GOP, while others may be “just visiting” in the DFL primary. On the other hand, we don’t have any good data to go on in trying to estimate how many Painter voters are previous Republican and/or independent voters, and how many are past regular DFL primary voters, or new DFL voters, who chose Painter based on his strong stance favoring impeachment, or for other issues such as his opposition to Copper/Nickle mining in Northern Minnesota, his criticism of Sen. Smith’s campaign finance practices, and the claim that Sen. Smith and her husband have significant stock holdings of medical industry companies. **Bottom line:** this appears to be a real but somewhat limited change in the “shape” of the Minnesota body politic. While it’s difficult to quantify, Painter voters certainly include a cohort that is “migrating” from the Republican party to the DFL. However, considering that the average for the last two mid-term Minnesota General Election turnouts for Governor is 2,041,214, if fully half of Painter’s voters are “permanent migrants” from the GOP, that would still be only 1.9% of all General Election voters.

The “Trump Factor” –

The “Painter Factor” is a subset of the larger “Trump Factor” – which can be seen as accounting for the significant increase in turnout among both Republicans and Democrats in this year’s primary when compared to each party’s Baseline Benchmark primaries. While the “Painter Factor” might represent a “permanent migration” to the DFL of about 2% of all General Election, the “Trump Factor” could indicate a significantly greater increase in total turnout. For the last two Presidential elections, Minnesota’s Presidential vote averaged 2,940,687 – that’s 895,347 votes more than the 2,041,214 average of the total votes for Governor in 2014 and 2010. The total “New Energy voters” this year is 276,831 – as we’ve seen that’s split about evenly between the DFL and the GOP. But these voters account for only 31% of the difference between Minnesota’s average total votes in the last two Presidential elections and the average total votes in our last two elections for Governor. Granted... the “New Energy voters” could translate to a significantly higher General Election turnout in this year’s Minnesota mid-term elections. However, because this new energy appears to be roughly equal in both parties, a challenging question remains: how might this potentially higher General Election turnout affect the final result? Who wins? We’ll consider that later.

While the total number of “New Energy voters” is roughly equal for both the GOP and the DFL, the GOP increase is huge... 74%... that’s over double the 32% increase for Democrats. On the GOP side this increase can be basically chalked up 100% to Trump – very simply, the new voters are Trump voters. Johnson beat Pawlenty by 28,036 votes – that’s a comfortable winning margin of 9%, but not an overwhelming victory by any stretch of the imagination. In the campaign, Jeff Johnson’s main message was: “I’ve always supported Trump – my opponent publicly withdrew his support for Trump in 2016 after the Access Hollywood tape.” Although Pawlenty raised and spent far more money than Johnson, that stark, simple message – hammered relentlessly – destroyed Pawlenty’s comeback bid. Focusing on the “Trump Factor” -- Johnson’s primary vote total increased by 112,666, from 55,836 in 2014 (good enough then for first place in a four way race) to 168,502 in 2018 – that’s *more than triple* his 2014 primary vote total. Here’s the key point: Johnson’s 112,666 increase roughly matches the 136,152 increase in the total 2018 GOP primary vote when

compared to the 2014 GOP benchmark. From this, it's obvious that the "Trump Factor" was the single, overwhelming force driving Johnson's win in the 2018 GOP primary for Governor. Johnson's tight embrace of Trump won the primary for him.

Much more on Pawlenty, "Never Trumpers" and the "Flip Side" of the "Trump Factor" –

There is a significant flip side to consider here. Because Jeff Johnson focused so starkly on Pawlenty's alleged "disloyalty" to Trump, and because all polling data shows such extraordinarily high support and enthusiasm for Trump among the Republican base, we should ask: "isn't it kind of amazing that Pawlenty did so well under the circumstances?" In many other situations, Republicans who have been seen as "anti-Trump" have either retired or have been defeated. Can you name a single election where a Republican who has leveled criticism of Trump comparable to Pawlenty's withdrawal of support after the Access Hollywood tape has done as well as Pawlenty did in this primary? Maybe the real lead for this story should be: "Republican who dumped on Trump makes a competitive primary race for Governor."

