THE JUDY FORD
WASON
CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY
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Northam holds 6-point lead over Gillespie, 51%-45%, as independents and moderates break for Democrat

Summary of Key Findings

1. Democrat Ralph Northam shows a 6-point lead over Republican Ed Gillespie, 51% to 45%, dropping one point in the final tracking poll of likely voters in the Virginia governor's race.

2. Allocating undecided voters to reflect historical voting patterns in Wason Center surveys indicates a Northam victory on Tuesday, 51.3% to 46.8%.

3. Northam's lead is built on strong support in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, and among women, African-Americans and young voters. Northam and Gillespie are statistically tied in two traditionally reliable Republican segments, Southwest-Southside Virginia and voters 45 and older.

4. Independents and ideological moderates break significantly for Northam.

5. For lieutenant governor, Democrat Justin Fairfax leads Republican Jill Vogel, 50% to 45%, with a projected Election Day victory of 51.9% to 48.1%.

6. For attorney general, Democrat Mark Herring leads Republican John Adams, 49%-45%, with a projected Election Day victory of 51.1% to 48.9%.

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Analysis

As Virginia voters prepare to choose their next governor, Democratic Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam holds a 6-point lead over former Republican National Committee Chair Ed Gillespie, 51% to 45%, in the Wason Center's final tracking survey of likely voters. Libertarian Cliff Hyra takes 2% of the vote, with 2% undecided.

Historical voting patterns in Wason Center surveys in statewide Virginia elections show undecided voters breaking approximately 3 to 1 for the Republican candidate. Allocating the undecided voters in line with that pattern indicates Northam's Election Day vote to be 51.3% and Gillespie's to be 46.8%.

Northam's lead dropped one point since the October 27 tracking poll, though he has never trailed Gillespie since the benchmark poll released on September 25, as shown in the tracking chart and graphic on page 3.

In the lieutenant governor contest, Democrat Justin Fairfax, a former federal prosecutor, leads Republican state Senator Jill Vogel, 50% to 45%. Using the same formula to allocate the 5% of undecided voters indicates an Election Day vote favoring Fairfax over Vogel, 51.9% to 48.1%. Seeking a second term as attorney general, Democrat Mark Herring leads former federal prosecutor John Adams, 49% to 45%. Allocating the 6% of undecided voters indicates a vote favoring Herring, 51.1% to 48.9%.

Northam's lead is demographically and regionally broad. Perhaps most importantly, he leads among independents by 13 points (51% to 38%) and moderates by 29 points (62% to 33%). He holds significant leads among women, black voters, younger voters, voters with incomes below $50,000, and in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads. Gillespie leads among white voters and men, but the candidates are statistically tied among voters 45 and older and voters in Southwest-Southside, two normally Republican segments.

Likely voters are firmly in their partisan and ideological corners, with Northam getting 98% of Democratic and 91% of liberal votes and Gillespie taking 95% of Republican and 86% of conservative votes.

"While each candidate seems to have locked down his base, Northam appears to be winning the appeal to political independents and ideological moderates," said Quentin Kidd, director of the Wason Center.

"It's hard to see how Gillespie can make up this deficit when he has consistently trailed Northam among independents by more than 10 points," said Rachel Bitecofer, assistant director of the Wason Center. "To put it into perspective, in 2013 the Republican nominee led among independents but still ended up losing the election by 2.6 percent."

