DFM Research

St. Paul, Minnesota

NORTH DAKOTA
EAST REGION
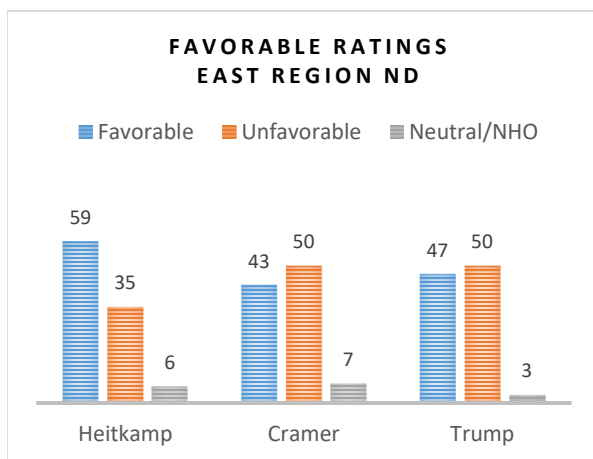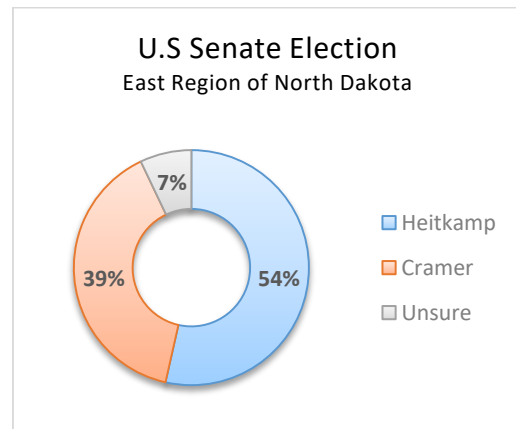
SEPTEMBER 14-28, 2018

To: Democratic-NPL State Party
From: Dean Mitchell
Date: October 2, 2018

As we continue to observe, North Dakota elections are more complicated than one would initially think. While many outside observers think of North Dakota as fairly homogenous, I believe this is in error when it comes to politics. Without getting into the nitty-gritty details, my experience has shown that to get a proper handle of North Dakota, one must view the state as five distinct regions. The regions: east cities (Fargo, West Fargo and Grand Forks), west cities (Bismarck, Mandan and Minot), east rural, central rural and west rural. A statewide survey, while useful for a variety of issues, can often be misleading in head-to-head elections; this is why I find it more useful to look at each piece separately to build a roadmap for success. This quick memo highlights two of the five regions (East City and East Rural) which amount to approximately 45 percent of the expected vote. The combined surveys were in regular field rotation September 14 through the 28th, with a total of 861 likely voters interviewed.

Based on my electoral model, Senator Heitkamp's campaign is right at the mark for a 'jump-ball' election. The current margin of 14 points in the east, similar to the 2012 margin in the region, is built on the strength in the three cities. This is not a surprising trendline, we have seen in several statewide surveys where the cities in east and west show an increase in Heitkamp's margin.

This current jump-ball scenario from regional polling strongly indicates the campaign with the better field organization and voter turnout program, is likely to be the campaign which wins on November 6th.

The data also shows that for voters in the east identified as unsure, the Heitkamp campaign is in a good position. Positive factors include Heitkamp's higher favorable rating to Rep. Cramer (59 percent to 43 percent), her job approval of 62 percent and a plus eight on being perceived as a North Dakota Democrat compared to Cramer being plus 20 points on his perception as a National Republican.

U.S Senate Election
East Region of North Dakota

Heitkamp 54%
Cramer 39%
Unsure 7%

FAVORABLE RATINGS
EAST REGION ND

■ Favorable   ■ Unfavorable   ▨ Neutral/NHO

Heitkamp: 59, 35, 6
Cramer: 43, 50, 7
Trump: 47, 50, 3

And when it comes to prime issues in the east, trade and health care remain prominent. With trade, voters in both rural and east cities are concerned that a 'trade war' could negatively impact North Dakota agriculture. North Dakota voters in the east also believe that Heitkamp will do a better job of requiring health care companies to cover pre-existing condition and keep health care more affordable. It is not even close!

