UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NORTH DAKOTA
WESTERN DIVISION

NORTH DAKOTA REPUBLICAN PARTY; MATTHEW SIMON, in his capacity as Chairman of the North Dakota Republican Party; ND DISTRICT 2 REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE; ND DISTRICT 8 REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE; ND DISTRICT 14 REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE; ND DISTRICT 46 REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE; Plaintiffs, v. MICHAEL HOWE, in his official capacity as Secretary of State of the State of North Dakota, Defendant.	Civil Action No. _____ **DECLARATION OF DAVID JAY WOLFSON**

I, David Jay Wolfson, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, declare under penalty of perjury:

I. BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

1. I am over the age of eighteen and competent to make this declaration. The facts stated here are within my personal knowledge, and the opinions stated here are my own professional opinions, which I hold to a reasonable degree of professional certainty in the fields of survey research and voter behavior. If called as a witness, I could and would testify to them.

Exhibit 2

Document Ref: 5DNVD-JHFKN-HZXCQ-Q6EKO

2. I am a Lecturer in the Political Analytics Master's program in the School of Professional Studies at Columbia University, where I teach graduate students the methods used to measure and analyze voter behavior.

3. I am a pollster in the Unites States and globally. My work focuses on survey design, data analytics, and predictive modeling of voter behavior.

4. I have conducted hundreds of public opinion studies across the United States for candidates, campaigns, and committees. I also conducted the first known scientific social issues survey in Mainland China, and I contribute survey research to advocacy organizations and public policy initiatives.

5. Before my current roles, I worked as a political consultant in Florida for more than a decade. For many years, I also taught campaign management as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Florida.

6. I hold a Master of Business Administration from Michigan State University and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, San Diego.

7. I designed and directed the North Dakota Primary Exit Poll described below, and I authored the Public Polling Memorandum titled "Evidence of Crossover Voting in North Dakota Republican Primary Elections" (July 2026) (the "Memorandum"), which reports its results. This declaration supplements that Memorandum.

8. In forming the opinions in this declaration, I reviewed and relied on: (a) the North Dakota Primary Exit Poll toplines (June 2026) and the Memorandum; (b) the official results of the June 11, 2024 primary election, the November 5, 2024 general election, the November 8, 2022 general election, and the June 9, 2026 primary election, as published by the North Dakota Secretary of State; (c) *Idaho Republican Party v.*

Ysursa, 765 F. Supp. 2d 1266 (D. Idaho 2011); (d) the Moore Information memorandum "Survey Results: Idaho Primary Voters" (Jan. 14, 2010), filed in that case as Dkt. 61-6; (e) the report of the State of Idaho's experts in that case, Martin & Saunders Report, Exhibit E, "Understanding Party Identification, Crossover Voting, and Strategic Voting in the Idaho Context," filed as Dkt. 60-9; and (f) contemporaneous public news reporting about the 2022 and 2024 races for North Dakota's U.S. House seat.

II. SUMMARY OF OPINIONS

9. Based on my review of these materials and my professional experience, I hold the following opinions:

(a) Crossover voting occurred in North Dakota's June 2026 Republican primary at measurable levels, it was strategically motivated, and it was accompanied by widespread outreach encouraging voters to take the Republican ballot.

(b) The crossover figures the exit poll measured, including 11% of self-identified Democrat primary voters crossing over for strategic purposes and a 4.7-point gap between voters who normally take the Democratic-NPL ballot and those who took it in 2026, are minimums. Self-reported survey measures of strategic crossover voting systematically understate the true amount.

(c) The Idaho evidence considered in *Ysursa* shows the same pattern: a self-described crossover rate of about 12% sat alongside reported crossover in specific races of 30% to 39%.

(d) North Dakota's 2024 Republican primary for U.S. House is consistent with crossover participation at a level well above the exit poll's self-reported figures, in the range of approximately 20%.

(e) Even at the conservative 4.7% floor, crossover participation was large enough to determine the outcome of several Republican legislative primaries in both 2024 and 2026. At more realistic rates, it was large enough to determine the outcome of most of them.

III. THE 2026 NORTH DAKOTA PRIMARY EXIT POLL

10. North Dakota does not register voters by political party. Any eligible voter may choose either the Republican or the Democratic-NPL section of the primary ballot. As a result, voter registration records alone cannot identify crossover participation, and post-election voter surveys are one of the few available methods for directly measuring it.

11. Following reports from candidates, activists, volunteers, and voters that organized efforts were encouraging Democratic voters to participate in Republican legislative primaries, I conducted a post-election exit poll of the June 2026 North Dakota primary. The poll interviewed 306 verified North Dakota voters who reported voting in that primary. Interviews were conducted immediately after the election using standard MMS/Text-to-Web survey methodology from a random sample of North Dakota primary voters. The survey carries an approximate 95% confidence level with a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

12. Respondents were asked which primary ballot they selected, which ballot they normally vote, why they chose the Republican ballot, whether anyone encouraged

them to vote the Republican ballot, the party they most closely identify with, and district-specific questions about contested Republican legislative races.

