



STATE NAVIGATE POLL BRIEFING

WISCONSIN

2026 STATEWIDE DEMOCRATIC PRIMARIES

GOVERNOR Francesca Hong, David Crowley, Mandela Barnes, Kelda Roys, Joel Brennan, Sara Rodriguez, Missy Hughes

TREASURER Yee Leng Xiong, Dylan Helmenstine

Likely-voter survey of the August 11, 2026 statewide Democratic primaries

AT A GLANCE



PRIMARY DATE

August 11, 2026



FIELD DATES

July 23-26, 2026



ABSENTEE BALLOTS SENT

June 26



MARGIN OF ERROR

±3.0%

Wisconsin statewide Democratic primaries - weighted to the likely-voter electorate

METHODOLOGY

This survey was fielded from July 23-26, 2026, among 1,085 likely Democratic primary voters across the state of Wisconsin. Respondents were contacted via text and completed an online survey designed by the State Navigate Polling Committee. Results were weighted by party identification, age, gender, race, education, voter registration date, and region, with benchmarks derived from the voter file, the U.S. Census Bureau, and prior election results. The margin of error is ±3% at a 95% confidence level. This survey was conducted by State Navigate, a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization, and was not sponsored by any party, candidate, or candidate's committee.

SPONSORED BY

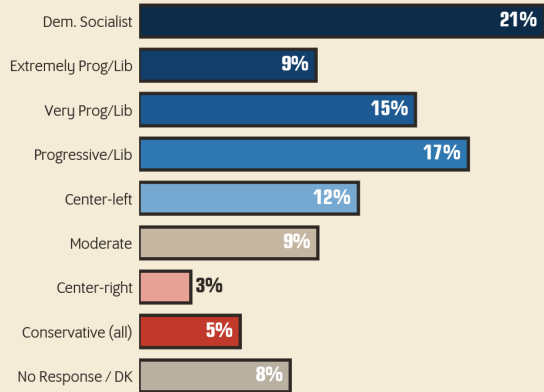
**UpNorth
News**

**MAIN STREET
ACTION**

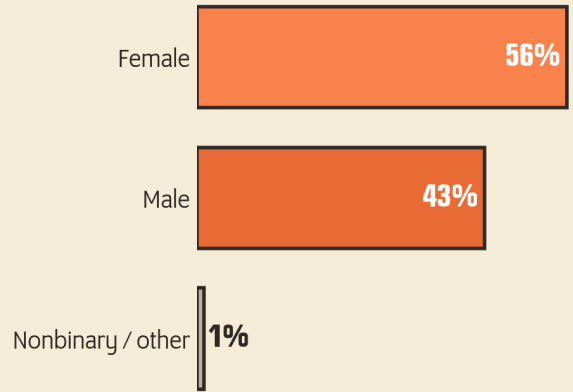


STATE DNA - SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

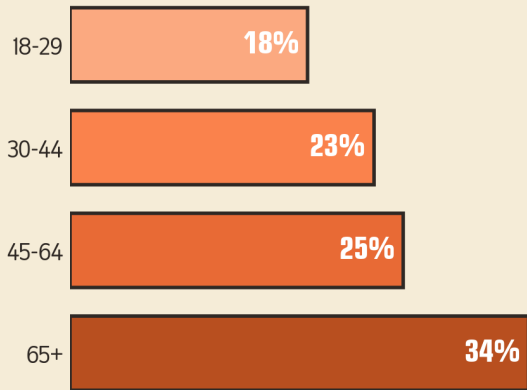
IDEOLOGICAL SELF-ID



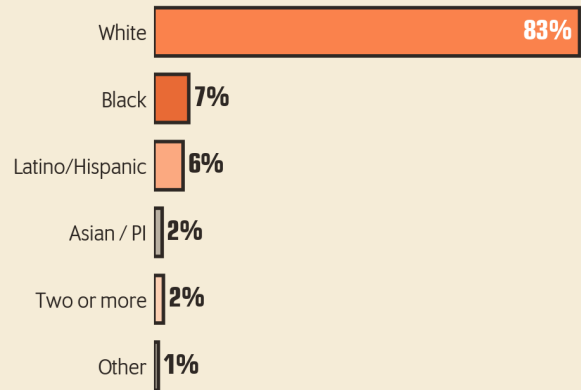
GENDER



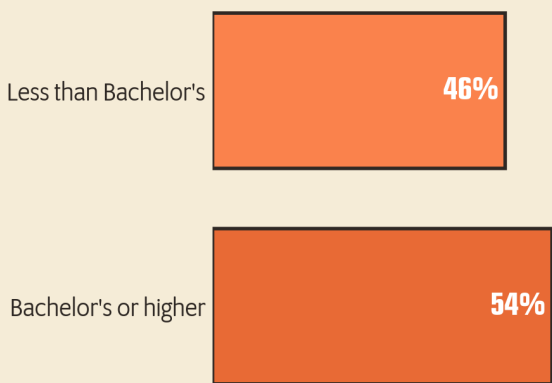
AGE



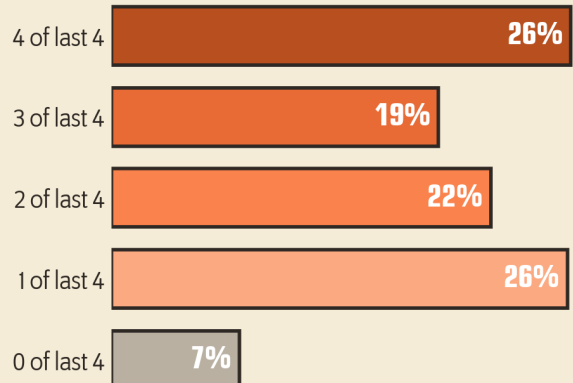
RACE / ETHNICITY



EDUCATION

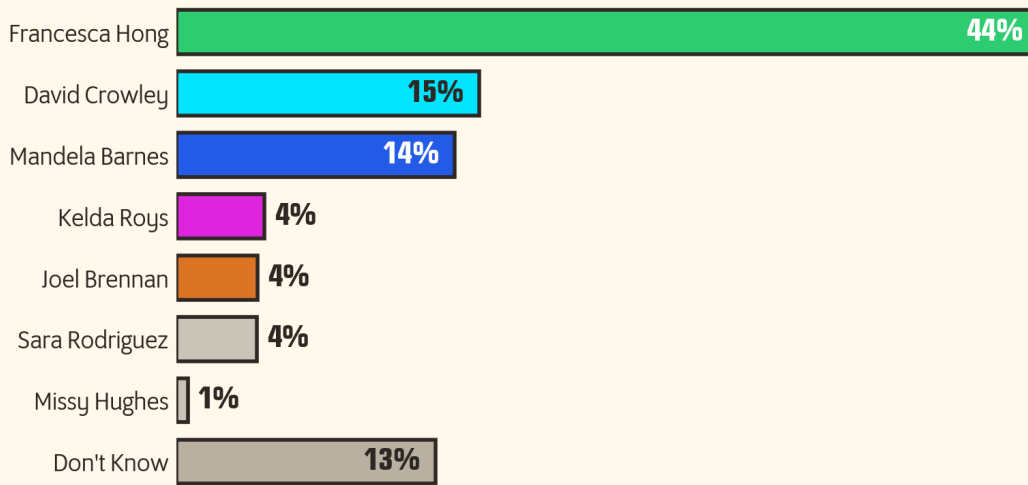


PRIMARY VOTING HISTORY (LAST 4 CYCLES)

