

MEMO: CROWLEY SURGING AS DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY REACHES FINAL DAYS

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Garren Randolph, Crowley for Wisconsin

DATE: August 5, 2026

With the electorate Wisconsin actually produces in an August primary, David Crowley leads Francesca Hong head to head once voters have heard about both candidates. That is a new poll conducted by PPP for Crowley for Wisconsin, retabulated by the campaign to the modeled age composition of the 2018 and 2022 August primary electorates. Crowley's momentum has surged since the campaign began advertising on TV and digital statewide and since he began traveling the state with Governor Tony Evers' endorsement and support.

It's clear Democrats have only a matter of days to ensure David Crowley is the Party's candidate to face Tom Tiffany in Wisconsin. Results in Michigan Tuesday night showed polling that failed to appropriately capture and reflect the primary electorate and well overstated the position of the race frontrunner. Democrats are in the driver's seat in Wisconsin to choose David Crowley and have the best fighting chance against Tom Tiffany in November.

Coverage of Wisconsin's primary has centered on topline polling showing Francesca Hong with a wide lead. This memo lays out three facts that complicate that picture, much like the topline complicated the picture in Michigan Tuesday night. The voter file, published survey crosstabs, and public ad tracking data all show a much closer race than the topline suggest and that the election will be decided by a different electorate than the one those topline assume.

David Crowley is very competitive in the primary for governor and Democrats must unite to ensure he is the Democratic nominee

1. The electorate voting in this primary is far older than the electorate being polled

Based on the voter file here are the age composition of the last two August partisan primaries, alongside the ballots returned so far this year and the likely voter model in recent survey research, including our own campaign's internal polling (conducted by Public Policy Polling, August 4 to 5, 753 likely Democratic primary voters):

Electorate	18 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
August 2018 primary (1,062,678 ballots)	14%	29%	57%
August 2022 primary (1,256,249 ballots)	16%	32%	52%
Ballots returned so far, 2026 (188,590 ballots)	15%	24%	61%
Crowley Internal Poll August 4-5	30%	32%	38%

Voters over 65 cast more than half the ballots in both of the last two comparable August primaries. They are 61 percent of the ballots already returned this year. The surveys driving coverage of this race, our own included, model an electorate roughly twice as young as any August electorate Wisconsin has actually produced. That is not a criticism of any pollster; likely voter modeling is a judgment call.

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The modeling discrepancy matters because age is the sharpest dividing line in this primary. In our survey's published age crosstabs, Hong wins voters under 46 by roughly 50 points. Among voters over 65 she trails David Crowley head to head and on the informed ballot.

2. When considering the electorate that actually votes, the race is close

Hold every preference in our most recent survey exactly where PPP measured it, and change one thing: **match the age mix to the electorate that actually voted in August 2022.**

Measure	Crowley Internal Poll August 4-5	At the 2022 electorate
Four-way ballot	Hong 42, Crowley 24	Hong 36, Crowley 27
Head to head	Hong 52, Crowley 33	Hong 48, Crowley 37
Informed four-way	Hong 39, Crowley 29	Hong 32, Crowley 32
Informed head to head	Hong 47, Crowley 38	Crowley 42, Hong 41

After the informed questions **at the 2022 electorate this race is a tie. At the 2018 electorate, which was older still, Crowley leads the informed head to head 44 to 40. Under every electorate Wisconsin has actually produced in August, the four way ballot is a single digit race and the informed head to head is even.**

The composition of the vote already cast points the same direction. Voters over 65 have returned three of every five ballots. Voters under 46 have returned 15 percent. In our survey the informed ballot among voters over 65 is Crowley 41, Hong 18, with 41 percent for Kelda Roys, Joel Brennan, or undecided. The Madison market currently has the lowest mail return rate of Wisconsin's major cities.

Tuesday's result in Michigan should also be a caution for anyone reading August primary topline. Public polling showed Abdul El-Sayed comfortably ahead in the Democratic Senate primary. He won by roughly one point. Low salience summer primaries are hard to poll for a structural reason: the most engaged supporters of an insurgent candidate are the easiest voters to reach, while the habitual older voters who decide these races show up whether or not they answer surveys.

3. One campaign is communicating with these voters

Public ad tracking through August 4 shows the pro-Crowley effort with \$2.3 million and 4,762 gross rating points of broadcast and cable on the air across Wisconsin's media markets. **It shows no broadcast, cable, or radio activity from the Hong campaign in any market.** Broadcast television is the top information source for a third of voters over 65 in our survey.

The effect is visible in the data. Two weeks ago, half the state could not rate David Crowley. Today he is 46 favorable, 17 unfavorable, and 55 percent of primary voters report hearing about him in just the last few days, positive by a six to one margin, with television news as the leading source. The campaign will be communicating statewide through election day. Crowley gains nine to ten points inside the survey's own questionnaire when voters hear about his record. Hong gains nothing and loses ground.

The bottom line

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If the August 11 electorate looks like the electorates of 2018 and 2022, and the 188,590 ballots already returned say it does, this primary does not have a prohibitive frontrunner. It is a single digit race in which the group casting most of the votes prefers David Crowley or has not decided, and the Crowley campaign is the only one talking to them.

Methodology note

Survey figures are from a Crowley for Wisconsin internal poll conducted by Public Policy Polling, August 4 to 5, 2026, among 753 likely Democratic primary voters, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.6 percentage points. Retabulated figures apply the survey's published age crosstabs to the modeled age composition of the August 2018 and August 2022 partisan primary electorates in the Wisconsin statewide voter file, and are unofficial supplemental tabulations by the campaign, not figures produced by Public Policy Polling. Because the retabulation increases the weight of the over 65 subgroup, retabulated figures carry a wider margin of error than the survey topline. Ballot return figures are from the statewide voter file as of August 5, 2026. Ad spending figures are from competitive media tracking through August 4, 2026.