Minnesota's General Election Presidential votes -- 2012 and 2016				
	2012			
Romney & Ryan -- Republican	1,320,225	45.0%		
Obama & Biden -- Democratic	1,546,167	52.7%		
Virgil Goode -- Constitution	3,722	0.1%	Right	0.2%
Gary Johnson -- Libertarian	35,098	1.2%	Disaffected	1.7%
James Harris -- Socialist Workers	1,051	0.0%	Left	0.5%
Dean Morstad -- Constitutional Government	1,092	0.0%	Right	
Jill Stein -- Green	13,023	0.4%	Left	
Jim Carlson -- Grassroots	3,149	0.1%	Disaffected	
Peta Lindsay -- Socialism and Liberation	397	0.0%	Left	
Ross "Rocky" Anderson -- Justice	1,996	0.1%	Disaffected	
Write-in	10,641	0.4%	Disaffected	
Subtotal and % for "all other"	70,169	2.4%		
Grand Total:	2,936,561	100.0%		
	2016		Classification	Subtotals
Trump & Pence -- Republican	1,322,951	44.9%		
Clinton & Kaine -- Democratic	1,367,716	46.4%		
Darrell Castle -- Constitution	9,456	0.3%	Right	0.3%
Dan Vacek -- Legal Marijuana Now	11,291	0.4%	Disaffected	7.1%
Jill Stein -- Green	36,985	1.3%	Left	1.3%
Alyson Kennedy	1,672	0.1%	Disaffected	
"Rocky" Roque De La Fuente -- American Delta	1,431	0.0%	Disaffected	
Evan McMullin -- Independence	53,076	1.8%	Disaffected	
Gary Johnson -- Libertarian	112,972	3.8%	Disaffected	
Write-in	27,263	0.9%	Disaffected	
Subtotal and % for "all other"	254,146	8.6%		
Grand Total:	2,944,813	100.0%		
Average, 2012 and 2016	2,940,687			

We've seen how simple it was for Johnson to win by simply drawing all the Trump "New Energy voters" to him. But a closer look at the history of Trump and the pre-Trump Minnesota Republican base is

instructive. Let's start with a comparison of Minnesota's General Election voting for 2012 and 2016 – here's the graphic:

The “Conventional Wisdom” take on Minnesota's 2016 results is that the race between Trump and Clinton was as close as it was simply because Republican's turned out their base, while a significant number of Democrats stayed home. There's some truth to that – Trump's vote was almost identical to Romney's vote in 2012... less than a 3,000 vote difference... while Clinton was down almost 180,000 votes from Obama's total in 2012. The most straightforward explanation is that as elsewhere in the country, minority voters didn't turn out for Clinton in anywhere near the numbers they did for Obama. But when we look at the numbers closely, there's significantly more than that going on – most particularly with third party and “other” voters.

In 2012, only **2.4%** of Minnesota votes were not for one of the major party candidates for President. While Romney received a respectable 45% of the vote, Obama won comfortably by about 8% -- with an absolute majority. By contrast, in 2016, Trump received only a tenth of a percent less than Romney's vote. But the percent of votes going to third party and “other” candidates was way up – to **8.6%**. As a result, Clinton's winning margin dropped to only **1.5%**. And not many of these voters were abandoning Clinton for Jill Stein, the Green party candidate – Stein received only **1.3%** of the vote. Instead, **7.1%** -- a total of **207,705** voters, went to what I classify broadly as “disaffected” candidates – primarily Libertarian and Independence party candidates. Of these, the Libertarians outnumbered the Independence voters by about two to one. Here's the key point: these voters are significantly more likely to have voted for Romney than for Obama in 2012, and would have also tended to have voted for a “traditional” or “pre-Trump” Republican in 2016 – if one had been on the ballot. By and large, these are not Hillary defectors. Two key points follow from this. **First**, the reason Trump was able to match Romney's 2012 total was that in 2016 he received the votes of many people who had either not been voting before, or who had flipped from Obama to Trump. Second, this year the entire GOP ticket is well positioned on State and Local issues to compete for those 207,705 Libertarian and Independence voters who didn't vote Republican for President in 2012.