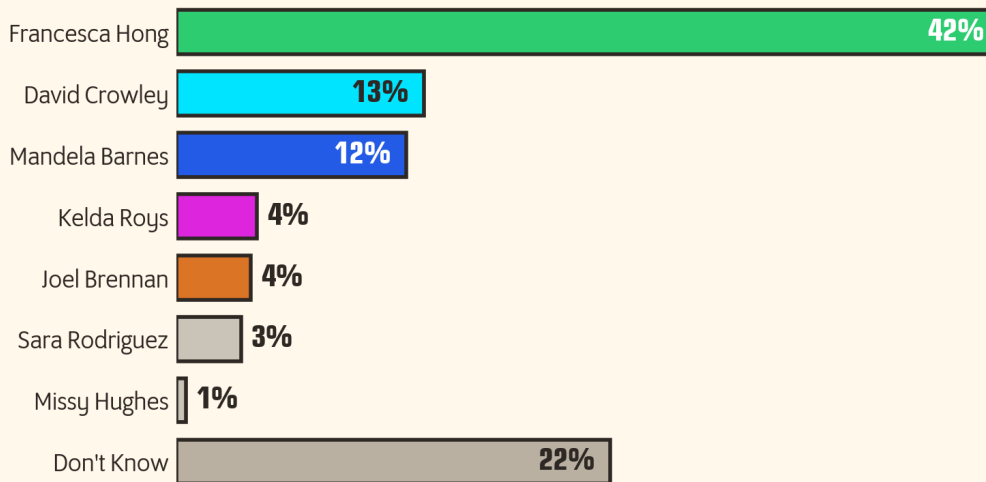


THE SNAPSHOT - GOVERNOR PRIMARY

THE HORSERACE - WITH LEANERS



BEFORE PUSHING UNDECIDEDS



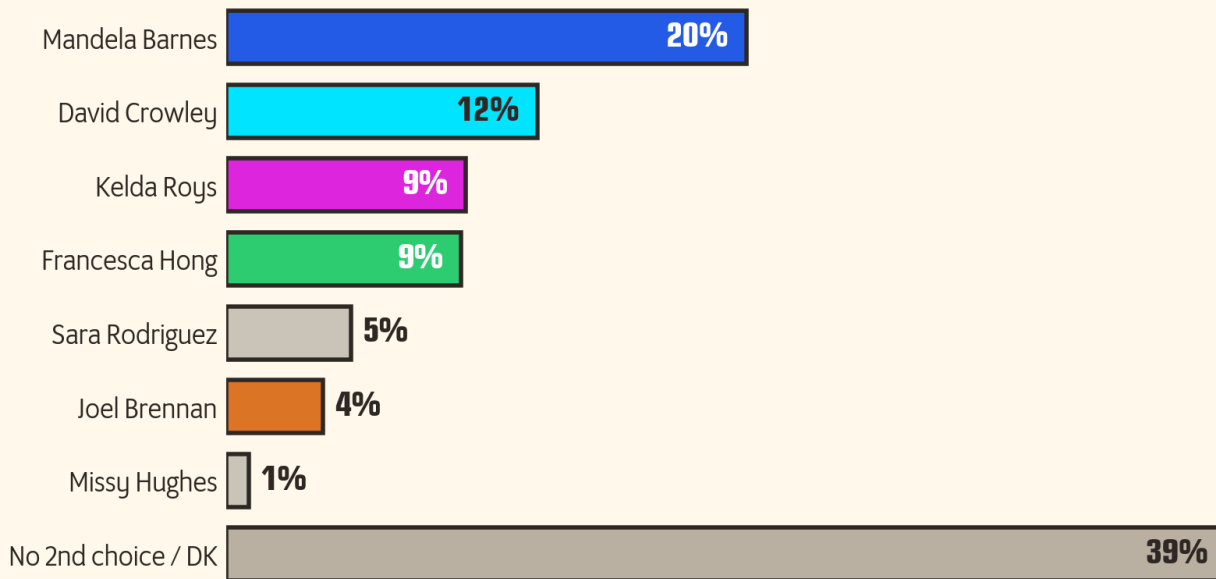
11% OF THE BALLOT IS ALREADY IN

Among likely voters who had already cast their ballot:

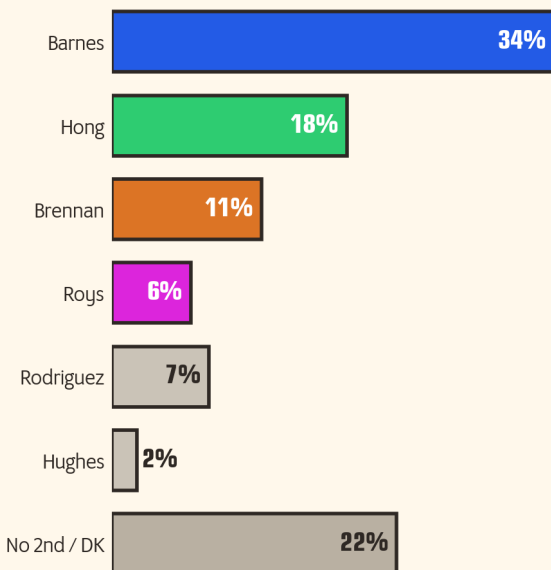
FRANCESCA HONG	MANDELA BARNES	SARA RODRIGUEZ	DAVID CROWLEY	JOEL BRENNAN	KELDA ROYS	MISSY HUGHES	DON'T REMEMBER
43%	18%	16%	11%	4%	2%	0%	7%

THE SNAPSHOT - SECOND CHOICE

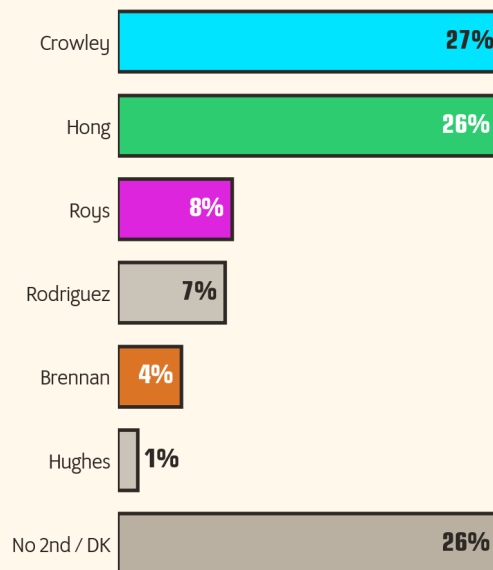
SECOND-CHOICE SUPPORT - ALL LIKELY VOTERS



