



STATE NAVIGATE POLL BRIEFING

WEST VIRGINIA SENATE DIST. 17
REPUBLICAN PRIMARY

Sen. Tom Takubo (incumbent) vs. Chris Pritt
Charleston-area district · May 3–6, 2026 follow-up survey

AT A GLANCE



PRIMARY DATE

May 12, 2026



EARLY VOTING BEGAN

Apr 29, 2026



FIELD DATES

May 3–6, 2026



MARGIN OF ERROR

± 5.5%

n = 360 likely Republican primary voters · Charleston area · Weighted by age, race, gender, education, region

METHODOLOGY

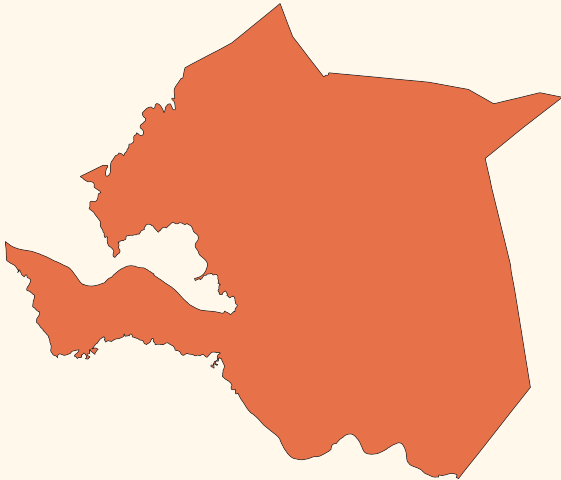
State Navigate surveyed 360 likely Republican primary voters in West Virginia's Senate District 17 from May 3 through May 6, 2026, as a follow-up to our April 13 baseline survey. Both waves used AllianceForge's text-to-web methodology via SurveyMonkey. The sample was drawn from the i360 voter file and weighted by age, race, gender, education, and region to reflect the likely 2026 R primary electorate. The survey carries a margin of error of ±5.5% at a 95% confidence level. This survey was not sponsored by any party, candidate, or candidate's committee.

DISTRICT DNA • SD-17



CHARLESTON AREA

Regions: Charleston, Suburbs, Rural
(see appendix for region map)



WHERE A FEW VOTES MATTER

~19%

OF VOTERS WILL DETERMINE WHO
THE NEXT STATE SENATOR WILL BE

~69,500

registered voters in SD-17

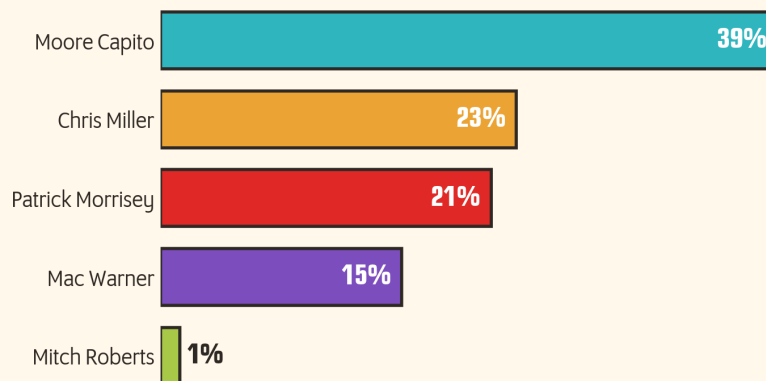
~12,900

voters cast in the 2022
GOP primary in SD-17

This district will likely elect a Republican
in November; a few voters will determine
how competitive the general election will be.