We need to keep in mind that American politics has become so incredibly polarized that both bases tend now to vote not so much on their positive view of their own candidates as on their fear and hatred of the other party. For this reason, in the absence of some other significant element, we can and expect both the GOP and the DFL bases to be strongly aligned in support of their parties this November. However, the 2012 and 2016 data suggest that Republicans might combine their Trump-supporting “New Energy voters” from 2012 with many of the Libertarian and Independence voters they lost in 2012 – to form a new voting majority this year. We’ll consider U.S. House races later, and Sen. Amy Klobuchar is certainly strong enough to overcome this. But it looks like all other Republican statewide candidates, including Karin Housley in her race with Sen. Tina Smith, may have some significant wind at their backs as a result of this potential combo.

Next, let’s consider precinct caucus attendance and straw poll voting history -- the graphic below provides some important data.

GOP and DFL precinct caucus attendance			Presidential Straw Poll, 2016		
Year & Race	GOP	DFL			Vote %
2018 Gov	10,909	34,329	Republican		
Change '10 to '18	Down 56%	Up 52%	Ben Carson	8,422	7.4%
2016 Pres	114,245	205,438	Ted Cruz	33,181	29.0%
2014 Gov	14,109	14,585 ¹⁾	John Kasich	6,565	5.7%
2012 Pres	25,953	N/A	Marco Rubio	41,397	36.2%
2010 Gov	19,243	22,532 ²⁾	Donald Trump	24,473	21.4%
2008 Pres	62,828	214,066	Write-in	207	0.2%
2006 Gov	N/A	N/A	Total:	114,245	
2004 Pres	N/A	51,518 ³⁾	Anyone but Trump straw poll:	89,772	78.6%
2002 Gov	15,862	N/A			

Yellow indicates an open seat
 1) estimated for DFL
 2) Dayton wasn't in the straw poll
 3) about 90% of precincts reported

The overarching point that we’ll see emerges from this data is that while the effect of Trump “New Energy voters” was overwhelming in the 2018 GOP primary, there appears to also be a kind of built-in, long-term structural resistance – a general queasiness – among the pre-Trump Minnesota Republican base. We see this most clearly in three ways. **First**, note both the very high Precinct Caucus Presidential Straw Poll turnout (left hand side, 114,245 votes) for Republicans in 2016, and equally or more important, how few of these new Caucus goers were Trump supporters. If we score all Caucus goers who didn’t vote for Trump as “Anyone But Trump” voters, we see that there was a core of about ninety thousand of these voters in 2016 – representing almost 80% of all Precinct Caucus participants. In 2016 the enthusiasm for Trump among Minnesota Republican Caucus participants was low – to

say the least. **Second**, notice the dramatic fall off in Republican Precinct Caucus attendance from 2016 to 2018. When we compare DFL and GOP Caucus attendance from 2010 – the last time there was an open seat for Governor – GOP Caucus attendance was **down 56%**, while DFL attendance was **up 52%**. The obvious explanation for this is that what was formerly the faithful GOP Caucus-going base – which overwhelmingly wanted someone other than Trump in 2016 – was unhappy or disaffected with the new Trump-dominated Republican Party. **Third**, let’s hearken back to the General Election votes – in 2016 about 113,000 voters chose Libertarian Gary Johnson – a former Republican Governor of New Mexico whose running mate, William Weld, was also a former Republican Governor (Massachusetts.) Gary

Trump-Pawlenty-Johnson... and the Pre-Trump Minnesota Republican base		
Jeff Johnson's Benchmarks		
Johnson's vote in 2018	168,502	
Johnson's baseline vote in 2014	55,836	
Increase in Johnson's vote, 2014 to 2018	112,666	
Tim Pawlenty Benchmarks -- Primary voting history		
		Vote %
First election, 2002 -- no major opposition	172,927	88.6%
Second election, 2006 -- no major opposition	147,622	88.9%
2018 election -- defeated by Jeff Johnson	140,466	43.8%
Pawlenty's 2018 vote & "ABJ"/"Never Trump" voters		
Pawlenty voters -- 2018	140,466	
Anyone But Johnson voters -- 2014	128,274	
"Never Trump" 2016 General Election voters: New Libertarian voters plus Independence Party voters	130,950	
Anyone But Trump straw poll voters -- 2016	89,772	
Conclusion for Tim Pawlenty: his base was traditional Republicans who voted for him in the 2002 and 2006 Primaries... these "Never Trumpers" were sure Trump would lose Minnesota in 2016... but they couldn't vote for Hillary... so they protested by voting for the Libertarian or Independence Party ticket.		
Conclusion for Jeff Johnson: He won tactically with Trump "New Energy voters" -- with his 55,836 base from 2014, they provided him the votes to win.		
New Energy voters in 2018 (Trump voters)	136,152	
Increase in Johnson's vote, 2014 to 2018	112,666	
Bottom Line: the 2018 Republican Primary for Governor was clearly all about Trump -- but Trump is a temporary phenomina. Best case: former House Speaker John Boehner is right... the GOP is "off somewhere taking a nap."		

