



*October 27, 2017*

## ***Northam hits 50%, gaining over Gillespie, 50%-43%; Democrats Fairfax and Herring also lead down-ticket***

### Summary of Key Findings

1. Democrat Ralph Northam hits the 50% mark, as latest Wason Center tracking poll shows a 7-point lead over Republican Ed Gillespie, 50% to 43%.
2. Northam leads among men and women, young and old, and among African-American voters. Gillespie leads among white voters.
3. Northam's lead is built on strong regional support in Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads and Richmond-Central Virginia. Southwest-Southside Virginia is Gillespie territory.
4. For lieutenant governor, Democrat Justin Fairfax leads Republican Jill Vogel, 47%-44%, but the race is tightening.
5. For attorney general, Democrat Mark Herring leads Republican John Adams, 49%-44%. This contest is also tightening

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## Analysis

In the closing weeks of the campaign to become Virginia's next governor, Democratic Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam has hit the 50% mark for the first time in Wason Center polling, leading former Republican National Committee Chair Ed Gillespie, 50% to 43% among likely voters. Libertarian Cliff Hyra polled at 3%, with 4% undecided.

In the lieutenant governor contest, Democrat Justin Fairfax, a former federal prosecutor, leads Republican state Senator Jill Vogel, 47% to 44%. Seeking a second term as attorney general, Democrat Mark Herring leads former federal prosecutor and White House aide John Adams, 49% to 44%. Both leads appear to be narrowing, however, as the Republicans gain and the Democrats decline in this survey.

This is the third poll in the Wason Center's 2017 tracking series. In the benchmark poll, released September 25, Northam's lead stood at 6% (47% to 41%), and it grew to 7% (49% to 42%) in the first tracking poll, released October 9, before narrowing to 4% (48% to 44%) in the second tracking poll, released October 17.

Northam's lead is demographically and regionally widespread. He leads among men and women, black voters, young and old voters, voters with incomes above and below \$50,000, and in Northern Virginia, Richmond-Central Virginia, and Hampton Roads. Gillespie leads among white voters overall and regionally in Southwest-Southside. Likely voters are firmly in their partisan and ideological corners, with Northam getting 96% of Democratic and 87% of Liberal votes and Gillespie taking 93% of Republican and 82% of Conservative votes. Independents break for Northam 48% to 35% and Moderates break for Northam 59% to 34%, results that may indicate a "Trump Effect" in Northam's favor.

As with Northam vs. Gillespie, the composition of the Democratic electorate compared to the Republican electorate gives Fairfax and Herring similar advantages, with both Democrats leading on the strength of support from Northern Virginia and among women, younger voters, and African-American voters.

"As we approach Election Day and the structure of the likely electorate becomes clearer, the advantage appears to be opening up for the Democratic ticket," said Rachel Bitecofer, assistant director of the Wason Center. "We're also seeing mounting evidence of a Trump effect at the top of the ticket."