2024 PRIMARY RESULT IN SD-17

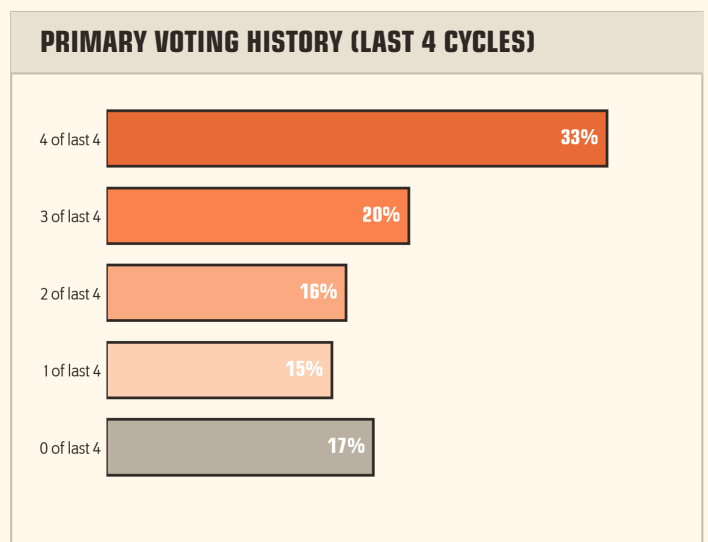
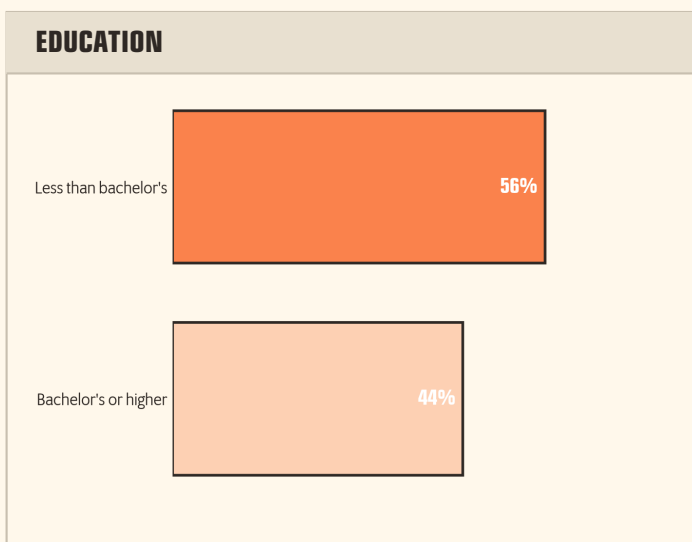
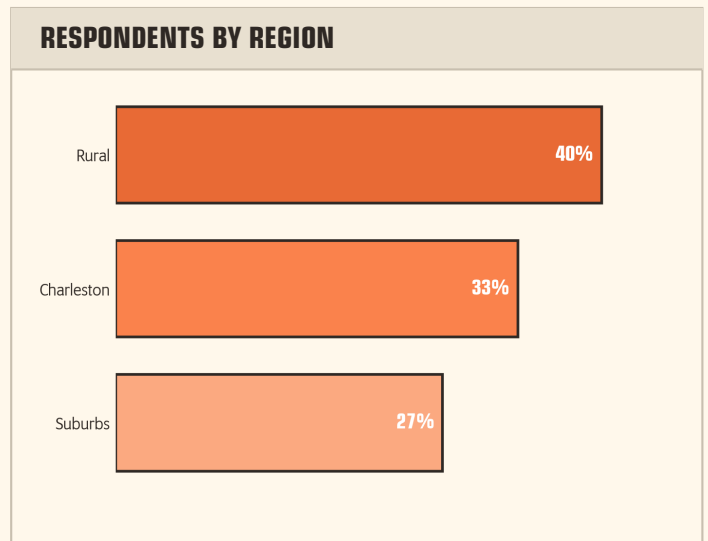
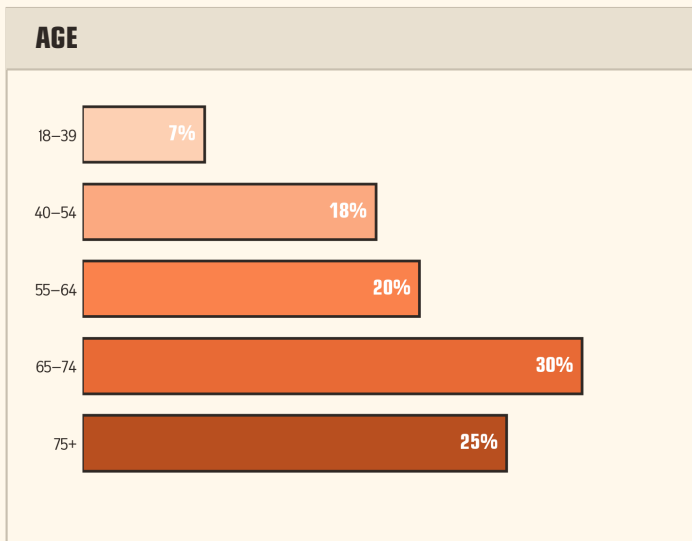
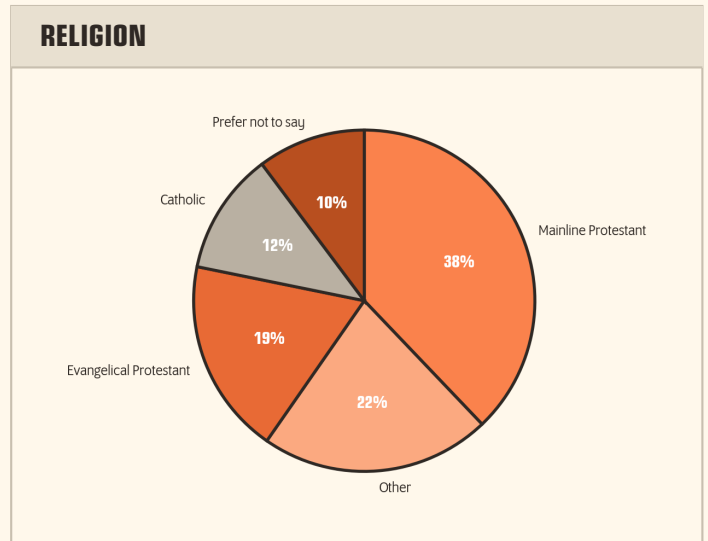
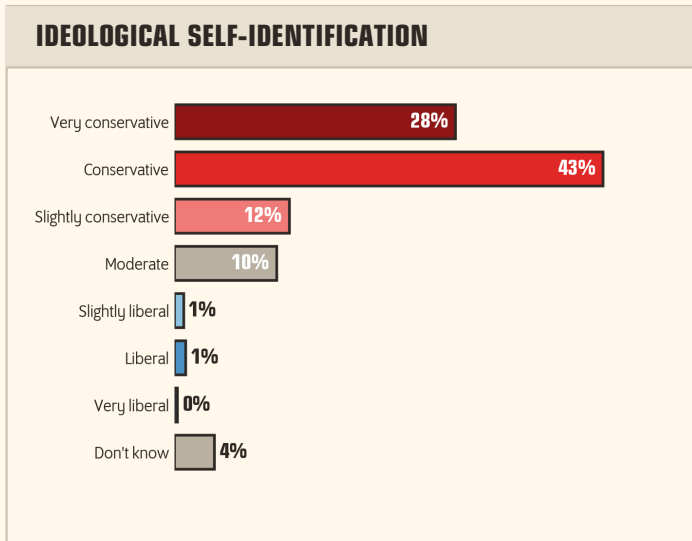
2024 GOP Gov. Primary in SD-17 (Capito +17)