13. The poll asked both a behavioral question (which ballot the respondent normally votes) and the standard attitudinal question of party identification ("Generally speaking, which political party do you most closely identify with?"). In *Ysursa*, the State's experts criticized the Idaho survey for asking only a behavioral question and not the standard party-identification question. Martin & Saunders Report, Ex. E, at 1, 4–5, Dkt. 60-9. The North Dakota poll asked both, which allows crossover to be measured under either definition.

14. The poll produced the following principal findings:

(a) **Strategic crossover.** 11% of self-identified Democrat primary voters reported casting their ballot on the Republican side for strategic voting purposes.

(b) **Ballot choice compared to usual ballot.** Two-thirds (66.7%) of respondents voted the Republican ballot, and one-third (33.3%) voted the Democratic-NPL ballot. Yet 38% reported that they *normally* vote the Democratic-NPL ballot. The 4.7-point gap means that, at a minimum, 4.7% of all respondents normally vote the Democratic-NPL ballot but took the Republican ballot in 2026. That equals roughly one in eight (about 12%) of respondents who normally vote the Democratic-NPL ballot.

(c) **Party identification compared to ballot choice.** Only 48.2% of respondents identify most closely with the Republican Party, while 26.3% identify as Democratic-NPL or Democrat and 24.7% as Independent.

Because 204 respondents took the Republican ballot and only 148 identify as Republicans, at least 56 Republican-ballot respondents, or 27.5% of them, do not identify as Republicans, even if every Republican identifier took the Republican ballot.

(d) **Motivation.** Among respondents who voted the Republican ballot, the largest share, 53.5%, said their primary reason was "to play a role in the outcome of a Republican primary race." By comparison, 33.5% voted primarily to support a particular Republican candidate and 12.9% voted primarily to oppose one.

(e) **Encouragement.** Nearly half of all respondents (45.9%) reported that, in the 30 days before the election, someone contacted them and encouraged them to vote on the Republican side of the ballot rather than the Democratic-NPL side.

(f) **Breadth.** Respondents in the district-specific questions were drawn from eleven legislative districts with contested Republican primaries: Districts 3, 7, 13, 15, 23, 25, 31, 33, 39, 42, and 43.

15. In my professional opinion, these results show that crossover participation in the 2026 Republican primary was not isolated. It occurred across many regions of the State, it was encouraged by organized outreach, and influencing the outcome of Republican nomination contests was a principal motivation for it.

IV. THE POLL'S CROSSOVER FIGURES ARE A FLOOR, NOT A CEILING

16. Surveys measure what respondents are willing to report. A well-documented source of error in survey research is social desirability bias, meaning that

respondents tend to underreport behavior they perceive as improper, embarrassing, or contrary to social norms, and to overreport behavior they perceive as civic-minded.

17. Entering another party's primary to influence the choice of that party's nominee, and especially doing so to help nominate a weaker or less faithful candidate, is behavior that many voters regard as improper. In my professional opinion, most voters who engage in it will not readily admit it to a pollster. Some will choose a more socially acceptable answer, such as that they voted to support a particular candidate. Others will decline to participate in the survey at all. Both effects push the measured rate of strategic crossover below the true rate.

18. The poll's structure reinforces this downward pressure. A voter who has crossed over into the Republican primary in several consecutive elections may now honestly answer that he or she "normally" votes the Republican ballot. That habitual crossover voter is then counted as a usual Republican-ballot voter and does not appear in the 4.7-point gap at all. The data show this group is substantial: 62% of respondents said they normally vote the Republican ballot, but only 48.2% identify as Republicans. At least 13.8% of all respondents therefore normally take the Republican ballot without identifying with the Republican Party.

19. The "encouragement to crossover" finding also matters to how much weight the crossover figures deserve. The State's experts in *Ysursa* relied on research concluding that strategic crossover voting is usually rare because it "requires a great deal of voter coordination," and that "[o]nly when political elites, the mass media, or candidate campaigns provide these coordination cues will there be high levels of strategic voting and will this strategic voting sway the election outcome." Martin &

Saunders Report, Ex. E, at 13, Dkt. 60-9 (quoting Alvarez & Nagler (2002), at 121). The North Dakota poll found exactly that kind of coordination: 45.9% of respondents reported being contacted and encouraged to take the Republican ballot. In my professional opinion, the conditions that the literature identifies as producing high levels of outcome-changing strategic crossover were present in North Dakota in 2026.

20. For these reasons, in my professional opinion, the 11% and 4.7% figures should be understood as minimum estimates. The true level of crossover participation in the 2026 Republican primary was likely substantially higher.