AMONG CROWLEY VOTERS



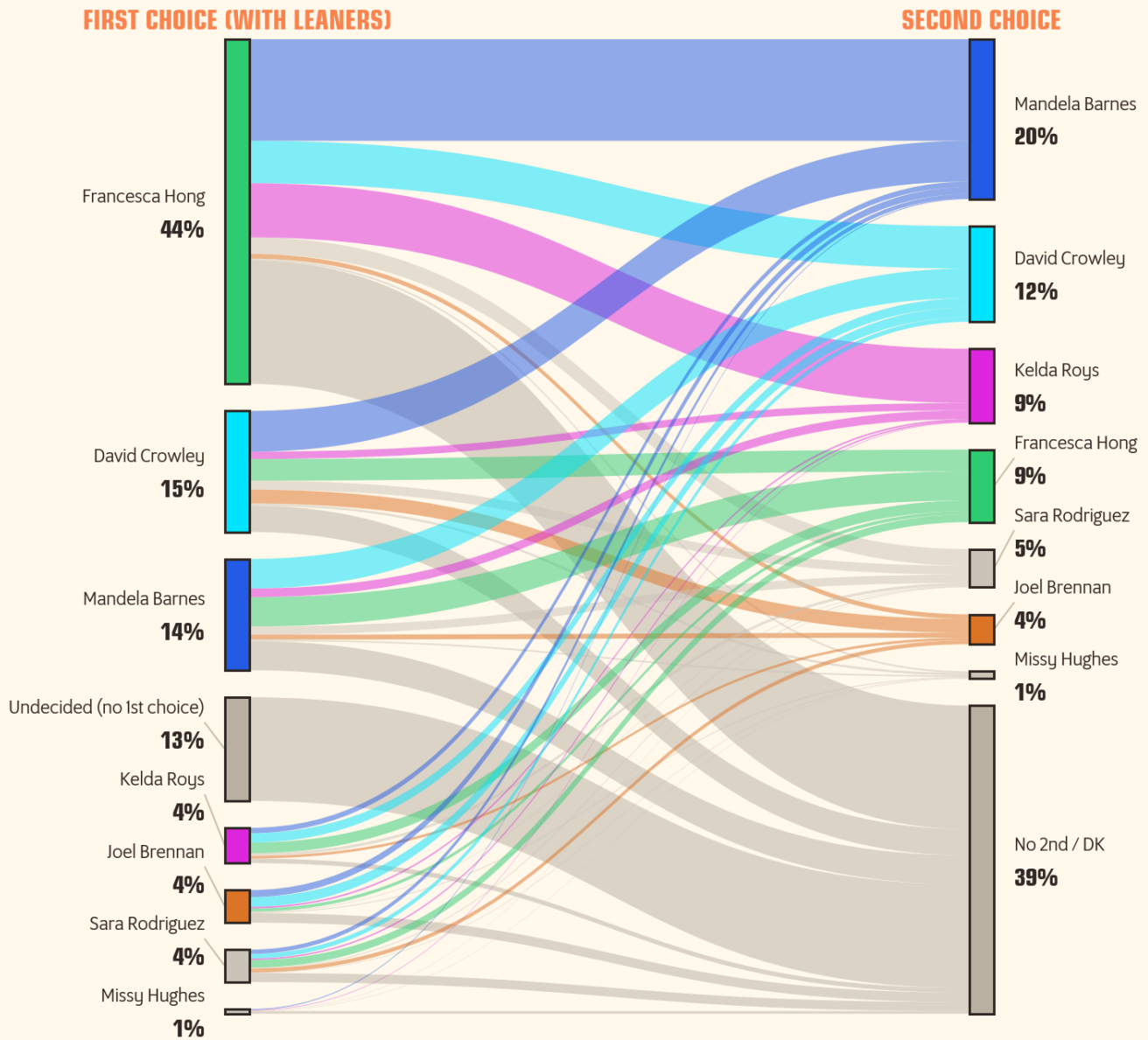
AMONG BARNES VOTERS



Barnes is the field's second-choice magnet. He is the top backup for Crowley voters (34%), while Barnes' own voters split toward David Crowley (27%) and Francesca Hong (26%) - pointing to Barnes as the likeliest consolidation point if the field narrows.

WHERE SECOND CHOICES GO

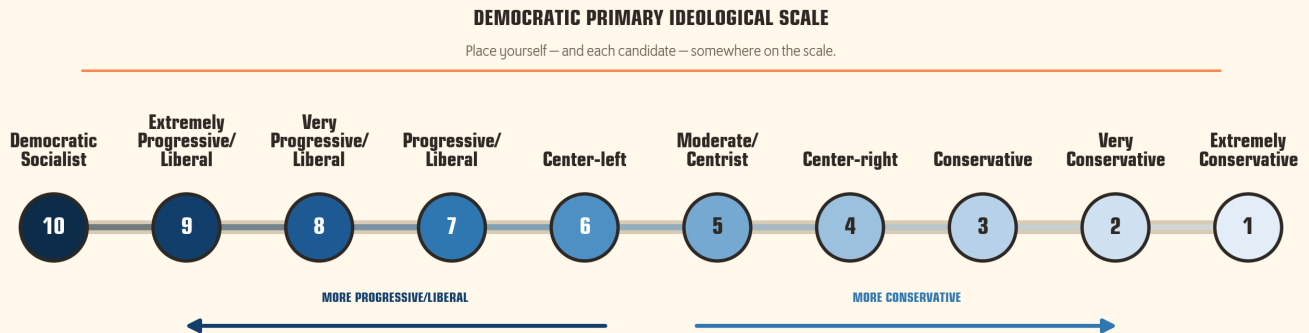
How first-choice support (after leaners) flows to each voter's second choice. Ribbons are colored by the second-choice candidate; voters with no first choice (after leaners) flow into the undecided pool.