A NOTE ON 2024

In 2024, SD-17 was an open seat where Pritt received 42% against Eric Nelson in the GOP primary; Nelson resigned last year and Anne Charnock was appointed to his seat. Nelson had the backing of much of the normative-conservative establishment in Kanawha County, plus the bonus of an active field operation in-district from the Moore Capito for Governor campaign. This year, Capito's mother, US Senator Shelley Moore Capito, is on the ballot in an uncompetitive US Senate primary, so Takubo loses the indirect center-right-conservative boost that Nelson had. The 2024 primary electorate broke 35% Charleston / 27% suburbs / 38% rural; when excluding non-Republicans it's 40% rural, 33% Charleston, 27% suburbs – we've weighted our survey to this breakdown.

DISTRICT DNA • SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS (LV)



White/Caucasian = 98%. n = 360 likely R primary voters, weighted.



THE CANDIDATES

TOM TAKUBO

Incumbent • Davis Creek, Charleston

BACKGROUND

Three-term incumbent from Charleston. Doctor and de facto opposition leader in the State Senate to Senate President Randy Smith and the Morrissey-aligned faction.

BACKERS

Labor unions; WV Chamber of Commerce.

KEY STRENGTH

12-year incumbency; highly motivated voter base; runs as the normative-conservative alternative to the Morrissey/Smith faction.

CHRIS PRITT

Attorney, Former Delegate • Charleston

BACKGROUND

Attorney and former WV Delegate from a rural Kanawha district. Took 42% in the open 2024 SD-17 primary against Eric Nelson.

BACKERS

Sen. Randy Smith; Gov. Morrissey; AFP; Make Liberty Win.

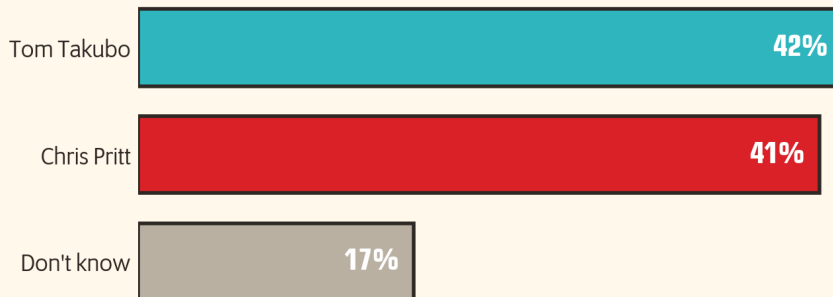
KEY STRENGTH

Name recognition from 2024 run; massive 4-to-1 to 5-to-1 spending advantage over Takubo.

THE SNAPSHOT

THE HORSERACE • WITH LEANERS

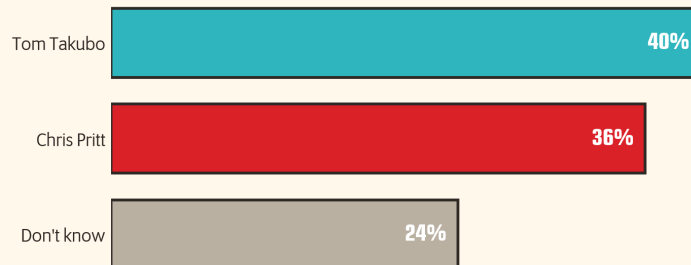
SD-17 Republican Primary Horserace (with leaners)



Our latest SD-17 poll shows a similar topline to our first one: Takubo with a 1-point lead; in April, Takubo led 40–39. However, last month's raw respondent sample was 10% more reflective of the likely education breakdown of the electorate (a key dividing line between decided voters). We've examined two potential non-response biases in our Team Notes; it's hard to say with absolute certainty whether the race has remained stable or not.

