

FREDRIKSON & BYRON

2018 Election Review



Minnesota Governor and Constitutional Offices:

DFLer Tim Walz to Become Minnesota Governor

Congressman Tim Walz defeated Hennepin County Commissioner Jeff Johnson in the race for Minnesota Governor. The two were running for the seat currently held by Governor Mark Dayton. Although polls leading up to the election showed a Walz lead in the single digits, he won by a double-digit margin and will become the first Governor in over 25 years from Greater Minnesota.

With his gubernatorial election win, Walz has become the first Minnesota governor since four year governor terms were put in place to serve a third straight term for the same party.

In the other statewide Constitutional offices, DFLers continued their unbroken streak of statewide wins going back to the 2008 election. Secretary of State Steve Simon won a fairly easy matchup and will serve his second term. Julie Blaha defeated Pam Myhra by 6% and will replace Rebecca Otto as the State Auditor. And in the closely watched Attorney General campaign, Keith Ellison will replace outgoing AG Lori Swanson after defeating Doug Wardlow by nearly 4%.

US Senate and House of Representatives:

Despite four new members, no net change in partisan makeup of MN delegation

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar was re-elected to her third six-year term in the U.S. Senate. Meanwhile, Senator Tina Smith was elected to fill out the remainder of the term to which she was appointed following the resignation of Al Franken. Klobuchar cruised to a 24% win, while Smith won by slightly over 10%.

Four Congressional seats changed parties, with DFLers picking up the suburban 2nd and 3rd districts, while Republicans won the two rural seats left open by retiring Democrats. In the 1st District, Jim Hagedorn will take over from Tim Walz (pending a potential recount). Angie Craig defeated Jason Lewis in a rematch of the 2016 campaign in the 2nd District. Dean Phillips unseated Erik Paulsen in the 3rd District. And Pete Stauber defeated Joe Radinovich and will replace Rick Nolan in the 8th District.

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Minnesota House of Representatives:

DFL Controls Minnesota House 75 to 59

There were two opposite messages given by the two Caucus leaders during fundraisers held at Fredrikson & Byron this summer to give credibility to their claims of success in 2018. Republican Speaker Kurt Daudt spoke of the strength of his suburban members who had won in 2016, despite Donald Trump losing; in some cases by wide margins, in their districts. DFL Leader Melissa Hortman looked to historical trends that showed an average of 17 seats changing hands during mid-term elections. Speaker of the House-designee Hortman was right.

For the fifth time in seven election cycles, the majority in the Minnesota House of Representatives changed hands as DFLers picked up 18 seats (one more than Hortman's stated average) and defended every DFL held seat despite 16 retirements among their 57 members. All told, 34 of the incoming 75 DFLers will be new (though two previously served in the House).

The path to the majority largely ran right through those 'Clinton' districts that Daudt spoke of, but past results and incumbent strength did not prove as important as the partisan makeup of the districts, equally strong candidates run by the DFL, and the trend lines in those districts. Each of the 12 suburban Clinton districts flipped to DFL control along with 4 other suburban districts, and two in Greater Minnesota.

Caucus break down by geographic type of district:

	DFL	Republican
Rural/Regional Center:	18	38
Exurban/Suburban:	40	21
Minneapolis/St. Paul:	18	0

Of note, of the 21 Republican exurban/suburban districts, just 11 are in the traditional five-county metro area, the other ten are in the surrounding outer-ring exurban counties. With just one more election cycle before a new round of redistricting, a legislative map that relies this heavily on rural districts, which generally have declining population, should worry the Republicans.

The gender breakdown is exactly the same as it was after the 2016 election, 48 women to 86 men. There were many new DFL women elected in the suburbs, but many replaced Republican women and there were also 10 women who retired from the House, half of which were replaced by men.

The House will be more racially diverse. There will be 15 people of color serving in the next legislature, an increase from 11 in the last legislature.