Johnson’s Minnesota Presidential vote was up 78,000 from his total in 2012. It was widely understood in Minnesota that Gary Johnson was a kind of default choice for “Never Trump” voters – who had a clear second option of voting for the Independence Party ticket. All of this points to a decided lack of enthusiasm for Trump among the

“traditional” or pre-Trump GOP base. To be clear, we’re talking about a disposition to go in a non-Trump direction – not about the current, powerful tendency for both party bases to vote against the other party in General Elections based on fear and hatred of the other party.

We’re ready now to put the Pawlenty-“Never Trumpers”-and-“Trump Factor”-“Flip Side”- puzzle together – with the aid of this graphic.

Because Jeff Johnson’s relevant track record is more limited – two primaries for Governor over four years -- the single, dominant benchmark for Johnson is the increase in his vote from 2014 to 2018. In both primaries he was the endorsed candidate, and he won both primaries. But as we’ll see, he couldn’t have won in 2018 without the Trump “New Energy voters.”

Former Governor Pawlenty has a much longer track record to consider – three GOP primaries for Governor, over a sixteen year period. Although Pawlenty lost the GOP Precinct Caucus straw poll in 2002, his strength among his base – the GOP caucus at the Legislature – led him to victory after a protracted Convention battle – he went on to win the GOP primary as the Convention-endorsed candidate, with no major opposition. As an incumbent, Convention-endorsed candidate he also won the 2006 Primary with no major opposition, and then won a close re-election in a heavily Democratic year (the Democrats took decisive control of the U.S. House, and also won five seats and effective control of the U.S. Senate.) Pawlenty choose not to run for re-election in 2010.

Based on this history, Pawlenty has both an extensive record, and a lot of political baggage – but he also established a clear voter base among regular and loyal GOP primary voters. As we can see from the graphic, that voter base was somewhere between about 150,000 and 170,000 – however, both data points represented the votes of a Convention-endorsed candidate. His already-extensive of financial supporters was greatly expanded by his years as head of the Financial Services Roundtable (from late 2012 to early 2018.) In February of 2018, even amid the Trump whirlwind, Pawlenty believed his record as Governor, his strong name recognition, his historical Primary voting base, and strong fundraising ability could allow him to ultimately win the GOP primary. He was widely believed to be the strongest available Republican candidate. However, as events unfolded, and largely

because of his withdrawal of support for Trump after the Access Hollywood tape, he decided it would be better to by-pass the GOP State Convention rather than fail to win endorsement. He and his backers thought with all their other assets, he could still win the primary. The low Precinct Caucus turnout, and Johnson's failure to win a first ballot Convention win even facing weak opponents must have also encouraged the Pawlenty camp.

We've already seen the "Trump Factor" – which didn't become fully visible until after the actual 2018 primary vote was counted. But as we can see from the graphic, there was a lot of data pointing to the potential for a Pawlenty vote in the zone that he actually received. In the 2014 Primary, the "Anyone But Johnson" vote totaled up to almost 130,000 votes – and these were votes against a Convention-endorsed candidate. We've already noted the strong "Anyone But Trump" Straw Poll vote in 2016 – that was by far a record turnout for Republican Caucus-goers, and it showed a strong base of about 90,000 voters who preferred some other GOP candidate to Trump. We've also noted the heavy third party turnout in the 2016 Presidential election. When you total new Libertarian Party voters and Independence Party voters, we have a group of about 130,000 voters who were so turned off by Trump in 2016 that they voted third party. All of this data pointed to the prospect of a 2018 Pawlenty Primary vote of about 140,000 votes – and that's what he actually did receive.