NO LEANER PUSH

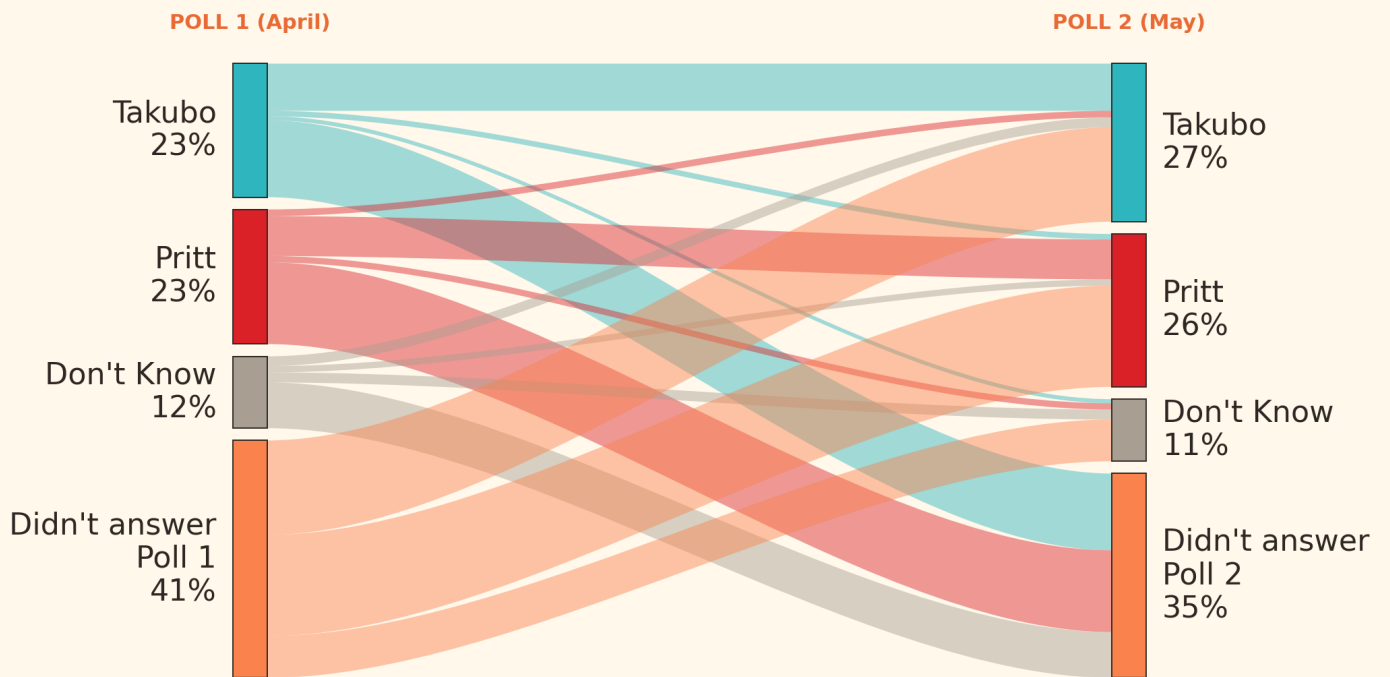
No leaner push



Before pushing undecided voters, Takubo has a 4-point lead. After pushing, Takubo gains 2% while Pritt gains 5%. Our April survey's before-leaner result was 34% Takubo/33% Pritt; after pushing undecideds it became 40% Takubo/39% Pritt. This indicates that Pritt is doing better with undecided voters compared to a few weeks ago, when they split almost evenly.