The telephone survey polled 839 likely voters, October 29-November 4, with an overall margin of error of +/- 3.5% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups. Likely voters are registered voters who voted in recent statewide elections, who say they are thinking about the upcoming election, are following news about the campaigns, and will definitely or probably vote in the upcoming election.
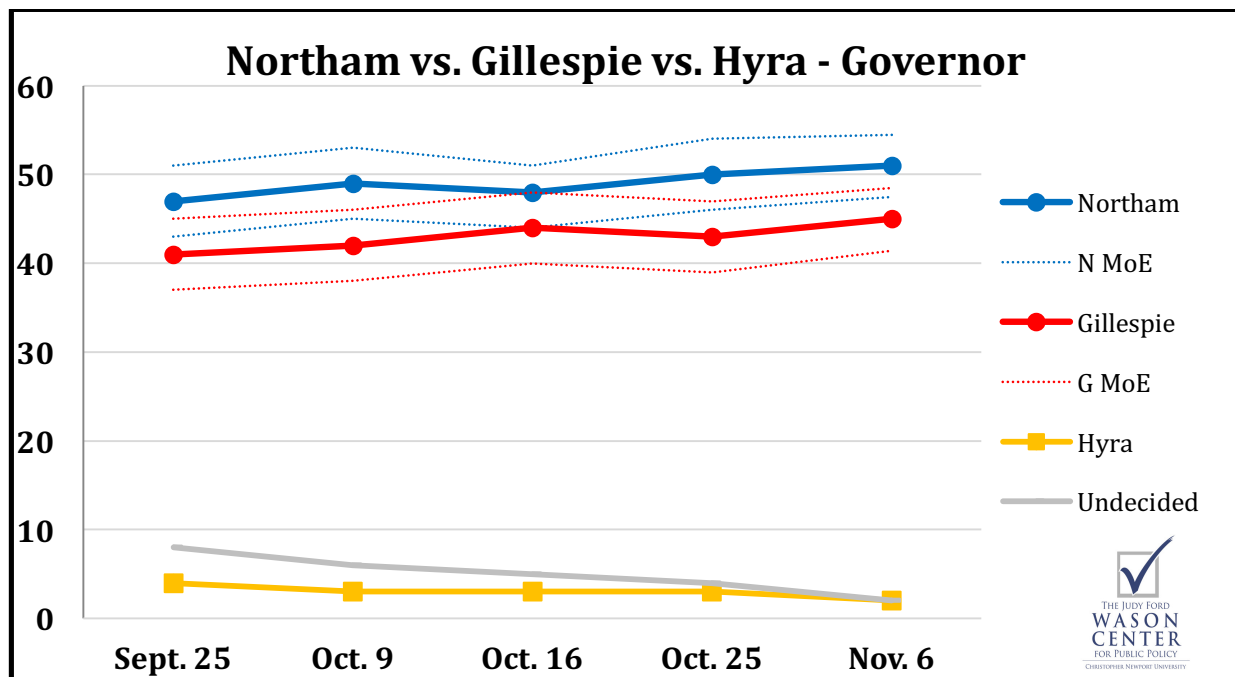
Q3: If the election for governor were being held today and the candidates were **[RANDOMIZE NAMES]** for whom would you vote? Which one are you leaning toward right now?

Q4: **[If undecided or refused]** Do you think by the time Election Day comes you might end up voting for either…

	9/25	10/9	10/17	10/27	**11/6**	**Projected Nov. 7 Vote***
Ed Gillespie	41	42	44	43	**45**	**46.8**
Ralph Northam	47	49	48	50	**51**	**51.3**
Cliff Hyra	4	3	3	3	**2**	**1.9**
Undecided/Dk/ Ref (vol)	8	6	5	4	**2**	

* Projected Nov. 7 vote allocates undecided voters to candidates based upon historical patterns in Wason Center polling that show undecided voters are 3 to 1 more likely to be Republican voters than Democratic voters on Election Day.

11/6	Male	Female	Black	White	18-44	45+	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	Lib	Mod	Cons	Dem	Ind	Rep	≤ $50K	> $50K
Ed Gillespie	51	39	7	55	39	48	42	46	40	49	6	33	86	2	38	95	35	46
Ralph Northam	44	58	91	41	56	49	51	50	57	48	91	62	12	98	51	3	64	49
Cliff Hyra	3	1	1	2	3	1	4	2	2	2	3	4	1	-	6	2	2	3
Undecided/Dk/ Ref (vol)	2	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	-	1	1	-	5	-	-	2

Northam vs. Gillespie vs. Hyra - Governor

Q5: If the election for lieutenant governor were being held today and the candidates were **[RANDOMIZE NAMES]** for whom would you vote? Which one are you leaning toward right now?

Q6: **[If undecided or refused]** Do you think by the time Election Day comes you might end up voting for either…

	9/25	10/9	10/27	**11/6**	**Projected Nov. 7 Vote***
Justin Fairfax	46	48	47	**50**	**51.9**
Jill Vogel	42	40	44	**45**	**48.1**
Undecided/Dk/ Ref (vol)	12	12	9	**5**	

* Projected Nov. 7 vote allocates undecided voters to candidates based upon historical patterns in Wason Center polling that show undecided voters are 3 to 1 more likely to be Republican voters than Democratic voters on Election Day.