Barnes is the biggest magnet for second choices (20%), pulling from Hong, Crowley and Roys voters alike, while Hong's large base disproportionately feeds the 'No 2nd / DK' pool - a sign her support is the most locked-in.

WHERE THE FIELD SITS - IDEOLOGY SCALE

WHAT VOTERS SAW

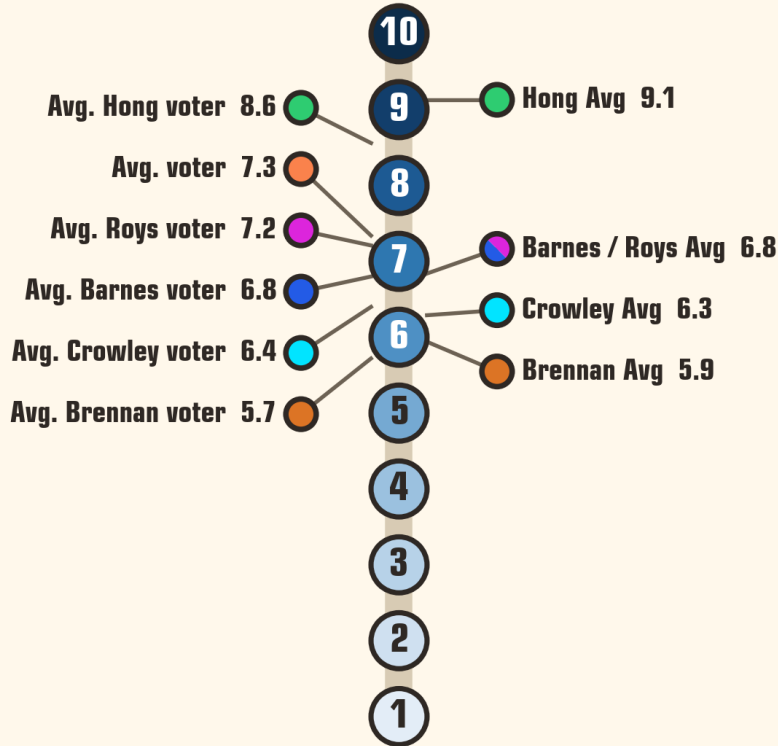


VOTER & CANDIDATE PLACEMENTS - AVERAGE (AMONG THOSE WHO ANSWERED)