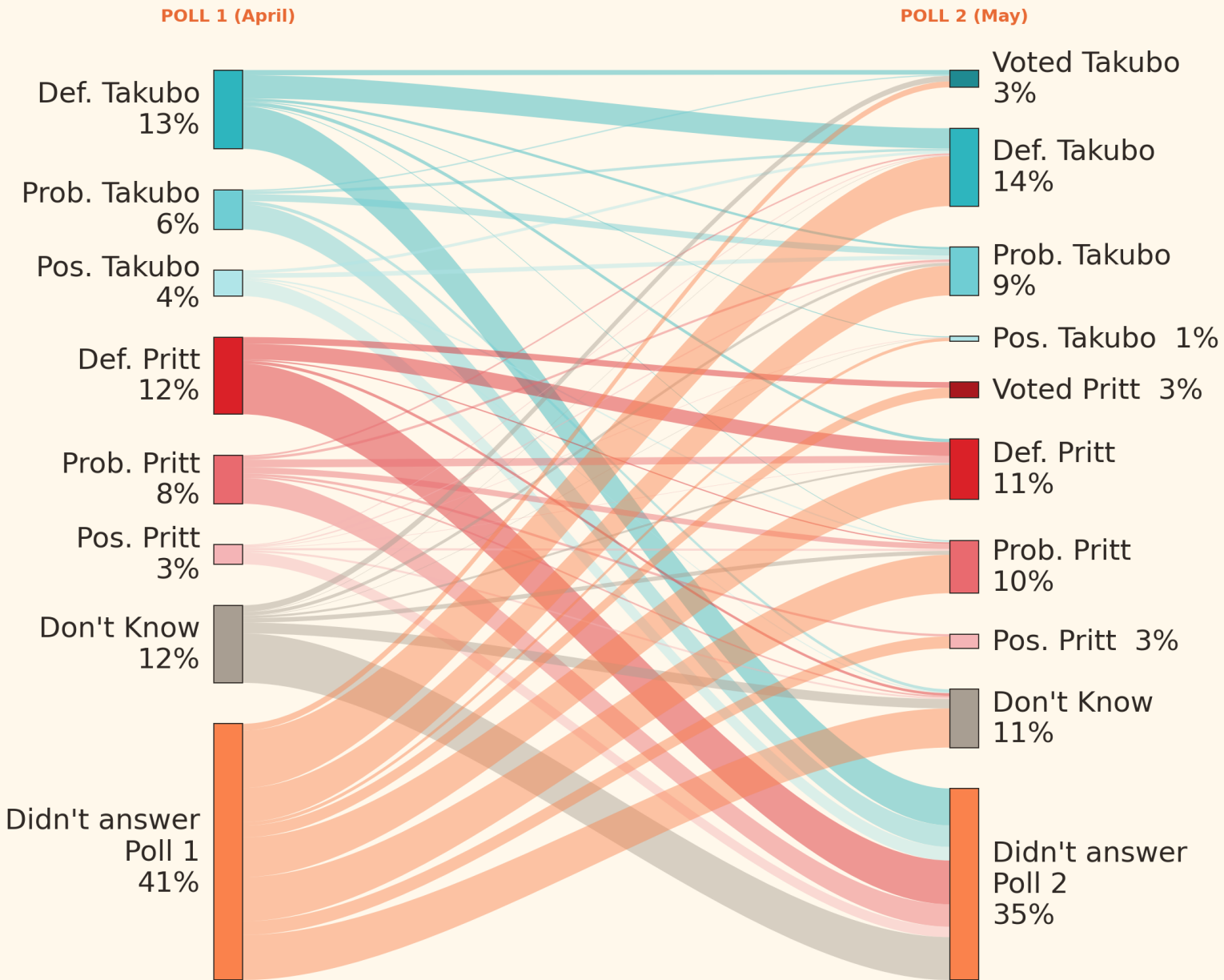
SANKEY COMPARISON OF POLLS: SIMPLE • REGULAR

Regular Election



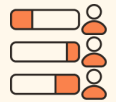
SANKEY COMPARISON OF POLLS: DETAILED · REGULAR