11/6	Male	Female	Black	White	18-44	45+	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	Lib	Mod	Cons	Dem	Ind	Rep	≤ $50K	> $50K
Justin Fairfax	46	48	82	36	51	45	52	46	46	44	85	54	12	93	45	1	50	48
Jill Vogel	43	44	12	54	39	46	41	45	42	48	9	37	80	1	41	91	38	43
Undecided/Dk /Ref (vol)	11	8	6	10	10	9	7	9	12	8	6	9	8	6	14	8	12	9

Q7: If the election for attorney general were being held today and the candidates were **[RANDOMIZE NAMES]** for whom would you vote? Which one are you leaning toward right now?

Q8: **[If undecided or refused]** Do you think by the time Election Day comes you might end up voting for either…

	9/25	10/9	10/27	**11/6**	**Projected Nov. 7 Vote***
John Adams	42	40	44	**45**	**48.9**
Mark Herring	47	51	49	**49**	**51.1**
Undecided/Dk/ Ref (vol)	11	9	7	**6**	

* Projected Nov. 7 vote allocates undecided voters to candidates based upon historical patterns in Wason Center polling that show undecided voters are 3 to 1 more likely to be Republican voters than Democratic voters on Election Day.

10/27	Male	Female	Black	White	18-44	45+	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	Lib	Mod	Cons	Dem	Ind	Rep	≤ $50K	> $50K
John Adams	42	45	10	54	39	46	41	47	44	51	11	34	81	4	40	88	42	43
Mark Herring	50	49	83	39	52	48	54	47	46	42	86	59	13	93	47	6	49	50
Undecided/Dk /Ref (vol)	8	6	7	7	9	6	5	6	10	7	3	7	6	3	13	6	9	7

Demographics

EDUC:

High school or less	12
Some college	18
Vocational or technical training	3
College graduate	39
Graduate study or more	27
Dk/ref (vol)	1

RACE:

White	72
Black or African American	20
Other	8

HISPANIC:

Yes	3
No	97

MIL OR RETIRED MIL IN HOUSE:

Yes	27
No	73

AGE:

18-24	6
25-34	14
35-44	17
45-54	22
55 & older	42

PARTYID:

Republican	34
Democrat	36
Independent	28
No preference (vol)	1
Other party (vol)	<1
Dk/ref (vol)	<1

[IF OTHER THAN REP OR DEM ABOVE]

PARTLEAN:

Republican	34
Democratic	41
Independent	25

IDEOL:

Strong liberal	8
Liberal	13
Moderate, leaning liberal	23
Moderate, leaning conservative	17
Conservative	22
Strong Conservative	11
Dk/ref (vol)	6

INCOME:

Under $25,000	3
$25-$49,999	11
$50-$74,999	15
$75-$99,999	17
$100,000-$149,999	21
Over $150,000	19
Dk/ref (vol)	14

REGION (defined by DMA):

Northern Virginia	34
Richmond/Central	21
Hampton Roads	24
South/Southwest	21

SEX (interviewer coded):

Male	49
Female	51

How the survey was conducted:

The results of this poll are based on 839 interviews of likely Virginia voters in the upcoming November election (registered voters who have voted in recent statewide elections, who also say they are thinking about the upcoming election, are following news about the campaigns, and will definitely or probably vote in the upcoming elections), including 400 on landline and 439 on cell phone, conducted October 29 to November 4, 2017. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. The margin of error for the likely voter model is +/- 3.5% at the 95% level of confidence. **This means that if 50% of respondents indicate a topline view on an issue, we can be 95% confident that the population's view on that issue is somewhere between 46.5% and 53.5%.** The margin of error is higher for subgroups. All error margins have been adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, which is 1.1 in this survey. The design effect is a factor representing the survey's deviation from a simple random sample, and takes into account decreases in precision due to sample design and weighting procedures. Sub samples have a higher margin of error. In addition to sampling error, the other potential sources of error include non-response, question wording, and interviewer error. The response rate (AAPOR RRI Standard Definition) for the survey was 18%. Five callbacks were employed in the fielding process. Live calling was conducted by trained interviewers at the Wason Center for Public Policy Survey Research Lab at Christopher Newport University. The data reported here are weighted using an iterative weighting process on sex, age, race and region of residence to reflect as closely as possible the demographic composition of likely voters in the November 2017 Virginia elections.