Candidate's Average Voter

Survey Candidate Placement

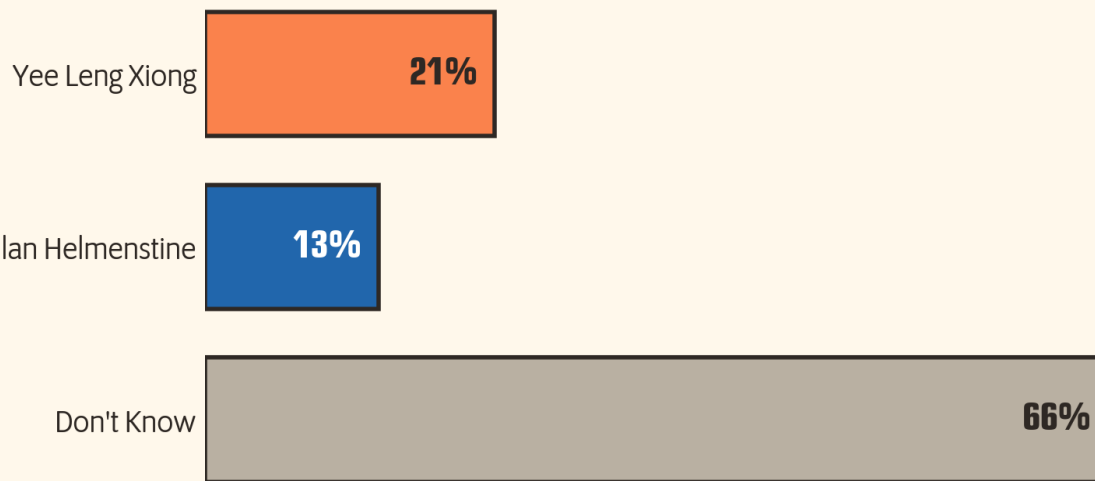
10 = MOST PROGRESSIVE



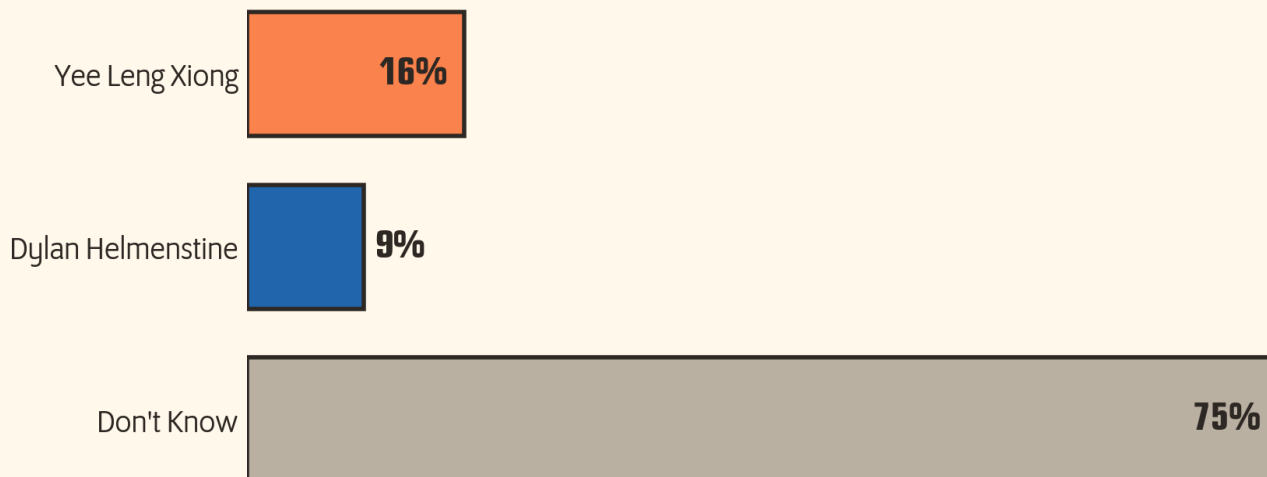
1 = MOST CONSERVATIVE

THE SNAPSHOT - TREASURER PRIMARY

THE HORSERACE - WITH LEANERS



BEFORE PUSHING UNDECIDEDS



11% OF THE BALLOT IS ALREADY IN

Among likely voters who had already cast their ballot:

YEE LENG XIONG

42%

DYLAN HELMENSTINE

21%

DON'T REMEMBER

38%

[illegible]

Issue	Percentage
Electability / Beat Tiffany	12%
Anti-Trump / Partisanship	12%
Affordability	11%
Healthcare	9%
Candidate Qualities	9%
Economy	8%
Social Issues	8%
Education	8%
AI / Data Centers	8%
Election Integrity / Democracy	5%
Taxes	4%
Immigration / ICE	4%
Other Issues	21%

TEAM NOTES & ANALYSIS

The following analysis from the State Navigate polling team examines the shape of the Democratic primary field and the integrity of the respondent sample.

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE • ON EVERS' FOLLY

“Never correct your enemy when he is making a mistake.” – Napoleon Bonaparte

The re-entry of David Crowley into the race has almost certainly crowned Francesca Hong as the Democratic nominee. A plurality of Crowley's voters have Barnes as their backup choice, a signal that a plurality of the voters Crowley has earned thus far since re-entering the race have come from Barnes' camp. Hong has been cautious not to lean into left-wing narratives about “the establishment” trying to prevent her from becoming the nominee, a smart tactic given her ideological distance from the median voter in this primary. Barnes and Roys are the closest to the median voter in this primary, with Crowley deemed as a “center-left” democrat; as such, it's no surprise that Barnes voters' second choice is split between Crowley and Hong.

MICHAEL FOLEY • ON DUPLICATES TAKEN OUT

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

Overzealous campaigns 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 this survey, 56 duplicate responses were removed from the sample. Please don't do this!

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE • ON YOUTH TURNOUT & AGE GAPS

Hong's greatest strength is motivating Wisconsin's youngest voters.

Typically, getting voters 18-29 to answer your survey takes a lot of work: their response rates to our surveys have been consistently <1%. But much to our surprise, this group of voters response on par with the overall sample. Hong currently enjoys a massive 64-point lead with these voters, too. Conversely, Hong is struggling most with voters over the age of 65, which break down as Barnes 20% / Hong 17% / Crowley 17%. Young voters' engagement with our survey is a likely indicator of record youth turnout in this primary, making this a strength Hong will need to carry into the general election to offset an expected poor performance with Wisconsin's moderate middle.

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE • ON UNDECIDED VOTERS

Hong's almost certainly going to win. The real question: will Hong win a majority?

13% of voters are undecided, but Hong's going to do poorly with these voters: 83% are 45 or older; 49% are 65 or older. With Hong already at 45% in our survey, the only question that is left to answer, barring some sort of major shakeup in the race after our survey, is whether she gets a majority of the vote.