V. THE IDAHO EXPERIENCE IN *YSURSA*

21. The Idaho evidence considered in *Ysursa* illustrates the same gap between how voters describe their habits and how they actually vote. In the Moore Information survey of 400 Idaho voters who cast a ballot in the 2008 primary, only 12% of non-Republican voters said they usually vote for Republicans in primary elections. Moore Information, Survey Results: Idaho Primary Voters, at 1–2 (Jan. 14, 2010), Dkt. 61-6. Yet when the same voters were asked about specific races, 30% of non-Republican voters reported voting for one of the two Republican candidates in the 2008 presidential primary, 35% reported voting for the Republican candidate in the 2008 U.S. Senate primary, and 39% of those who usually vote for Democrats reported having voted in a Republican primary for a state legislative candidate. *Id.* at 1, 3.

22. In other words, the self-described crossover rate of 12% understated the reported crossover in specific races by a factor of roughly two and a half to three. In my professional opinion, the same dynamic is present in North Dakota, where the exit poll's

self-reported strategic crossover figures are similarly likely to understate actual crossover behavior.

23. The court in *Ysursa* reached its conclusions without needing to rely on the Republican Party's experts, because the State's own experts "provide[d] the Court with clear evidence of crossover voting." 765 F. Supp. 2d at 1273. Those experts reported that the average rate of crossover voting in the academic literature is around 10% under a strict definition limited to voters who identify with the opposing party, and testified that the rate is more likely 20% to 30% if independent voters are included. *Id.* at 1274. The court held that "even if the more strict definition of crossover voting is considered, and independent voters are not included, the number is still significant," and that "an even smaller number of crossover voting would cause constitutional concerns." *Id.* It concluded that "even if we use the most conservative estimate of 10% crossover voting, with only a small number of partisan raiders, the effects can be devastating to a party." *Id.* at 1275.

24. The North Dakota measurements fall within the range the *Ysursa* court considered. The strict, self-reported figures (11% of Democrat identifiers) are comparable to the 10% to 12% strict figures in Idaho. The broader measure, the share of Republican-ballot respondents who do not identify as Republicans (at least 27.5%), falls within the 20% to 30% range the State's experts in *Ysursa* described when independents are included.

25. North Dakota also shares the feature the *Ysursa* court and the State's experts identified as driving crossover: the dominant party's primary is often "the only game in town." *Id.* at 1273. In North Dakota's June 2024 primary, 15 Republican

legislative contests had more candidates than seats, and no Democratic-NPL legislative contest did. In the June 2026 primary, 16 Republican legislative contests were contested, compared with one Democratic-NPL contest. In the 2024 general election, the Republican nominee for U.S. House received 69.24% of the vote. In my professional opinion, where the Republican primary is frequently the decisive election, voters who do not identify as Republicans have a strong incentive to participate in it.

VI. THE 2024 REPUBLICAN PRIMARY FOR U.S. HOUSE

26. North Dakota's June 11, 2024 Republican primary for its at-large U.S. House seat provides independent, real-world evidence of crossover participation that does not depend on what voters were willing to tell a pollster. The official results were:

2024 Republican Primary, Representative in Congress

Candidate	Votes	Percent
Julie Fedorchak	43,424	45.93%
Rick Becker	27,965	29.58%
Cara Mund	18,460	19.52%
Alexander C. Balazs	3,788	4.01%
Sharlet Mohr	800	0.85%
Write-in	109	0.12%
Total	**94,546**	

Source: N.D. Sec'y of State, Official 2024 Primary Election Results (June 11, 2024).

27. Cara Mund's candidacy is a useful marker of non-Republican participation. In 2022, Ms. Mund ran for the same seat as a pro-choice independent. After she entered the race, the endorsed Democratic-NPL candidate, Mark Haugen, suspended his campaign, and no Democratic-NPL nominee appeared on the November ballot. *Mark Haugen, endorsed Democratic-NPL U.S. House candidate, suspends campaign*, KFYR-TV (Sept. 4, 2022). In the November 2022 general election, Ms. Mund received 89,644 votes (37.57%) against the Republican nominee. N.D. Sec'y of State, Official

2022 General Election Results. In 2024, Ms. Mund ran again, this time in the Republican primary, saying she was "running as a Republican this time, not an independent." Associated Press (Apr. 8, 2024). Abortion rights had been a major part of her 2022 campaign. *Id.*

28. In my professional opinion, the votes for Fedorchak, Becker, Balazs, and Mohr can reasonably be treated as reflecting the preferences of Republican primary voters, while Ms. Mund's support is best understood as drawn in substantial part from voters who do not ordinarily identify with the Republican Party, including voters who supported her as the non-Republican alternative in 2022. On that view, crossover participation in the 2024 U.S. House Republican primary approached 19.5% of the vote.

