

POLLING MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FR: PJ Wenzel, Partner, Clout Research

RE: Survey of Likely Republican Primary Election Voters in South Dakota

Clout Research is an opinion research and voter data modeling firm based in Dublin, Ohio working with clients in politics, business, media, government, and non-profit agencies nationwide for more than a decade. It uses the latest technology in research, telephony, texting, and big data to help clients identify opportunities and challenges to influence lawmakers, win elections, and improve service to their clients, constituents, and voters. Since its founding in 2005, it has worked with notable success for Republican clients at the highest levels, from presidential campaigns to governor to township trustee and city council.

Clout conducted a telephone survey of likely Republican Primary Election voters statewide in South Dakota regarding the 2018 nomination race for governor. The survey was conducted April 21-23, 2018 and included 815 respondents. It carries a confidence interval of 95% and a margin of error of +/- 3.43 percentage points.

The survey of likely GOP Primary voters statewide in South Dakota shows that in the race for Governor, Congresswoman Kristi Noem is on track to win her party's nomination on June 5th.

An initial ballot reveals **the Congresswoman outperforms Marty Jackley** with a four-point lead on the ballot (41%/37%) with 22% still undecided. But when likely voters who are "soft supporters", or "leaners", were added to the ballot test, **Ms. Noem's margin grew substantially to a 12-point advantage, leading Mr. Jackley, 49% to 37%**. It is notable that 32% say they are *firm* in their support for Noem, compared to only 27% who are firm for Jackley.

The primary electorate in South Dakota is very familiar with both Congresswoman Noem, and state Attorney General Marty Jackley. Both candidates are seen with largely favorable eyes by GOP voters, with 77% favorable toward Mr. Jackley, and 73% favorable toward Cong. Noem. Ms. Noem's favs are slightly stronger, however, as nearly 47% said they had a "very favorable" opinion of the Congresswoman.

Despite Mr. Jackley's positive image, the ballot strongly leans toward Cong. Noem, suggesting that it will take a great deal in the way of Jackley resources to overcome the deficit in the final stretches of the campaign.

One especially notable number is voter perception of the job performance of President Trump among South Dakota Republicans. The President has an extremely positive job

performance rating of 75% overall, with 9% saying they give him “only fair” marks, and just under 15% saying he’s done a “poor” job thus far. Significantly, nearly **50% award the President with “excellent” marks for his first year and a half in office.**

During what is sure to be the most intense period of paid media for this campaign, candidates who are seen by voters to be aligned with the President will have much to gain.

Among those voters who give President Trump “excellent” marks for his job performance thus far, 56% favor Ms. Noem in the race for governor. Mr. Jackley wins just 30% support among that group. She leads by a similar margin among those voters who give Trump the slightly lower job performance rating of “good”.

Among undecided voters in the race for governor, 74% give Trump positive marks on his leadership of the nation, another indication they may well fall in with Ms. Noem when they eventually decide whom to support in the race for governor.

One other point of interest is where voters are lining up on the Second Amendment, in the aftermath of the tragic Florida school shooting. Among “Strong Second Amendment” voters, **Cong. Noem leads Jackley by a wide margin, 46% to 32%.** Whereas Mr. Jackley has found a following among those who favor repeal of the Second Amendment, with 53% of that very small demographic group supporting his candidacy. Among leaners, the gap is more pronounced, with 18% of those who lean toward Ms. Noem identifying as strong Second Amendment voters, compared with only 6.7% of those same voters leaning toward Mr. Jackley.

It’s worth noting that fully 65% of those voters identifying as “undecided” also identify as “strong Second Amendment” voters. **If past is prologue, these voters will likely fall into Ms. Noem’s camp by a double-digit spread.**

In conclusion, as the race for the GOP nomination for Governor in South Dakota enters the final stretch, it seems apparent that Congresswoman Noem is in the strongest position both on the ballot and among those voters who make up the core and backbone of the South Dakota GOP electorate. With the likelihood that spending in this race will increase substantially over the next several weeks, Mr. Jackley will have a lot to overcome to win over undecideds and primary voters whose profile seems to align much more closely with Ms. Noem.

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