TEAM NOTES & ANALYSIS

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE · ON NEWLY REGISTERED VOTERS

Our poll was weighted by voter registration date - here's why.

Accounting for new voters in an electorate is just as important as determining which voters have actually voted in a primary before. It's a common mistake that can lead to polls missing in transient areas and missing electorates where you have an unusual number of first-time voters in the state. Given how Democratic primaries have shaken out in places like New York and Denver, we felt it was appropriate to make sure we didn't have a blind spot here. Our poll is weighted to where 10% of the primary electorate registered to vote in Wisconsin after 11/6/24; that's slightly higher than the average of 7.4%; this is because we've seen more of these voters turn out in Democratic primaries in 2026. Even if we were to change the weighting to the 7.4% average, however, the candidate percentages don't move when rounding to the nearest whole, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

MARY RADCLIFFE · ON DROPPING RESPONDENTS

Three strikes and you're out.

While our survey asks voters to provide demographic information, we also have demographic data available from the voter file to match against. For this survey, we checked 3 demographic characteristics against voter file data: age, race, and gender. There were 11 respondents where none of the stated demographics matched the voter file, and almost always in a way that the respondent probably thought would increase their weight in our survey – for example, 9 of these 11 respondents claimed to be nonbinary. Another 4 failed to match on 2 demographic characteristics and also gave suspicious answers to other questions in our survey – for example, one of these voters claimed to be a nonbinary Muslim Republican with a graduate degree making less than \$30,000/year. All 15 of these respondents were dropped from the sample. Five more were dropped from the survey for other reasons, such as claiming to have already voted early in person – which wasn't available at the time of fielding – or telling us they no longer live in Wisconsin. (Respondents who did not match on 2 demographic characteristics but whose responses did not otherwise appear suspicious were not dropped. The voter file contains errors, and most people are not liars.)

CHAZ NUTTYCOMBE · ON HONG'S TURNOUT RISK

Hong has a dominant lead but it's built very much on infrequent voters and a split between the other candidates.

Hong's share of the vote steadily declines the more primaries that a voter has participated in from 66% of no primary voters to 57% of 1 of 4 voters to 44% of 2 of 4 voters to 38% of 3 of 4 voters and finally, 29% of perfect 4 of 4 primary voters. If frequent voters line up behind one competitor (right now, 4 of 4 primary voters split 19% for Crowley and 18% for Barnes) and voter turnout is low, Hong could fall well short of her potential.

MARY RADCLIFFE · ON DROPPED-OUT CANDIDATES

Very few voters are choosing a candidate who left the race.

In a sign that most voters have heard the news about Sara Rodriguez and Missy Hughes having dropped out of the race, just 5% of voters say they plan to vote for one of these two candidates. Voters who have not yet voted who selected either Rodriguez or Hughes as their top choice were informed about their candidate having dropped out of the race, and asked to select an alternative, which barely moved the topline: if we reallocate these voters to their next choice, Hong remains at 44%, Crowley and Barnes each improve a point to 16% and 15%, respectively, with 14% undecided and 11% selecting a different candidate.

TEAM NOTES & ANALYSIS

MICHAEL FOLEY • ON AREA CODES

Area codes hint at the geography of Hong's support.

Respondents with cell phone area codes outside Wisconsin - most likely younger Wisconsin transplants - are the most likely to back Hong (55%), followed by those with Milwaukee-suburban 262 (51%) and Madison & SW 608 (47%) area codes. Crowley and Hong are tied at 33% in the 414, which theoretically mainly covers Milwaukee County, but cell phone area codes aren't always tied to county or area of current residence. Older residents, in particular, may still have 414 area codes from before the 414 was split in the late 1990s.

MICHAEL FOLEY • ON THE ISSUES

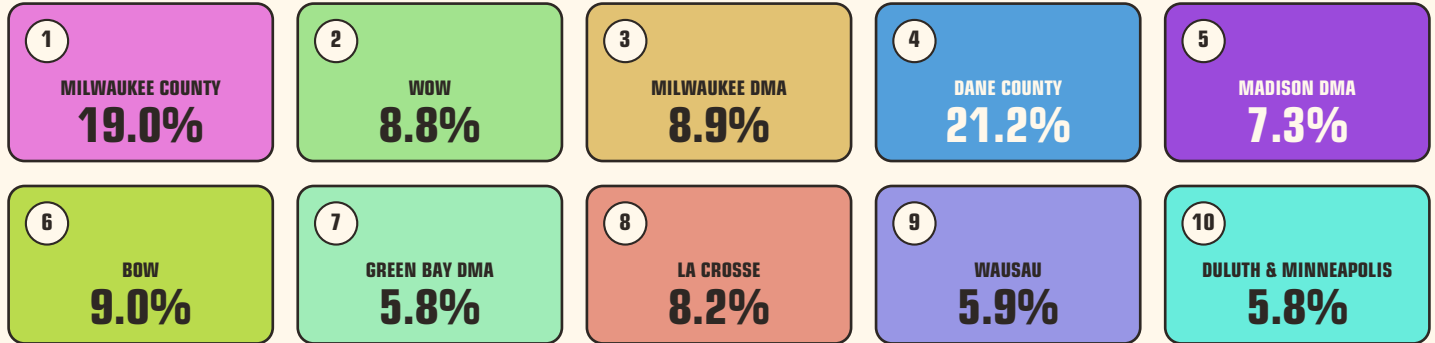
Hong leads on nearly every issue - Crowley only wins on electability.