29. Turnout data in the same election support this conclusion. In 2024, 94,546 votes were cast in the Republican primary for U.S. House, equal to 38.0% of the 249,101 votes the Republican nominee received in the November general election. Only 19,205 votes were cast in the Democratic-NPL primary for U.S. House, equal to 17.6% of the 109,231 votes the Democratic-NPL nominee received in November. N.D. Sec'y of State, Official 2024 Primary and General Election Results. Had Democratic-NPL general-election voters participated in their own party's primary at the same rate as Republican general-election voters, the Democratic-NPL primary would have drawn roughly 41,500 votes, about 22,000 more than it did. That shortfall is of the same magnitude as the 18,460 votes Ms. Mund received in the Republican primary, and her total nearly equals the entire 19,205-vote Democratic-NPL primary for the same office.

30. I recognize that primary turnout can vary for reasons other than crossover, including how competitive each party's primary is. But a competitive Republican primary

drawing voters away from an uncompetitive Democratic-NPL primary is itself the mechanism of crossover voting that the *Ysursa* court and the literature describe. In my professional opinion, the 2024 U.S. House primary shows crossover participation in North Dakota at a level near 20%, well above the self-reported figures in the 2026 exit poll and consistent with my opinion that those figures are a floor.

VII. CROSSOVER AT THESE LEVELS CAN DETERMINE CLOSE REPUBLICAN LEGISLATIVE PRIMARIES

31. To evaluate whether crossover participation of this size can affect outcomes, I compared the official margins in contested Republican legislative primaries in 2024 and 2026 with an estimate of the number of crossover voters in each contest. I first applied the most conservative figure, 4.7%.

32. For Senate contests and one-seat House contests, where each voter casts one vote, I calculated crossover voters as 4.7% of total votes cast for the named candidates. For two-seat House contests, where each voter may cast up to two votes, I estimated the number of voters as total votes divided by two and calculated crossover voters as 4.7% of that number. Because some voters cast only one House vote, this understates the number of voters and is therefore conservative. I then compared each candidate's "margin to the nomination line" (a winning candidate's lead over the top losing candidate, or a losing candidate's deficit to the last candidate who won a seat) with the estimated number of crossover voters. Write-in votes are excluded.

33. Even at 4.7%, the estimated crossover vote exceeded the margin to the nomination line for the candidates shown below. In those contests, crossover voters acting together for the winning candidate were numerous enough to have determined who received the Republican nomination.

2026 Republican Legislative Primaries: Candidates Within the 4.7% Crossover Margin

District	Office (Seats)	Crossover Voters (4.7%)	Candidate	Result	Votes	Margin to Nomination Line
LD 3	House (2)	63	DesLauriers	Won	706	+43
			Mihalick	Won	686	+23
			Hoverson	Lost	663	−23
LD 15	Senate (1)	147	Kenner	Won	1,242	+42
			Weston	Lost	1,200	−42
LD 42	House, unexpired term (1)	22	C. Osowski	Won	214	+17
			McNally	Lost	197	−17

2024 Republican Legislative Primaries: Candidates Within the 4.7% Crossover Margin

District	Office (Seats)	Crossover Voters (4.7%)	Candidate	Result	Votes	Margin to Nomination Line
LD 2	House (2)	103	Longmuir	Won	1,254	+104*
			Althoff	Lost	1,150	−104*
LD 8	House (2)	140	Berg	Won	1,671	+85
			S. Olson	Won	1,620	+34
			Prichard	Lost	1,586	−34
LD 14	House (2)	181	Nelson	Won	2,004	+147
			Steidl	Lost	1,857	−147
LD 26	House (2)	82	Maki	Won	1,110	+13
			Timmons	Lost	1,097	−13
LD 42	House (2)	24	O'Brien	Won	301	+11
			Hanson	Lost	290	−11

* In LD 2, Longmuir's 104-vote margin over Althoff is one vote larger than the estimated 103 crossover voters (4.7% × 2,195 estimated voters = 103.2). LD 2 is included because the margin falls within one vote of the crossover estimate. The estimate assumes every LD 2 voter cast both House votes; if even about 20 voters cast only one House vote, the estimated crossover would exceed Longmuir's margin.

Source for both tables: N.D. Sec'y of State, Official 2024 and 2026 Primary Election Results.

34. Because the 4.7% figure is a floor, I repeated the same analysis using a 19.5% crossover rate, the share Ms. Mund received in the 2024 Republican primary for U.S. House (see Part VI). At that rate, crossover voters exceed the margin to the

nomination line in 12 of the 16 contested Republican legislative primaries in 2026 and in 9 of the 15 in 2024, as shown below.