New member profiles:

05A (Bemidji and Leech Lake region) John Persell (DFL): Persell is one of two returning members. He lost to Rep. Matt Bliss in 2016 and defeated him by eight votes this year. This race will go to a recount.

06B (Central and Eastern Iron Range) Dave Lislegard (DFL): Lislegard replaces Rep. Jason Metsa who stepped down to run for Congress. Lislegard is the Mayor of Aurora and he is a strong backer of proposed copper/nickel mining projects on the east end of the Range.

13A (Paynesville, Cold Spring, St. Joseph) Lisa Demuth (R): Demuth is a ROCOI School Board member and owns/manages a commercial property. She replaces Rep. Jeff Howe who ran successfully for the open State Senate seat in this district.

14B (Eastern half of St. Cloud) Dan Wolgamott (DFL): Third time is the charm for Wolgamott who previously lost elections on the A side of this district, and the Senate seat. He defeated Ways and Means chair Jim Knobloch who ended his campaign early due to family issues. Wolgamott works as a realtor.

15B (Rural Sherburne and Benton counties) Shane Mekeland (R): Mekeland replaces Rep. Jim Newberger who opted to challenge Sen. Amy Klobuchar instead of seek re-election. Mekeland made news late in the election for being the victim of an alleged assault last month. He is a small businessman with experience as both a convenience store manager and as a residential building contractor.

19A (North Mankato & St. Peter) Jeff Brand (DFL): Brand replaces the retiring Rep. Clark Johnson. He is a St. Peter City Council member, member of the Coalition of Greater MN Cities board, and works as an insurance agent.

20B (Northfield) Todd Lippert (DFL): Lippert is a minister at First United Church of Christ in Northfield and replaces the retiring Rep. David Bly.

33B (Southern Lake Minnetonka) Kelly Morrison (DFL): Doctor Kelly Morrison is an OB-GYN in private practice and will be one of two freshmen medical doctors added to the House. She defeated Rep. Cindy Pugh.

34A (Northwestern Hennepin County) Kristin Robbins (R): Robbins was elected to replace Majority Leader Joyce Peppin, who resigned after session ended to take another job. Robbins currently serves as the Executive Director of the Economic Club of Minnesota.

34B (Maple Grove & Osseo) Kristin Bahner (DFL): Bahner defeated Rep. Dennis Smith and works as an IT consultant, a profession the GOP has had members in, but no recent DFLers.

35A (Anoka & Ramsey) John Heinrich (R): Heinrich is a combat veteran who served in Iraq from 2003-2004 and serves as Vice-President of an asphalt/concrete company. He replaces retiring Rep. Abigail Whelan.

36A (Champlin & Coon Rapids) Zack Stephenson (DFL): Stephenson joins a growing list of Assistant Hennepin County Attorneys serving in the House. He replaced the retiring Republican Rep. Mark Uglen.

38B (White Bear Lake and surrounding) Ami Wazlawik (DFL): Wazlawik defeated former State Auditor Patti Anderson and replaces retiring Republican Rep. Matt Dean. She works in the White Bear Lake schools.

39B (Stillwater & Lake Elmo) Shelly Christensen (DFL): Christensen is a retired teacher and coach in the Stillwater school district. She defeated Rep. Kathy Lohmer.

40B (Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park) Samantha Vang (DFL): Vang is an organizer who has worked on non-partisan voter accessibility and civic participation. She replaces Rep. Deb Hilstrom who unsuccessfully ran for Attorney General.

42A (Shoreview, Arden Hills & Mounds View) Kelly Moller (DFL): Moller is also an Assistant Hennepin County Attorney focusing on criminal appeals. She defeated Rep. Randy Jessup.

44A (Plymouth) Ginny Klevorn (DFL): Klevorn is a professional mediator and long-time public school advocate. She defeated Rep. Sarah Anderson, the chair of the State Government Finance Committee.

44B (Minnetonka and Plymouth) Patty Acomb (DFL): Acomb is a Minnetonka City Council member and an environmental scientist. She replaces retiring Rep. Jon Applebaum.

