



*March 29, 2017*

## ***Gillespie ties Northam, Perriello in fall matchup; both Democrats beat Republicans Wagner, Stewart***

### Summary of Key Findings

1. If the fall race for Virginia governor is between former Republican National Committee Chairman Ed Gillespie and current Democratic Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam, voters are split 40% to 39%.
2. If the election is between Gillespie and former Democratic congressman Tom Perriello, voters are split almost identically, 39% to 39%.
3. Ideological moderates are divided, while political independents favor Gillespie over either Democrat by an identical margin: 40% to 30%.
4. In a November matchup, both Northam and Perriello beat the other two Republicans seeking the nomination, Prince William County Supervisors Chair Corey Stewart and Virginia Beach state Senator Frank Wagner.
5. With all 100 House of Delegates seats up in November, Democrats lead Republicans in the generic ballot test, 48% to 41%.

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#### **For further information contact:**

**Dr. Quentin Kidd**, Director  
Wason Center for Public Policy

e-mail [qkidd@cnu.edu](mailto:qkidd@cnu.edu)

O: (757) 594-8499  
M: (757) 775-6932

**Dr. Rachel Bitecofer**, Assistant Director  
Wason Center for Public Policy

e-mail [rachel.bitecofer@cnu.edu](mailto:rachel.bitecofer@cnu.edu)

O: (757) 594-8997  
M: (541) 729-9824

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## Analysis

In an early look at the 2017 race for Virginia governor, both Democratic contenders are in a statistical dead heat with the leading Republican candidate. If the matchup in November is between current Democratic Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam and former Republican National Committee Chair Ed Gillespie, voters are split, 39% Northam and 40% Gillespie. Voters are almost identically divided if the matchup is between former Democratic congressman Tom Perriello and Gillespie, with each candidate receiving 39%.

Regardless of which Democrat is on the November ballot, the structure of the race looks similar against Gillespie, coming down to who will win the ideological moderate and politically independent vote and the vote-rich region of Northern Virginia.

Ideological moderates are divided fairly evenly, regardless of the Democratic candidate, with a strong third supporting either Northam or Perriello against a strong third for Gillespie. However, Gillespie holds a 10-point lead over either Northam or Perriello among political independents.

Regionally, Hampton Roads favors either Democrat over Gillespie, although Northam's advantage in his home region is 8 points greater than Perriello's. Gillespie leads both Democrats by more than 10 points in Richmond-Central Virginia and by 5 points or more in the South-Southwest region. However, in Northern Virginia everything is statistically tied between the three, with nearly a quarter of the vote still undecided.

Both Northam and Perriello beat the two other Republicans in head-to-head matchups. Northam beats Prince William County Supervisors Chair Corey Stewart 41% to 33% and state Senator Frank Wagner 40% to 34%. Perriello beats Stewart 40% to 34% and beats Wagner 38% to 35%.

In addition to electing a governor, voters will be electing all 100 members of the House of Delegates in November. Democrats lead Republicans in the generic House of Delegates ballot test, 48% to 41%.

The survey's margin of error is +/- 3.7% at the 95% level of confidence.

"We're a long way off from the fall election, but we can see some fundamentals taking shape," said Quentin Kidd, director of the Wason Center for Public Policy. "The partisans and the liberals and conservatives are settling into their opposing camps, and the ideological and political middle is in play."

"The middle seems evenly split at this point, but they're not necessarily the battleground," said Rachel Bitecofer, assistant director of the Wason Center. "The question may be whether the candidates try to gain an edge by persuading those voters or focus instead on mobilizing their base in a turnout election."

**Questions 1-15 released on March 28**

Q16: [ASK ALL] Ok, thanks. Now, if the election for governor were being held today and the candidates were [ROTATE: Ed Gillespie, the Republican or Ralph Northam, the Democrat], for whom would you vote?

	All	Male	Female	White	Black	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	18-44	45 +	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Gillespie	40	48	33	47	12	39	49	34	41	37	41	5	37	75	83	4	40
Northam	39	33	45	32	68	37	35	48	35	38	39	79	38	13	3	83	30
Someone else (vol)	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	1		3
Undecided/Dk/ref (vol)	19	18	20	18	19	22	15	18	21	23	18	15	23	10	13	13	27

Q17: [ASK ALL] If the election for governor were being held today and the candidates were [ROTATE: Ed Gillespie, the Republican or Tom Perriello, the Democrat], for whom would you vote?

	All	Male	Female	White	Black	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	18-44	45 +	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Gillespie	39	47	33	46	11	37	47	36	42	39	40	4	35	76	83	2	40
Perriello	39	33	44	33	65	39	36	42	37	37	39	75	39	13	2	83	30
Someone else (vol)	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1		1	3
Undecided/Dk/ref (vol)	20	18	22	19	22	23	16	20	18	22	19	20	24	10	14	14	27

Q18: [ASK ALL] If the election for governor were being held today and the candidates were [ROTATE: Corey Stewart, the Republican or Ralph Northam, the Democrat], for whom would you vote?