2026 Republican Legislative Primaries: Candidates Within the 19.5% Crossover Margin

District	Office (Seats)	Crossover Voters (19.5%)	Candidate	Result	Votes	Margin to Nomination Line
LD 3	House (2)	261	DesLauriers	Won	706	+43
			Mihalick	Won	686	+23
			Hoverson	Lost	663	−23
			Hendrickson	Lost	622	−64
LD 7	Senate (1)	518	Axtman	Won	1,539	+420
			Hopfauf	Lost	1,119	−420
LD 7	House (2)	498	Vetter	Won	1,608	+457
			Sauter	Won	1,433	+282
			R. Becker	Lost	1,151	−282
LD 13	Senate (1)	296	Lee	Won	865	+210
			Sallberg	Lost	655	−210
LD 15	Senate (1)	609	Kenner	Won	1,242	+42
			Weston	Lost	1,200	−42
			Estenson	Lost	683	−559
LD 15	House (2)	484	C. Kenner	Won	1,680	+336
			Henderson	Lost	1,344	−336
LD 25	House (2)	306	Skroch	Won	1,001	+274
			Evans	Lost	727	−274
LD 31	Senate (1)	459	Schaible	Won	1,233	+114
			Graner	Lost	1,119	−114
LD 31	House (2)	421	Holle	Won	1,269	+284
			Rohr	Won	1,159	+174
			Schmidt	Lost	985	−174
			Remington	Lost	902	−257
LD 33	House (2)	665	Heger	Won	2,075	+196
			Tveit	Lost	1,879	−196
LD 39	House (2)	492	Schatz	Won	1,881	+460
			Kempenich	Won	1,744	+323
			Dodge	Lost	1,421	−323
LD 42	House, unexpired term (1)	91	C. Osowski	Won	214	+17
			McNally	Lost	197	−17

2024 Republican Legislative Primaries: Candidates Within the 19.5% Crossover Margin

District	Office (Seats)	Crossover Voters (19.5%)	Candidate	Result	Votes	Margin to Nomination Line
LD 2	House (2)	428	B. Anderson	Won	1,275	+125
			Longmuir	Won	1,254	+104
			Althoff	Lost	1,150	−104
LD 6	House (2)	682	D. Anderson	Won	2,034	+501
			Vollmer	Won	1,991	+458
			Bachmeier	Lost	1,533	−458
			Kramer	Lost	1,436	−555
LD 8	House (2)	580	Berg	Won	1,671	+85
			S. Olson	Won	1,620	+34
			Prichard	Lost	1,586	−34
			Rensch	Lost	1,069	−551
LD 14	Senate (1)	830	Klein	Won	2,532	+809
			Grothe	Lost	1,723	−809
LD 14	House (2)	752	Weisz	Won	2,215	+358
			Nelson	Won	2,004	+147
			Steidl	Lost	1,857	−147
			Danduran	Lost	1,639	−365
LD 26	House (2)	340	J. Olson	Won	1,280	+183
			Maki	Won	1,110	+13
			Timmons	Lost	1,097	−13
LD 38	House (2)	319	Wolff	Won	1,020	+175
			L. Olson	Lost	845	−175
LD 42	Senate (1)	126	Cory	Won	360	+75
			McNally	Lost	285	−75
LD 42	House (2)	99	O’Brien	Won	301	+11
			Hanson	Lost	290	−11

Note: Crossover voters are estimated at 19.5% of the voters in each contest, using the same method described in paragraph 34. *Source:* N.D. Sec’y of State, Official 2024 and 2026 Primary Election Results.

35. In several contests, more than one candidate fell within the crossover margin. At 4.7%, three of the four candidates in 2026 House District 3 and all three leading candidates in 2024 House District 8 did. At 19.5%, every candidate in 2026

House Districts 3 and 31 and Senate District 15, and in 2024 House Districts 6, 8, and 14, falls within the margin, meaning crossover voters could have determined the nominees from the entire field.

36. This analysis shows that crossover participation of the size measured is large enough to determine these outcomes. The poll cannot establish which candidate crossover voters supported in each individual district. But the question for the Republican Party is not whether crossover voters decided any particular race. In these contests, the margins were too narrow to rule out that voters outside the Party chose the Party's nominee, regardless of which candidate prevailed.

VIII. CONCLUSION

37. Based on my professional experience and the evidence described above, it is my opinion that North Dakota's open primary system allows substantial numbers of voters who do not identify with the Republican Party, including self-identified Democrats, to participate in selecting the Republican Party's nominees. In 2026, that participation was measurable, strategically motivated, and encouraged by widespread outreach.

38. It is further my opinion that the exit poll's self-reported crossover figures are minimums, that actual crossover participation is likely substantially higher and, as the 2024 U.S. House primary indicates, may approach 20% of the Republican primary vote, and that crossover at these levels is large enough to determine the outcome of close Republican legislative primaries.

39. Because North Dakota does not register voters by party and the primary ballot choice is made in private, the Republican Party has no means under the current system to identify these voters or to exclude them from its nomination process.

40. I reserve the right to supplement or revise these opinions if additional information becomes available.

41. I declare under penalty of perjury, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed in Los Angeles, CA, on November 23, 2026.