Regular Election

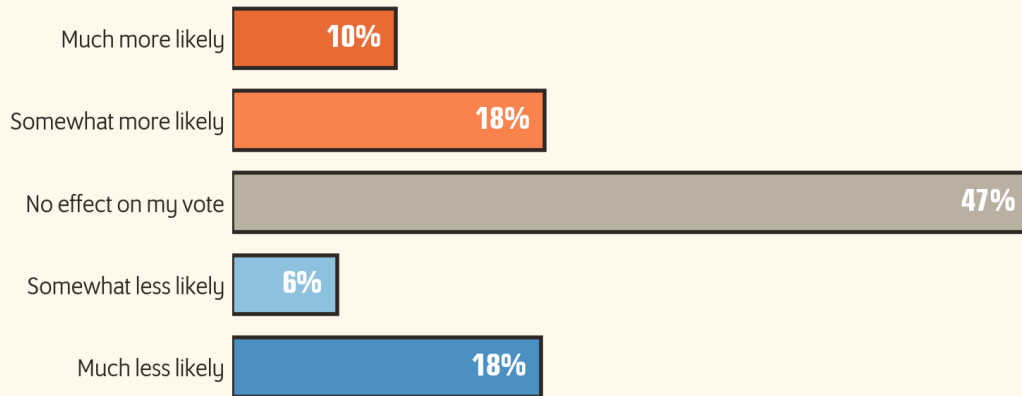


REPUBLICAN TYPOLOGIES & IDEOLOGY

EFFECT OF A MORRISEY ENDORSEMENT

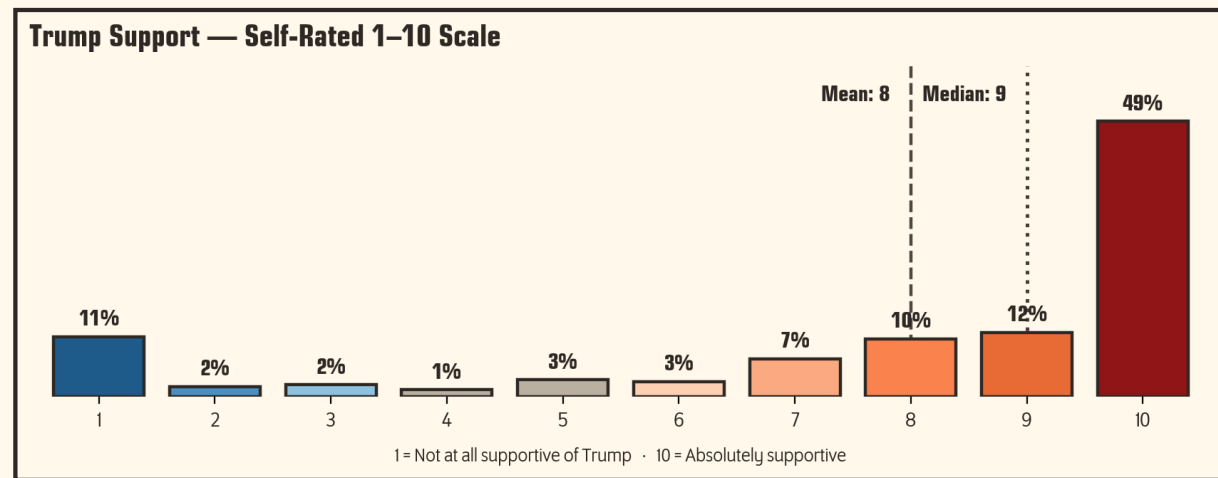


Effect of a Morrisey Endorsement on Vote



A potential indicator of how the raw sample is possibly more Takubo-friendly than the April poll, the percentage of respondents who say a Morrisey endorsement makes them less likely to support a candidate has increased by 6%; the percentage who say it makes them more likely has essentially remained the same. This is either noise, or if our poll proves to be accurate, a result of an electorate becoming polarized against the Governor.

TRUMP SUPPORT



Another potential indicator that this sample may be more Takubo-friendly, this is the least “Trumpy” State Senate seat we’ve polled in the final stretch of the campaign. However, given the demographics and partisanship of this district, that may actually hold true. We’ll know by Tuesday.



TEAM NOTES & ANALYSIS

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE • ON SURVEY WEIGHTING CHANGE

Live and learn: regional weighting added for the May follow-up.

Every other West Virginia Senate poll we've conducted has been weighted by county to account for well-known regional differences in the state's primaries. We didn't weight SD-17 by region in our first survey, similar to last year's Virginia House of Delegates polls of seats within a single county. We're glad we decided to check our blind spots: the previous SD-17 poll was 42% Charleston, 25% Charleston suburbs, and 33% rural. In reality, the 2024 primary electorate was 35% Charleston, 27% Charleston suburbs, and 38% rural. We've slightly increased the rural region's share and decreased Charleston's in weighting to account for this year's primary being Republican-only. Had the previous survey been weighted to these regions, it would have been 40% Takubo, 40% Pritt, and 20% Undecided, compared to the last survey's results of 40% Takubo, 39% Pritt, 21% Undecided. To see our regional classifications, please check the appendix.

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE • ON VOTER LIKELIHOOD

"It all comes down to turnout." — Dave Weigel

Takubo is doing incredibly well with the voters who came out in every primary in 2018/2020/2022/2024 (33% of the sample), holding a 19-point lead with them. Among everyone else, though (voters who voted in 3 of those primaries or fewer, 67% of the sample), Pritt has a 7-point lead. Collapse it another way: when adding the 3/4s and 4/4s (53% of the sample), Takubo has an 8-point lead among that section. 0/4s, 1/4s, 2/4s combined (47% of the sample): Pritt has a 5-point lead among that section. However, when analyzing voters' answers on how likely they think they are to vote (which are probability-based), there's a different story. 89% of Pritt voters have already voted or say they're definitely voting, vs. 84% of Takubo's voters. Pritt better hope his mid-propensity voters show up.

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE • ON CROSS-CANDIDATE ALIGNMENT

Voters are moving toward factional identifications in both races.

Since our April survey, the regular and special elections have begun to align. 31% of our sample are Pritt/Charnock voters (a 10% increase from the previous survey), and 20% are Takubo/Jarroj voters (a 6% increase), both of which align with factional vote choices. 19% are Takubo/Charnock voters (a 2% increase), and 6% are Pritt/Jarroj voters (a 2% decrease). Another way to look at it: in the April survey, Takubo voters were going 41% Charnock — 35% Jarroj, now they're 48% Jarroj — 44% Charnock (a 10-point "swing"); Pritt voters were 54% Charnock — 20% Jarroj in April, now they're 76% Charnock — 14% Jarroj (a 28-point "swing").