We asked respondents an optional, open-ended question about the number one issue impacting their vote. We then organized the myriad of responses we received into 13 categories. Hong leads among voters in all categories except one - Electability/Beat Tiffany. Crowley leads among that cohort of 111 weighted voters with 35%. Hong dominates among voters whose top issue is AI/Data Centers (86% of 71), Social Issues (67% of 72) and Affordability (65% of 102). Note that because some people mentioned more than one issue, the weighted number of categorized responses is 1,273 - higher than the number of weighted respondents.

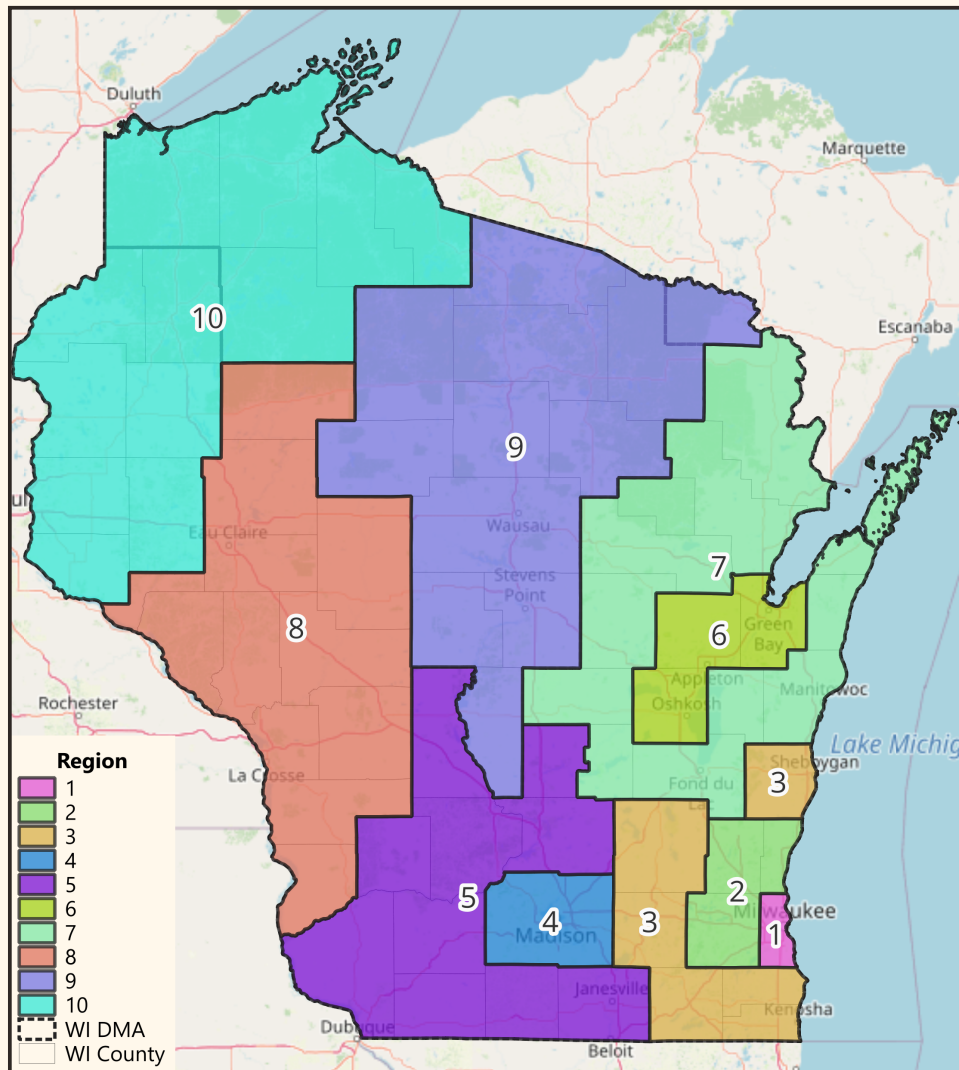
APPENDIX • REGIONS & WEIGHTS

State Navigate's ten Wisconsin analysis regions, numbered to match the map below. Cards show each region's share of the weighted likely-voter sample.

REGION WEIGHTS • SHARE OF WEIGHTED SAMPLE



WISCONSIN REGIONAL MAP





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 CAnalysis.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 topline, 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.