	All	Male	Female	White	Black	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	18-44	45 +	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Stewart	33	39	27	39	9	32	40	29	33	33	33	2	26	68	77	1	28
Northam	41	36	46	35	63	41	36	47	39	41	41	79	44	10	5	85	34
Someone else (vol)	2	2	2	2	1	2	3		2	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	3
Undecided/Dk/ref (vol)	24	23	26	23	27	25	21	24	25	25	24	18	29	19	18	13	35

Q19: [ASK ALL] If the election for governor were being held today and the candidates were [ROTATE: Corey Stewart, the Republican or Tom Perriello, the Democrat], for whom would you vote?

	All	Male	Female	White	Black	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	18-44	45 +	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Stewart	34	40	27	40	8	32	42	28	35	31	34	2	25	73	81	2	26
Perriello	40	35	45	35	61	40	35	43	41	40	40	75	42	11	2	83	35
Someone else (vol)	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	3		2	2	2	1		1	3
Undecided/Dk/ref (vol)	25	34	36	23	30	27	21	29	21	29	23	20	31	16	17	14	36

Q20: [ASK ALL] If the election for governor were being held today and the candidates were [ROTATE: Frank Wagner, the Republican or Ralph Northam, the Democrat], for whom would you vote?

	All	Male	Female	White	Black	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	18-44	45 +	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Wagner	34	40	28	40	10	33	38	32	35	31	35	4	28	66	77	3	28
Northam	40	34	45	34	62	38	37	46	37	40	39	77	42	11	4	81	33
Someone else (vol)	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	2		2	3	1	1	3
Undecided/Dk/ref (vol)	25	24	25	24	25	27	22	21	26	26	24	19	29	20	18	15	36

Q21: [ASK ALL] If the election for governor were being held today and the candidates were [ROTATE: Frank Wagner, the Republican or Tom Perriello, the Democrat], for whom would you vote?

	All	Male	Female	White	Black	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	18-44	45 +	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Wagner	35	42	28	42	9	34	42	32	34	32	36	4	29	69	80	3	29
Perriello	38	31	44	32	60	35	35	42	39	37	37	75	39	10	2	80	30
Someone else (vol)	2	3	2	2	4	2	3	1	3	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	3
Undecided/Dk/ref (vol)	25	25	26	24	27	29	20	25	24	28	25	20	30	18	17	15	38

Q22: In addition to the election for governor, there will also be elections for all 100 House of Delegates seats this year. Thinking about just the House of Delegates, if the election for the House of Delegates were held TODAY, would you vote for [RANDOMIZE: “the Republican Party’s candidate” or “the Democratic Party’s candidate”] for the House of Delegates in your district?

Republican	41
Democratic	48
Other/Undecided (vol)	2
Don’t know/refused (vol)	9

**Questions 23-27 and Questions 28-29 were released on March 28.**

### Demographics

EDUC:		IDEOL:	
High school or less	12	Strong liberal	6
Some college	19	Liberal	13
Vocational or technical training	2	Moderate, leaning liberal	24
College graduate	35	Moderate, leaning conservative	21
Graduate study or more	32	Conservative	19
		Strong Conservative	10
HISPANIC:		Dk/ref (vol)	6
Yes	4		
No	96	AGE:	
		18-24	9
RACE:		25-34	12
White	72	35-44	15
Black or African American	19	45-54	23
Other	9	55 & older	41
RELIG:		INCOME:	
Protestant	30	Under \$25,000	5
Christian (non-specific) (vol)	15	\$25-\$49,999	12
Catholic	16	\$50-\$74,999	15
Jewish	2	\$75-\$99,999	14
Other	15	\$100,000-\$149,999	19
None (vol)	18	Over \$150,000	24
Dk/ref (vol)	3	Dk/ref (vol)	11
PARTYID:		REGION:	
Republican	27	Northern Virginia	34
Democrat	30	Richmond/Central	21
Independent	39	Hampton Roads	24
No preference (vol)	2	South/Southwest	21
Other party (vol)	1		
Dk/ref (vol)	1	SEX:	
<b>[IF OTHER THAN REP OR DEM ABOVE]</b>		Male	49
PARTLEAN:		Female	51
Republican	36		
Democratic	38		
Independent	21		
Dk/ref (vol)	5		

**How the survey was conducted:**

The results of this poll are based on 831 interviews of registered Virginia voters, including 414 on landline and 417 on cell phone, conducted March 16-26, 2017. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. The margin of error for the whole survey is +/- 3.7 % 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 46.3% and 53.7%.** The margin of error is higher for subgroups. All error margins have been adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, which is 1.2 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 Virginia.