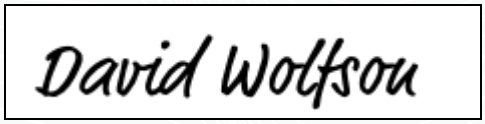
David Wolfson

David Jay Wolfson
Lecturer, Political Analytics, Columbia University
Pollster

CERTIFICATE *of* SIGNATURE

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RECIPIENT VERIFICATION

EMAIL VERIFIED
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DAVID JAY WOLFSON

National Pollster

Faculty Lecturer, Columbia University – Political Analytics Graduate Program

July 2026

FROM: David Jay Wolfson

RE: Survey Results: North Dakota Primary Voters

Methodology

This memo contains results of a post-election exit poll conducted among 306 verified North Dakota voters who reported voting in the June 2026 primary election. Interviews were conducted post-election using standard MMS/Text-to-Web survey methodology from a random sample of North Dakota primary voters immediately following the election. The survey carries an approximate 95% confidence level with a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points, subject to normal sampling variation. Due to weighting and rounded calculations, not all responses may total exactly the sample size.

Summary

The results demonstrate measurable evidence of crossover voting in North Dakota's June 2026 Republican primary, and suggest that organized efforts to influence Republican primary outcomes were experienced by a substantial portion of the primary electorate surveyed.

- 11% of self-identified Democrat primary voters cast their ballot on the Republican ballot for strategic voting purposes
- Two-thirds (66.7%) of respondents voted on the Republican primary ballot, yet 38% say they normally vote on the Democratic-NPL ballot
- Nearly half (45.9%) of respondents say they were contacted in the past 30 days by someone encouraging them to vote on the Republican side of the ballot rather than the Democratic-NPL side
- A majority (53.5%) of Republican-ballot voters say their primary reason for choosing that ballot was to play a role in the outcome of a Republican primary race, rather than to support (33.5%) or oppose (12.9%) a particular Republican candidate

Finally, district-specific questions were fielded to voters in 11 contested Republican legislative districts, indicating that crossover participation occurred broadly across many regions of North Dakota rather than in a single district.

Background

North Dakota operates one of the nation's most open primary election systems. Because voters do not register by political party, an eligible voter may select either the Republican or Democratic-NPL ballot during a primary election. However, a voter may vote on only one party's ballot during that election.

The June 2026 North Dakota Republican legislative primaries generated widespread public discussion regarding whether self-identified Democrat voters were being encouraged to participate in Republican legislative nomination contests. Following reports from candidates, activists, volunteers, and voters of organized efforts encouraging Democratic voters to participate in Republican legislative primaries, this post-election exit poll was conducted to measure the extent of crossover voting in the Republican primary and to better understand voter motivations.

Ballot Choice

Although two-thirds of respondents reported voting on the Republican primary ballot, a substantial share reported that they normally participate on the Democratic-NPL side. 38% stated they normally vote on the Democratic-NPL ballot, demonstrating that crossover participation was significant across the board, rather than isolated incidences.

Ballot Choice

"Which side of the North Dakota primary ballot did you vote on?"

	Count	All Voters
Republican primary ballot	204	66.7%
Democratic-NPL primary ballot	102	33.3%

Usual Primary Ballot

"When voting in primary elections, which ballot do you normally vote on?"

	Count	All Voters
I normally vote on the Republican ballot.	190	62%
I normally vote on the Democratic-NPL ballot.	116	38%

Respondents' party identification shows the same pattern. Fewer than half of respondents (48.2%) identify most closely with the Republican Party, while 26.3% identify as Democratic-NPL/Democrat and 24.7% as Independent.

Party Identification

"Generally speaking, which political party do you most closely identify with?"

	Count	All Voters
Republican	148	48.2%
Democratic-NPL / Democrat	80	26.3%
Independent	76	24.7%
Minor party	2	0.8%

Primary Motivation

Respondents who voted on the Republican ballot were asked the primary reason they chose that ballot. The largest share, 53.5%, said their primary purpose was to play a role in the outcome of a Republican primary race. By comparison, 33.5% voted primarily to support a particular Republican candidate and 12.9% voted primarily to oppose a particular Republican candidate.

The fact that the largest category selected was influencing the outcome of the Republican primary, rather than supporting or opposing a preferred candidate, suggests strategic vote participation was an important motivation for many crossover primary voters.

Primary Reason for Choosing the Republican Ballot

(Among those who voted on the Republican primary ballot)

	Count	Republican Ballot
To support a particular Republican candidate	68	33.5%
To oppose a particular Republican candidate	26	12.9%
To play a role in the outcome of a Republican primary race	109	53.5%

Voter Contact

One of the most significant findings concerns reported voter contact. Nearly half of respondents (45.9%) said they had been contacted during the previous 30 days by someone encouraging them to vote on the Republican side of the ballot rather than the Democratic-NPL ballot. Another 45.1% said they were not contacted, and 9.0% were not sure.

This suggests that organized voter outreach encouraging Republican-ballot participation was widespread during the election period.

Encouragement to Vote the Republican Ballot

"In the past 30 days, were you contacted by anyone encouraging you to vote on the Republican side of the primary ballot rather than the Democratic-NPL side?"