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE • ON 1ST POTENTIAL NON-RESPONSE BIAS: REGION

Polling rural voters in this district has proven difficult.

Despite our best efforts to make our unweighted sample more representative of the electorate, it is actually slightly less so than our first survey's unweighted sample. The unweighted May sample is 43% Charleston, 27% Charleston suburbs, and 29% rural. Trying to get an unweighted, reflective sample has proven more difficult here than in every other district we have surveyed. In theory, the addition of regional weighting softens that blow; if we didn't weight by region in this survey, Takubo would be doing ~1 point better.



TEAM NOTES & ANALYSIS · CONT.

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE · ON 2ND POTENTIAL NON-RESPONSE BIAS: EDUCATION

This is the 4th poll here in 3½ weeks, exhausting non-college voters.

After our first survey, we learned that both campaigns had internals conducted for them. That is a likely contributor to the second potential non-response bias we've encountered: education. This is a likely reason why non-college voters are harder to poll in swing states; they're inundated with poll requests. The SD-17 non-college voters have also been inundated: we're all pulling from the same voter universe, and the SD-17 electorate has received requests to complete four polls in just 3½ weeks. When we noticed the problem of polling these voters on our first day (when our unweighted sample was +17 college), we targeted them the most in the final two days of our poll, but it wasn't enough to get close to the education breakdown of our last survey's unweighted sample. Our survey weighting looked at the two most recent Republican primary electorates (only among registered Republicans) and landed on a 57% non-college-educated and a 43% college-educated electorate. The unweighted sample in this survey is 53% college-educated, up from 48% in the first survey. Simply put, if the electorate looks more like 2022 or 2024, Pritt probably wins. However, if the electorate looks more like 2018, the last midterm election under President Trump, then Takubo will win.

MICHAEL FOLEY · ON INCOME BY REGION VOTE CHOICE

Candidate support in Charleston and its suburbs is dependent on income.

Pritt and Takubo are seeing some education and Trump vs. Traditional GOP differences, but one of the largest splits is among income, with Pritt doing better in lower-income households and Takubo doing better with higher-income households. Overall, Pritt is up 47%–35% for the slight majority making under \$100k, and Takubo is up 51%–37% among six-digit households. But this is not an even effect across the board. In the more rural areas, Pritt is leading among both income groups: a 6-point lead with under-\$100k households and a similar 8-point lead in rural households bringing in over \$100k. But once you reach the suburbs and Charleston, it is a different story. In the suburban areas, Pritt is up 56%–32% in under-\$100k households, but Takubo is leading 58%–28% in higher-income households — the gap between groups shoots up from a 2-point difference in the rural areas to 54 points. And in Charleston, Pritt is up 43%–33% among lower-income respondents, and Takubo leads 57%–34% among higher-income respondents. Takubo's inability to break as wide a lead with the wealthier rurals is costing him several points on the ballot, and indicates that there is an attitude difference among the wealthy depending on where they decide to live.

MICHAEL FOLEY · ON DUPLICATES TAKEN OUT

Sharing may be caring, but it's also very daring.