Pawlenty and his backers weren't wrong to think they were in a good position to win the 2018 GOP Primary. However, as we've seen, the Trump "New Energy voters" turned out for Johnson in numbers that were simply unprecedented for any past GOP primary. Ultimately, that made the difference – when Johnson combined his core base of 55,000 2014 Primary voters with the Trump "New Energy voters" the result was a comfortable win, even with Pawlenty hitting the vote total he could reasonably expect to win.

The Bottom Line is that the 2018 GOP Primary for Governor was all about Trump. However, Trump is a temporary phenomena. Former House Speaker John Boehner is right when he says the Republican party is "off somewhere taking a nap." On the one hand, it will almost certainly wake up as Trump leaves the scene – willingly or unwillingly. A level of Federal debt that can no longer be controlled is only one of the dangers we face. The big question is: will the damage done by then be

so extensive that is beyond repair? With a younger generation on the march – and alternatives like Ranked Choice Voting ready to spur demands for reform, we may be heading for a realignment, or a multi-party system – or something we haven't yet conceived of.

Walz for Governor – a clear win and a major opportunity for “One Minnesota” Democrats

Meanwhile, and again looking at things from a practical point of view, the DFL probably has their best-case scenario for holding the Governor’s seat – First District Congressman Tim Walz won the DFL Primary for Governor. Until shortly before the election, Walz was believed to be in a close race with three-term Attorney General Lori Swanson – who abruptly abandoned her re-election bid when it appeared the Convention’s endorsement was out of reach, switching to

DFL Governor's race -- results by CD										
Note: two minor candidates are not shown										
BOX 1	Candidate's District by District vote									Candidate's statewide total votes
	CD1	CD2	CD3	CD4	CD5	CD6	CD7	CD8		
Erin Murphy	7,967	19,733	22,780	39,626	57,833	11,949	9,150	17,931	186,969	
Lori Swanson	6,960	16,222	19,626	19,552	21,560	13,190	14,798	31,609	143,517	
Tim Walz	37,636	26,716	32,395	37,307	53,298	16,874	18,105	20,501	242,832	
Total:	53,341	63,717	76,007	97,912	134,788	42,829	43,625	71,516	583,735	
The % below is the party's total vote for each CD -- in other words, where is the party strong or weak										
	9.1%	10.9%	13.0%	16.8%	23.1%	7.3%	7.5%	12.3%		
Metro core, CDs 3, 4 and 5:	52.9%									
BOX 2	Candidates percent of the CD vote for each District									Candidate's statewide % of vote
	CD1	CD2	CD3	CD4	CD5	CD6	CD7	CD8		
Erin Murphy	14.9%	31.0%	30.0%	40.5%	42.9%	27.9%	21.0%	25.1%	32.0%	
Lori Swanson	13.0%	25.5%	25.8%	20.0%	16.0%	30.8%	33.9%	44.2%	24.6%	
Tim Walz	70.6%	41.9%	42.6%	38.1%	39.5%	39.4%	41.5%	28.7%	41.6%	
Walz represents CD1										
Nolan, Swanson's Lt. Gov. running mate, represents CD 8										
BOX 3	Candidate's percent of their total vote from each district (where are they strong?)									
	CD1	CD2	CD3	CD4	CD5	CD6	CD7	CD8		
Erin Murphy	4.3%	10.6%	12.2%	21.2%	30.9%	6.4%	4.9%	9.6%	100.0%	
Lori Swanson	4.8%	11.3%	13.7%	13.6%	15.0%	9.2%	10.3%	22.0%	100.0%	
Tim Walz	15.5%	11.0%	13.3%	15.4%	21.9%	6.9%	7.5%	8.4%	100.0%	
Difference										
Metro core, Murphy:	64.3%	11.4%	too hot	Walz represents CD1						
Metro core, Swanson:	42.3%	-10.6%	too cold	Nolan, Swanson's Lt. Gov. running mate, represents CD 8						
Metro core, Walz:	50.7%	-2.2%	just right							
The difference column is each candidate's Metro Core % minus the party's Metro Core %										
BOX 4	The difference by CD between a candidate's vote % in the CD and party's vote % in the CD									Average except for CDs 1 & 8
	CD1	CD2	CD3	CD4	CD5	CD6	CD7	CD8		
Erin Murphy	-4.88%	-0.36%	-0.84%	4.42%	7.84%	-0.95%	-2.58%	-2.66%	2.83%	
Lori Swanson	-4.29%	0.39%	0.65%	-3.15%	-8.07%	1.85%	2.84%	9.77%	2.83%	
Tim Walz	6.36%	0.09%	0.32%	-1.41%	-1.14%	-0.39%	-0.02%	-3.81%	0.56%	
Walz represents CD1										
Nolan, Swanson's Lt. Gov. running mate, represents CD 8										
CDs 1 and 8 are not part of the average, because they are home districts for Walz and Nolan										