46A (Golden Valley, St. Louis Park & Plymouth) Ryan Winkler (DFL): Winkler is the second DFLer to return to the House. He voluntarily left office in 2015 when his then wife took a job overseas, he returned to Minnesota to run for Attorney General, but dropped out to run for his former House seat when current Rep. Peggy Flanagan joined Tim Walz's ticket. He was elected as the Majority Leader within the House DFL Caucus.

47B (Chaska & Chanhassen) Greg Boe (R): Boe is a member of the Chaska City Council and serves as the Carver County Environmental Services Department Manager. He replaces retiring Rep. Joe Hoppe.

48B (Eden Prairie) Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn (DFL): Kotyza-Witthuhn has worked in business operations and as a tutor for at-risk students. She notably adopted three children under five years-old during this campaign and defeated the K-12 Finance Chair Rep. Jenifer Loon.

49A (Edina) Heather Edelson (DFL): Edelson is a non-practicing attorney, stay-at-home mom and community volunteer. She defeated Rep. Dario Anselmo.

49B (Edina & Bloomington) Steve Elkins (DFL): Elkins is a current member of the Metropolitan Council and has served on the Bloomington City Council and other local boards and commissions. He previously worked as a transportation economist in the airline industry. He replaces retiring Rep. Paul Rosenthal.

50A (Richfield & Bloomington) Mike Howard (DFL): Howard is a Richfield City Council member, the former Communications Director for the DFL House Caucus, and worked in communications for the Super Bowl Host Committee last year. He replaces retiring Rep. Linda Slocum.

52B (Inver Grove Heights & Mendota Heights) Ruth Richardson (DFL): Richardson is an attorney and has worked with several non-profit, social work, and disability focused organizations. She defeated Rep. Regina Barr.

53A (Woodbury, Maplewood & Oakdale) Tou Xiong (DFL): Xiong is an attorney and previously worked at the Capitol while employed by the MN Housing Finance Agency. He is currently a Maplewood City Council member and works for the State Ethnic Councils. He replaces retiring Rep. JoAnn Ward.

53B (Woodbury) Steve Sandell (DFL): Steve is an educator, Minnesota historian, and youth sports coach. He defeated Rep. Kelly Fenton.

54A (South St. Paul, Cottage Grove, Newport & St. Paul Park) Anne Claflin (DFL): Claflin is an environmental scientist with the MN PCA and a union leader within MAPE. She defeated Rep. Keith Franke.

55A (Shakopee) Brad Tabke (DFL): Tabke is the former Mayor of Shakopee and owns a commercial real estate consulting company. He defeated Erik Mortensen, who had defeated Rep. Bob Loonan in the Republican primary.

56A (Savage & Burnsville) Hunter Cantrell (DFL): Cantrell works as a tutor and campaigned heavily on health care costs following his cancer diagnosis and treatment as a young adult. He defeated Rep. Drew Christensen.

56B (Burnsville & Lakeville) Doctor Alice Mann (DFL): The second medical doctor elected this year, Mann is a family practice physician. She defeated Rep. Roz Peterson.

57A (Apple Valley & Lakeville) Robert Bierman (DFL): Bierman owns a third-generation flooring and home furnishings business. He replaces Rep. Erin Maye Quade who stepped down to run for Lt. Governor on Rep. Erin Murphy's ticket.

57B (Rosemount & Apple Valley) John Huot (DFL): Huot has worked for 30 years in emergency medical services and healthcare and started several small businesses and now works as a realtor. Huot defeated Rep. Anna Wills.

60B (Minneapolis – U of M) Mohamud Noor (DFL): Noor has been a frequent candidate and served a partial term after being appointed to fill a vacancy on the Minneapolis School Board and works as a computer scientist. He replaces Rep. Ilhan Omar who stepped down to successfully run for Congress in the 5th District.