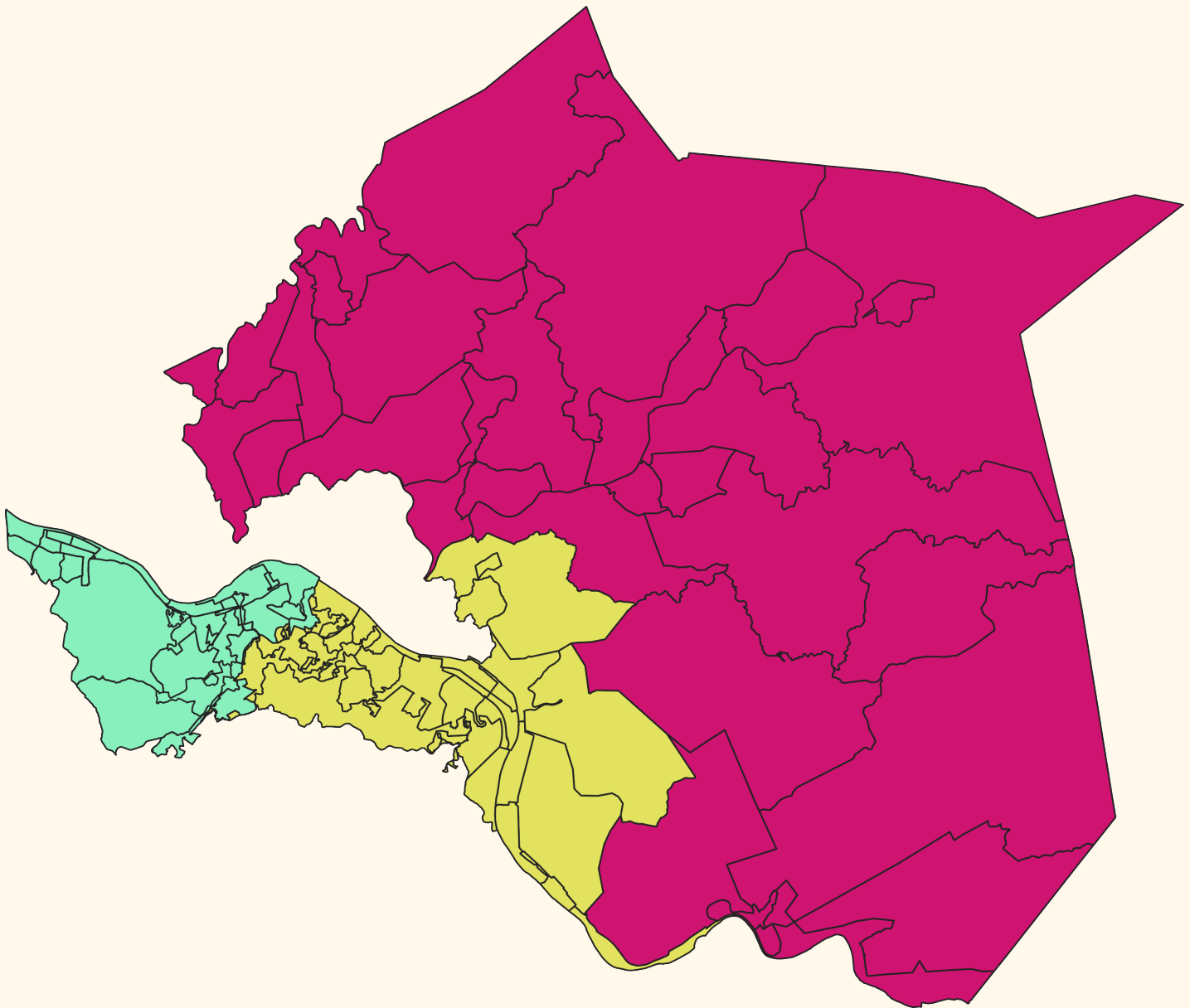
Overzealous candidates and their supporters will sometimes share our poll links with others. We can detect when that happens. When it does, all responses associated with the shared link are thrown out because we have no way to reliably associate the response with certain information necessary for weighting. In SD-17, 21 duplicate responses were removed from the sample. Please don't do this!

APPENDIX • REGIONAL MAP & WEIGHTS

RURAL
40.2%

CHARLESTON
33.3%

SUBURBS
26.5%





State Navigate is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to becoming a compass for state legislatures everywhere. Our bipartisan polling team consists of alumni of FiveThirtyEight, political scientists, and polling experts. Last year, State Navigate was the most accurate pollster in the country for the 2025 election cycle. To learn more about our poll sponsorship opportunities, [click here!](#) Public polling on state governance, especially state legislatures, is rare, so we try to make our polling as affordable as possible for sponsors to help fill this gap.

OUR POLLING TEAM

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chaz was the Director of CNalysis.com, the only website dedicated to state legislative election forecasting. He has successfully forecasted thousands of state legislative elections since 2017 during his senior year in high school. Chaz leads the polling team and works with them on survey design, field work, weighting, and written analysis.

MICHAEL FOLEY

ELECTIONS COORDINATOR

Michael is an expert in GIS technology and has experience in coding and scraping technology. He is a graduate of Fordham University and the University of Chicago Law School. In our polling, Michael conducts fieldwork, setting up surveys and texts, and exports/designs crosstabs.

MARY RADCLIFFE

DATA MANAGER

Mary Radcliffe is a mathematician and data analyst from Pittsburgh. She earned a PhD in Mathematics from the University of California, San Diego in 2012. Mary has previously worked as a Teaching Professor at Carnegie Mellon University and Researcher at FiveThirtyEight. In our polling, Mary helps with survey design, keeps our polling operations ethical, creates toplines, and writes analyses of results.

G. ELLIOTT MORRIS

POLLING COMMITTEE MEMBER

Elliott Morris is a data-driven journalist and author living in Washington, DC. He's the author of STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: How Polls Work and Why We Need Them. Elliott was most recently the Editorial Director of Data Analytics at ABC News, where he developed polling aggregation and election-forecasting models and managed the research and data visualization teams for ABC's data-journalism website FiveThirtyEight/538. In our polling, Elliott helps with survey design and writing weighting scripts.

NICHOLAS GOEDERT

POLLING COMMITTEE MEMBER

Nicholas / "Nick" is an assistant professor of Political Science at Virginia Tech with expertise focused on legislative elections and American politics. He is the author of GROUND WAR: Courts, Commissions, and the Fight over Partisan Gerrymanders (Oxford, 2022). He served as an expert witness in the Wisconsin redistricting case Whitford v. Gill. He holds a Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton and a J.D. from Georgetown Law. In our polling, Nick helps with survey design and gives academic feedback.

Your compass for state legislatures

PEACE OUT. THAT'S ALL.