Bottom line: the U.S. Senate race based on regional polling fitting into the statewide model show the race to be a 'toss-up'. Nothing new here.

Q2: Generally speaking, do you think North Dakota is moving in the right direction, or is North Dakota off on the wrong track?

Right direction **60%**
Wrong track **29**
(VOL) Unsure **12**

Q3: I'm now going to read you some names of public figures and names in the news, for each one, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion, and if you never heard of them before, just let me know:

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Neutral (VOL)	Never Heard Of
a: Donald Trump	**47%**	**50**	**3**	**0**
b: Heidi Heitkamp	**59**	**35**	**4**	**2**
c: Kevin Cramer	**43**	**50**	**5**	**2**
h: Al Carlson	**20**	**30**	**21**	**29**

Q4: Generally speaking, do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove or strongly disapprove the job Donald Trump is doing as President of the United States?

Strongly approve **33%**
Somewhat approve **18**
Somewhat disapprove **10**
Strongly disapprove **39**
(VOL) Unsure / Neutral **0**

Q5: And generally speaking, do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove or strongly disapprove the job Heidi Heitkamp is doing as United States Senator?

Strongly approve **29%**
Somewhat approve **33**
Somewhat disapprove **16**
Strongly disapprove **20**
(VOL) Unsure / Neutral **2**

Q6: Now let's take a look at a few upcoming elections. If the election was held today for the United States Senate, would you vote for Heidi Heitkamp the Democrat or Kevin Cramer the Republican?

	All Voters	Certain to Vote
Heidi Heitkamp	**53%**	**55**
Kevin Cramer	**39**	**39**
(VOL) Unsure /All Other	**8**	**6**

Q7: And in the race for United States House of Representative, if the election was today, would you vote for Mac Schneider the Democrat, Kelly Armstrong the Republican or Charles Tuttle?

Mac Schneider	**42%**
Kelly Armstrong	**39**
Charles Tuttle	**3**
(VOL) Unsure	**15**

Q10: And if the election was held today for the North Dakota Legislature, which party candidates would you vote for, the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

Democratic Party	**43%**
Republican Party	**45**
(VOL) Unsure	**12**

Now I have a few questions about the U.S. Senate Race.

Q11: Do you think of Heidi Heitkamp as a North Dakota Democrat or as a National Democrat?

North Dakota Democrat	**47%**
National Democrat	**39**
(VOL) Both	**6**
(VOL) Neither/Unsure	**8**

Q12: And do you think of Kevin Cramer as a North Dakota Republican or as a National Republican?

North Dakota Republican	**33%**
National Republican	**53**
(VOL) Both	**4**
(VOL) Neither/Unsure	**10**

Q13: Over the last few months there has been a lot of talk about Trade Wars. What impact do you think a Trade War will have here in North Dakota?

Strong negative impact	**41%**
Some negative impact	**25**
Some positive impact	**9**
Strong positive impact	**9**
or, No real impact	**8**
(VOL) Unsure	**8**

Q14: How concerned are you that a Trade War with China, Canada or Europe could negatively impact North Dakota agriculture goods?

       Very concerned **43%**
       Concerned **13**
       Just somewhat concerned **24**
       Not that concerned **18**
       (VOL) Unsure **3**

Q15: Some say that President Trump can be tough on trade with China, yet North Dakota will not suffer many consequences. Do you agree or disagree with that view?

       Strongly agree **13%**
       Somewhat agree **20**
       Somewhat disagree **20**
       Strongly disagree **40**
       (VOL) Unsure **7**

Questions 16 and 17 Regional Variation Questions

Q18a: Regardless which candidate you support for the U.S. Senate; do you think Heidi Heitkamp or Kevin Cramer will do a better job to ensure health insurance companies are required to cover pre-existing conditions?

       Heidi Heitkamp **59%**
       Kevin Cramer **25**
       (VOL) Both **4**
       (VOL) Neither/Unsure **11**

b. and who will do a better job making sure health insurance is more affordable?

       Heidi Heitkamp **53%**
       Kevin Cramer **33**
       (VOL) Both **3**
       (VOL) Neither/Unsure **11**