	Count	All Voters
Yes	140	45.9%
No	138	45.1%
Not Sure	28	9.0%

Strategic Voting Across Multiple Legislative Districts

District-specific ballot questions were fielded across numerous contested Republican legislative races, and respondents were drawn from 11 legislative districts (Districts 3, 7, 13, 15, 23, 25, 31, 33, 39, 42, and 43). The results demonstrate that voters were participating throughout multiple legislative districts, rather than in only a single geographic area or isolated legislative district. While the purpose of this memorandum is not to evaluate individual legislative contests, the district-level results demonstrate that crossover participation occurred broadly across the study area in many regions throughout North Dakota in the June Republican primary election. District-level results appear in the questionnaire that follows.

Context

Political scientists have long recognized strategic crossover voting as a potential feature of open primary systems, and election law scholarship has examined circumstances in which voters temporarily participate in another party's nomination process in an effort to influence candidate selection. North Dakota's election structure makes empirical measurement particularly valuable because voter registration records alone cannot identify crossover participation. Accordingly, post-election voter surveys provide one of the few available methods for directly measuring voter motivation and reported behavior.

Conclusions

This statewide post-election exit poll provides quantitative evidence that crossover voting occurred during the June 2026 North Dakota primary election. Several findings are particularly noteworthy:

- A substantial percentage of respondents (38%) normally vote on the Democratic-NPL ballot, and 11% of self-identified Democrat primary voters reported voting on the Republican primary ballot for strategic voting purposes
- Nearly one-half of respondents (45.9%) reported receiving encouragement to vote on the Republican ballot
- A majority of Republican-ballot respondents (53.5%) stated their primary purpose was influencing the outcome of Republican primary contests rather than simply supporting a preferred Republican candidate

These findings provide measurable evidence that crossover participation occurred, that many voters reported being encouraged to engage in such participation, and that influencing Republican nomination contests represented a principal motivation for many voters. The findings contribute objective empirical evidence to an issue that has largely been discussed through anecdotal accounts, and provide a factual basis for continued examination by policymakers, political parties, election administrators, researchers, and, where applicable, courts considering questions relating to North Dakota's primary election system.

About the Pollster

David Jay Wolfson is a national public opinion researcher and political strategist specializing in election research, public affairs polling, and voter behavior. He serves as a Faculty Lecturer in the Political Analytics Graduate Program at Columbia University. Mr. Wolfson has conducted hundreds of public opinion studies across the United States for candidates, campaigns, and committees. He completed the first scientific social issues survey in Mainland China, and he contributes survey research to advocacy organizations and public policy initiatives.

DAVID JAY WOLFSON

National Pollster

Faculty Lecturer, Columbia University – Political Analytics Graduate Program

NORTH DAKOTA PRIMARY VOTERS (N=306)

June 2026 · Survey Mode: MMS/Text to Web · 95% Confidence Level, ±5% Margin of Error

Due to weighting and rounded calculations, not all responses may total exactly the sample size.

Screening Questions

S1. Do you currently live in North Dakota?

	Count	Percent
Yes	306	100%
No	0	0%

S2. Are you eligible to vote in North Dakota?

	Count	Percent
Yes	306	100%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	0	0%

S3. Did you vote in Tuesday's North Dakota Primary Election?

	Count	Percent
Yes	306	100%
No	0	0%

S4. Which side of the North Dakota primary ballot did you vote on?

	Count	Percent
Republican primary ballot	204	66.7%
Democratic-NPL primary ballot	102	33.3%

S5. When voting in primary elections, which ballot do you normally vote on?

	Count	Percent
I normally vote on the Republican ballot.	190	62%
I normally vote on the Democratic-NPL ballot.	116	38%

S6. What is the primary reason you decided to vote on the Republican side of the ballot? (Shown when S4 was answered, 'Republican primary ballot'.)

	Count	Percent
To support a particular Republican candidate	68	33.5%
To oppose a particular Republican candidate	26	12.9%
To play a role in the outcome of a Republican primary race	109	53.5%

S7. In the past 30 days, were you contacted by anyone encouraging you to vote on the Republican side of the primary ballot rather than the Democratic-NPL side of the ballot? (All respondents)

	Count	Percent
Yes	140	45.9%
No	138	45.1%
Not Sure	28	9.0%

S8. Have you ever previously voted in a North Dakota Republican primary election?

	Count	Percent
Yes	227	74.1%
No	62	20.4%
Not Sure	17	5.5%

Subject Matter Questions

B1 and B2 series questions were fielded to district subsets as applicable. Question labels identify the legislative district and chamber (for example, B1.3.House refers to the District 3 House contest).