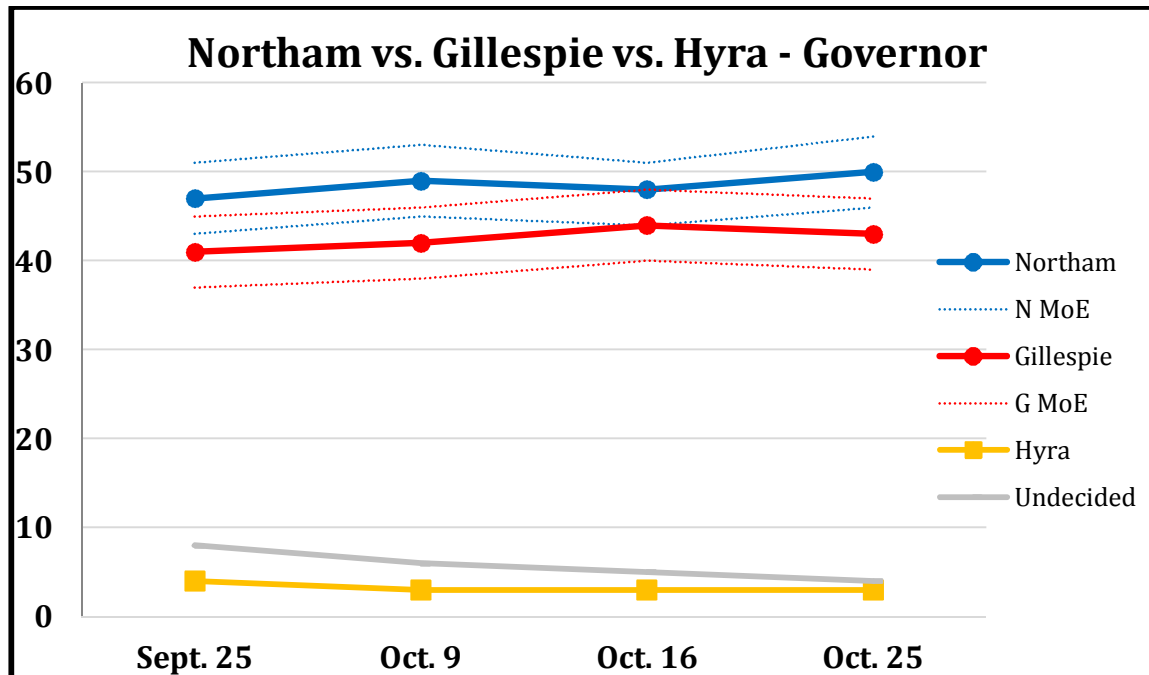
This tracking poll imposes the tightest screen yet in the Wason Center tracking series, approximating as closely as possible the November 7 electorate. It is based on interviews with 812 likely voters conducted October 20-25, and carries a margin of error of +/- 3.8% at the 95% level of confidence. To be considered a likely voter, registered Virginia voters had to have voted in at least two of the last four statewide elections or have been newly registered since March 2016 and voted in the 2016 presidential election. Additionally, participants had to indicate that they were thinking about the upcoming election, following news about the campaigns, and were certainly or probably going to vote in the upcoming election. This screening results in a projected turnout of approximately 44%, which fits the trend of recent Virginia gubernatorial elections.

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
Ed Gillespie	41	42	44	<b>43</b>
Ralph Northam	47	49	48	<b>50</b>
Cliff Hyra	4	3	3	<b>3</b>
Undecided/Dk/ Ref (vol)	8	6	5	<b>4</b>

10/27	Male	Female	Black	White	18-44	45+	Nova	Rich	HR	S/west	Lib	Mod	Cons	Dem	Ind	Rep	≤ \$50K	> \$50K
Ed Gillespie	42	44	11	53	38	45	40	42	43	51	8	34	82	2	35	93	40	42
Ralph Northam	51	49	85	39	50	49	53	51	47	43	87	59	13	96	48	3	51	51
Cliff Hyra	3	4	1	4	7	2	3	5	4	2	3	4	1	-	10	2	3	4
Undecided/Dk/ Ref (vol)	5	4	3	4	5	4	4	2	6	4	2	3	4	2	7	2	6	3



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
Justin Fairfax	46	48	47
Jill Vogel	42	40	44
Undecided/Dk/Ref (vol)	12	12	9

10/27	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
John Adams	42	40	44
Mark Herring	47	51	49
Undecided/Dk/Ref (vol)	11	9	7

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	9
Some college	19
Vocational or technical training	4
College graduate	40
Graduate study or more	29
Dk/ref (vol)	1

RACE:

White	71
Black or African American	20
Other	9

MIL OR RETIRED MIL IN HOUSE:

Yes	31
No	69

AGE:

18-24	6
25-34	13
35-44	16
45-54	23
55 & older	42

PARTYID:

Republican	33
Democrat	36
Independent	30
No preference (vol)	1
Other party (vol)	<1
Dk/ref (vol)	<1

[IF OTHER THAN REP OR DEM ABOVE]

PARTLEAN:

Republican	32
Democratic	33
Independent	35

IDEOL:

Strong liberal	6
Liberal	13
Moderate, leaning liberal	25
Moderate, leaning conservative	19
Conservative	20
Strong Conservative	11
Dk/ref (vol)	6

INCOME:

Under \$25,000	3
\$25-\$49,999	10
\$50-\$74,999	18
\$75-\$99,999	18
\$100,000-\$149,999	18
Over \$150,000	22
Dk/ref (vol)	11

REGION (defined by DMA):

Northern Virginia	33
Richmond/Central	22
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 947 interviews of registered Virginia voters, of which 812 were determined to be likely 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 397 on landline and 415 on cell phone, conducted October 20-25, 2017. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. The margin of error for the likely voter model is +/- 3.8% 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 46.2% and 53.8%.** 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 20%. 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.