a run for Governor. However, shortly before the election Swanson’s campaign was confronted with not one but two scandals. First, her running mate, retiring Congressman Rick Nolan, was accused of an inadequate response to allegations of sexual abuse made against his Chief of Staff, who was allowed to retire, and then re-emerged as a paid campaign worker. Next, accusations emerged that many employees of the Attorney General’s office were asked to perform political work for her campaign, including during the work day, and that promotions and

job security were conditioned on a willingness to do this work. Many also characterized Swanson as being significantly under the influence of her former boss, the previous Attorney General, Mike Hatch – who was characterized by some as almost a kind of puppet-master. For these and other reasons, Swanson ended up finishing third, 17% behind Tim Walz. The graphic below organizes the election results by Congressional District... we'll examine it in detail.

BOX 1 and BOX 2 show the vote totals and percentages for each of the three major candidates (two minor candidates are omitted; Tin Holden and Ole Savior won 1.1% and .7% of the statewide vote respectively.) As we can see from Box Two, Tim Walz finished with 41.6% of the statewide vote, and a comfortable margin of about 10% more than the Convention-endorsed candidate, Erin Murphy.

Walz tried mightily to compete for the Convention endorsement, but currently the Caucus and Convention systems are dominated by the more extreme wings of the GOP and DFL party. Walz ran a long, energetic and well-funded campaign, raising over \$2.4 million as of August 8th pre-primary finance report. That report showed he had about \$500,000 on hand, meaning there was plenty of money to finance late TV advertising. Erin Murphy raised an impressive \$960,000 total -- but had only \$200,000 on hand at the end – not much for the final TV ad blitz. Late-starter Lori Swanson raised about \$600,000, and had only \$135,000 on hand for the final ad blitz. (Pawlenty and Johnson raised \$2.1 million and \$565,000 respectively... and had \$1 million and \$193,000 on hand for the final TV ads.)

One striking thing to me about the DFL campaigns was how much of the total money raised for both Walz and Murphy had been spent before their Convention. Clearly, there was significant money going into staff, and in to very extensive campaigning to the Caucus goers, and especially to those who would become State Delegates. Watching this, I found myself wondering – are they spending too much and focusing too much on the Convention – not leaving enough resources for the likely primary campaign. On the GOP side, Johnson was notably restrained in his spending before the Convention – although he raised significantly less than Murphy, he was able to hoard enough for a significant broadcast TV and Radio campaign, and also a strong social media-internet campaign presence. The outlier was clearly Swanson, who had significantly weaker ties to her party's activist base

than any of the other major candidates. Her strategy was clearly to rely on her relatively high name recognition from twelve years as Attorney General – and three statewide election wins – concentrating on paid media to do the job in a relatively short Primary campaign. As we can see from the financial numbers, it's clear that she ran out of money towards the end. It's hard to tell how much of her loss was the result of the late entry and the weak campaign with party activists, and how much was due to the scandals. It does seem clear that the massive time and energy devoted to the activist base paid off for both Walz and Murphy. Although his total spending was less, the same can be said for Jeff Johnson. There was clearly much less reliance on TV ad campaigning as compared to the 2010 cycle, when Gov. Mark Dayton skipped the Convention process entirely, and won his primary by one percent basically by spending about \$3 million total – and heavy on the TV ads – before the Primary. The way politicians campaign and the importance of the attention they pay to their activist bases is changing.