61B (Minneapolis – Southwest) Jamie Long (DFL): Long has worked for members of Congress here and in Washington D.C., most recently as Rep. Keith Ellison's District Director. He replaces Rep. Paul Thissen who resigned his seat in the Spring when he was appointed to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

62A (Minneapolis – South) Hodan Hassan (DFL): Hassan works as a clinical social worker for Hennepin County and has years of experience as a community and labor organizer. She replaces retiring Rep. Karen Clark.

62B (Minneapolis – Sotuth) Aisha Gomez (DFL): As a first-time candidate, Gomez was able to earn the distinction of receiving the highest vote percentage of any candidate with an opponent (92.07%). She is currently the senior aide to Minneapolis Councilmember Alondra Cano. She replaces retiring Rep. Susan Allen.

64A (St. Paul) Kaohly Her (DFL): For the last year, Her has served as the Policy Director to St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter. Prior to that, she worked in the St. Paul Public Schools, as a consultant, and with several non-profits. She replaces Rep. Erin Murphy who ran for Governor.

67B (St. Paul - Eastside) Jay Xiong (DFL): Xiong is a former legislative staffer and organizer. He replaces retiring Rep. Sheldon Johnson.

Minnesota Senate:

GOP Retains Control of Minnesota Senate 34 to 33

There was just one special election on the ballot for the State Senate, but with an evenly divided Senate chamber heading into the election, that special election determined the majority. This race was required due to the ripple effects of Al Franken resigning his Senate seat; then Governor Dayton appointing his Lieutenant Governor Tina Smith to fill that seat; which then required former Senate President Michelle Fischbach to ascend to the Lieutenant Governor's office and resign her State Senate seat. The election pitted Rep. Jeff Howe (R) against Joe Perske (DFL). Despite enormous amounts of money being spent to try to win control of the body, the Republican leanings of the district and Howe's strength as a candidate won out and he cruised to a 15% victory.

The Senate has now filled the President of the Senate position with Sen. Jeremy Miller of Winona. It remains unknown who the new chair of Higher Education will be (to replace Sen. Fischbach) and whether or not Sen. Miller will stay on as chair of the Jobs Committee as well as serve as President.

Local and ballot issues:

There were no Constitutional Amendments or any other sort of statewide ballot initiatives this election, but several school districts and other local governments had items on the ballot. For school districts, 79% of districts with ballot questions passed at least one question. This is an uptick from recent years and advocates see the state passage of reforms to how agricultural land is treated as one positive benefit. Minneapolis easily passed a ballot initiative to ease restrictions on full liquor licenses outside of the major commercial districts in the city. There were also several municipal sales tax proposals on the ballot for everything from municipal facilities, changing length of terms for local offices, and various city services.

National:

At the national level, Democrats took control of the U.S. House of Representatives for the first time since losing it in the 2010 election. They are currently projected to pick-up 39 seats with changes across the country, including flipping six seats in California, four in New Jersey, three in Virginia, two each in Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, and Texas, and breaking 100% GOP control of Kansas and Oklahoma. Democrats now hold every Congressional seat in New Mexico and all of New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut). Republicans maintained their hold on every seat in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Arkansas, and West Virginia.

Despite a good year for Democrats, the U.S. Senate presented them with a tough challenge due to the high number of Democratic incumbents running for re-election in states Trump won. All told,

Democrats lost four incumbents in Florida, Indiana, Missouri, and North Dakota while picking up Republican held seats in Arizona and Nevada.

At the state level, Democrats started to make up for huge legislative losses during the Obama years by picking up 380 legislative seats and flipping the majority in eight chambers, including the Minnesota House. In Governor's races, Democrats picked up seven new Governors; including three in the Midwest (Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin); and Republicans flipped Alaska from Independent to Republican. Republicans were able to hold onto their majority of Governors around the country (27-23), but with the high profile races in Florida and Georgia and close wins in Iowa, Ohio, South Dakota, Democrats came razor close to flipping that overall majority.