B1.3.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Jeff Hoverson	5	22.2%
Crystal Hendrickson	4	16.7%
Tim Mihalick	6	27.8%
Blaine DesLauriers	7	33.3%

B2.3.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	14	66.7%
Mostly oppose another candidate	7	33.3%

B1.7.Senate. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Jerri Hopfauf	28	67.6%
Michelle Axtman	13	32.4%

B2.7.Senate. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	22	52.9%
Mostly oppose another candidate	19	47.1%

B1.7.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Rick Becker	18	44.1%
Gaylynn Becker	6	14.7%
Greg Vetter	10	23.5%
Steven Sauter	7	17.6%

B2.7.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	31	76.5%
Mostly oppose another candidate	10	23.5%

B1.13.Senate. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Phil Sallberg	10	57.1%
Judy Lee	7	42.9%

B2.13.Senate. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	10	57.1%
Mostly oppose another candidate	7	42.9%

B1.13.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Everett Duckworth	5	28.6%
Russell Bubach	1	7.1%
Austen Schauer	7	42.9%
Jim Jonas	4	21.4%

B2.13.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	12	71.4%
Mostly oppose another candidate	5	28.6%

B1.15.Senate. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Kent Weston	10	44.4%
Kristen Kenner	11	50.0%
Judy Estenson	1	5.6%

B2.15.Senate. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	14	66.7%
Mostly oppose another candidate	7	33.3%

B1.15.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Donna Henderson	5	22.2%
Kathy Frelich	7	33.3%
Correy Kenner	10	44.4%

B2.15.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	17	77.8%
Mostly oppose another candidate	5	22.2%

B1.23.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Sharlet Mohr	1	33.3%
Dennis Nehring	1	33.3%
Corey Johnson	1	33.3%

B2.23.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	4	100%
Mostly oppose another candidate	0	0%

B1.25.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Matt Evans	0	0.0%
Kathy Skroch	7	46.2%
Terry Goerger	8	53.8%

B2.25.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	14	92.3%
Mostly oppose another candidate	1	7.7%

B1.31.Senate. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Mary Graner	13	73.3%
Don Schaible	5	26.7%

B2.31.Senate. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	12	66.7%
Mostly oppose another candidate	6	33.3%

B1.31.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Karen Rohr	6	33.3%
Dawson Holle	7	40.0%
Jim Schmidt	5	26.7%
Kevin Remington	0	0.0%

B2.31.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	17	93.3%
Mostly oppose another candidate	1	6.7%

B1.33.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Bill Tveit	6	19.2%
Mike Hager	11	34.6%
Anna Novak	14	46.2%

B2.33.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	28	88.5%
Mostly oppose another candidate	4	11.5%

B1.39.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Mike Schatz	8	58.3%
Keith Kempenich	5	33.3%
Jason Dodge	1	8.3%

B2.39.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	11	75%
Mostly oppose another candidate	4	25%

B1.42.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Connie Osowski	2	28.6%
Ethan Harsell	1	14.3%
Dustin McNally	5	57.1%

B2.42.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	7	85.7%
Mostly oppose another candidate	1	14.3%

B1.43.House. In this Republican primary election for State Legislature, for whom did you vote?

	Count	Percent
Jill Chandler	7	60%
Eric Murphy	1	10%
Mike Holmes	4	30%

B2.43.House. Was your vote primarily because you support that candidate or primarily because you oppose another candidate?

	Count	Percent
Mostly support that candidate	8	70%
Mostly oppose another candidate	4	30%

Demographic and Behavioral Questions

D1. Generally speaking, which political party do you most closely identify with?

	Count	Percent
Republican	148	48.2%
Democratic-NPL / Democrat	80	26.3%
Independent	76	24.7%
Minor party	2	0.8%

D2. Politically, would you describe yourself as?

	Count	Percent
Very conservative	74	24.3%
Somewhat conservative	67	22.0%
Moderate	101	32.9%
Progressive	42	13.7%
Liberal	22	7.1%

D3. Which of the following systems would you most prefer for future primary elections?

	Count	Percent
A system where voters receive one ballot containing both Republican and Democratic primary contests and choose which party's side of the ballot to vote on	122	40.0%
A system where voters request either a Republican or Democratic primary ballot before voting	24	7.8%
A system where voters declare a political party when they register and may only vote in that party's primary	19	6.3%
An open primary where all candidates appear on one ballot regardless of party	140	45.9%

Precoded Variables

Age. What is your age?

	Count	Percent
18-34	7	2.3%
35-54	60	19.8%
55-64	52	17.0%
65+	146	47.6%

Gender. What is your gender?

	Count	Percent
Male	145	48%
Female	154	51%
Other	3	1%

Ethnicity. What is your ethnicity?

	Count	Percent
Asian	4	1.2%
Black/African-American	1	0.4%
Hispanic	2	0.8%
Other	19	6.3%
White	280	91.4%

LD. Legislative District

	Count	Percent
3	26	8.6%
7	52	16.9%
13	35	11.4%
15	29	9.4%
23	4	1.2%
25	36	11.8%
31	22	7.1%
33	36	11.8%
39	24	7.8%
42	18	5.9%
43	25	8.2%