Referring now to the graphic, BOX 1 has a percentage line at the bottom that shows the total party vote (for all three candidates) in each CD, as a percentage of the total party vote statewide. This is to highlight the relative importance – and power – of each CD in the Primary nominating process. As we can see, CD5 (Minneapolis and some first tier suburbs on the South, West and North) is by far the most vote-rich district – accounting for almost a fourth of all DFL Primary votes cast statewide. Since each CD has one eighth of the population, this means that CD5 has about twice the weight of an average district (CD3 and CD8 are closest to the statistical “average weight” of 12.5%.) The weight of CD1 is higher than we would expect from a Republican district (Trump won CD1 by 15% in 2016) – but that's because it's Tim Walz's home district – he won 71% of the DFL vote there. Similarly, CD8 produced a strong turnout of 12.3% -- about the statistical average for a Congressional District; although Trump won there by 15.5%, Nolan squeaked by with a winning margin of less than 1%. Lori Swanson got a strong boost from Nolan in CD8, it was her best district by far – she ran a full 20 points ahead of her statewide percentage. Tim Walz also won his CD1 by less than 1% -- and both are leaving Congress, meaning there is a good chance that both of these strong Trump districts will flip to Republicans.

BOX 1 also shows the percentage of the statewide DFL vote for “Metro core, CDs 3, 4 and 5:” these total to 52% -- a little more than half of all Minnesota DFL Primary voters, although the population of these three Districts is 37.5% of the state’s total.

One of the big issues for all Minnesotans, and particularly Democrats, is the growing metro/rural split – Republicans now completely dominate rural State Legislative districts. Because DFL voters are so heavily concentrated in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, this produces an overall tilt towards the GOP – it’s possible for Republicans to win a majority of seats in the State House and/or the State Senate (the Senate isn’t up for election this year) while losing the statewide popular vote for the legislature by one or two percent – or even more.

Tim Walz has been looked to as a Democrat who might be able to reverse, or at least slow down, the metro/rural split. BOX 3 provides some crucial data on this. The “Metro core” percentage is calculated for all three candidates – showing the percentage of each candidate’s statewide vote that came from the three core Metro districts. Recall that the party’s total vote for Governor for these three Districts is **52.9%**. As we can see, the Convention-endorsed and “furthest left” Erin Murphy also has the highest Metro core percentage – **64.3%** -- meaning that almost two out of every three votes she received were from the three Metro core districts. I’ve included a slightly whimsical “Goldilocks Scale” to the right – showing that Murphy’s score is “too hot” (meaning Too Metro) – while Swanson’s is “too cold” (mean she’s weakest where the DFL is strongest.) Tim Walz is “just right” – he gets about the same percentage of Metro core votes as the party does.

BOX 4 pushes this analysis a little further. It highlights the difference between the percentage of each candidate’s vote in each Congressional District and the DFL party’s vote in that district as a percentage of the party’s statewide vote. I also calculate an average for CD2 through CD7 – CD1 and CD8 are excluded because they are home Congressional Districts for Tim Walz and Rick Nolan, who was Lori Swanson’s running mate. The result for Tim Walz is really striking – the average difference for his vote percent in each CD and the party’s total vote percent in that district is less than one percent. This means that Walz’s support essentially mirrors the strength of the DFL statewide. One way of looking at this is to say that Walz’s geographic strength isn’t different from the DFL party’s geographic strength. Of course, another

way of saying this is that Walz's voter base is as tilted towards the Metro part of the State as the DFL is. But another way of looking at this is to say that Walz can compete everywhere in the state in a way that most other statewide Democrats (who tend to be from the Metro) cannot. Walz himself is from a largely rural district – he's a gun owner, and used to receive "A" grades from the NRA. He has a better rapport with rural Minnesota voters in terms of culture, style and values than many other Democrats. At the same time, he's certainly progressive enough to appeal to the DFL's "Core metro" base – he ran about even with Erin Murphy in CD5 – 2.4% behind her – that is the most liberal and the most voter-rich of the state's eight Districts.

Ellison for AG – a looming disaster for Democrats

The 5th District – DFL and GOP takeaways