



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

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Research Policy Update

Native Vote Regional Report: Midwest Region

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Native Vote initiative is a nonpartisan effort to promote American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) voter engagement throughout Indian Country. The purpose of this report is to share bi-weekly updates on the status of competitive elections during the 2020 election cycle for states in each NCAI region where turnout of the Native Vote may make a difference.



NCAI Midwest Region – Voting Age Population

For the 2020 election cycle, a number of close races have the potential to be impacted by the number of voting age AI/ANs who vote, especially if they are a significant percentage of the total population in the state. The NCAI Midwest Region includes the states of Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and 33 federally recognized tribal nations and four state-recognized tribal nations have land within the states. For the five states in the Midwest Region, the AI/AN voting age population number and percentage of the overall population for each of the states are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: AI/AN Voting Age Statewide Population Percentage for States in the Midwest Region

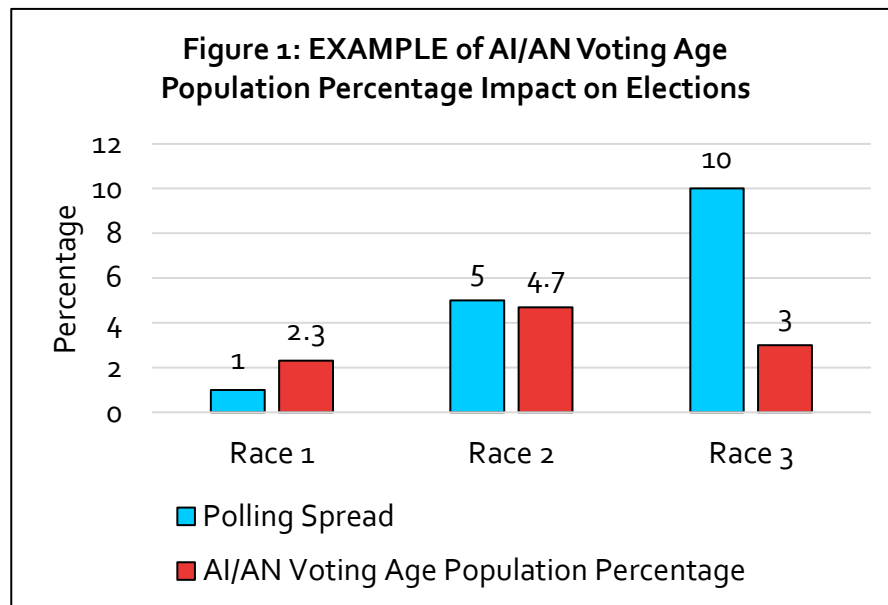
State	2019 State Total Voting Age Population Estimates	2019 AI/AN State Total Voting Age Population Estimates	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage of State Population
Illinois	9,853,946	105,658	1.07%
Iowa	2,428,229	22,291	0.92%
Michigan	7,842,924	114,476	1.56%
Minnesota	4,336,475	79,237	1.83%
Wisconsin	4,555,837	71,057	1.56%

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5.

The AI/AN voting age population has the potential to impact competitive national, Congressional district, and state legislative races where the margin of victory is estimated to be similar to the AI/AN voting age population percentage.

Figure 1 illustrates an example of how graphs are used in this report to illustrate how the AI/AN voting age population percentage can impact close elections. The polling difference or margin between candidates is represented as a percent in the blue bars, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage of the total state population is represented in the red bars in the graph.

In *Race 1*, the AI/AN percentage in the example state (red) is larger than the polling difference between candidates (blue) in Race 1. Here AI/AN voters can clearly impact the outcome of the race.



In *Race 2*, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is close to the polling difference between candidates. AI/AN voters in elections like this example can potentially impact the outcome.

In *Race 3*, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is smaller than the polling difference between candidates. In this example, AI/AN voters may not have a big impact on the outcome.

In this report, data on competitive and potentially competitive elections may change over time and is monitored with the *Cook Political Report*, which is a non-partisan newsletter that regularly analyzes elections at the national and state level. The *Cook Political Report* ranks races as tossups, with either candidate having a possibility to succeed, or as “leaning” or “likely” to result in a specific outcome, Democratic (“D”) or Republican (“R”).

This report also uses current polling on competitive races as collected by *FiveThirtyEight*, which is a news media source and national polling clearinghouse. Finally, this report uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau on the number and percentage of AI/AN voters in election districts. For national and statewide elections [Electoral College (Presidential), Senate, and Gubernatorial races], the data on AI/AN voting age population is drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2019 population estimates. For all other elections, AI/AN voting age population data for U.S. Congressional districts and state upper and lower legislative house levels is drawn from the

Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) Census Bureau dataset from 2018. These reports are compiled using the NCAI regions, which may differ from other organizational or federal department regional designations for tribal nations. The reports for each state in this NCAI region are illustrated below.

NCAI Midwest Region – Illinois



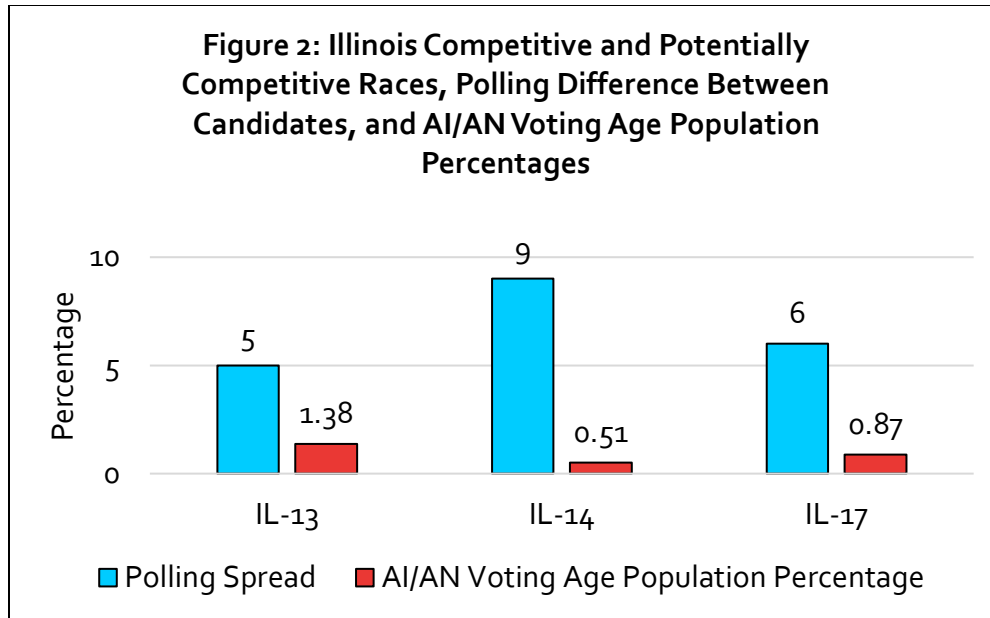
Illinois has three competitive or potentially competitive Congressional district races, according to the latest *Cook Political Report*. **Table 2** illustrates the competitive races for Illinois, the *Cook Political Report* ranking, the voting electorate or district, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in those districts. The races include Illinois’ thirteenth, fourteenth and seventeenth Congressional districts. The thirteenth district ranks competitive and a tossup, with a slight lean toward a Republican outcome, or “Tossup-R.” The fourteenth district ranks potentially competitive and likely to result in a Democratic outcome, or “Likely-D.” The seventeenth district ranks competitive and possibly to result in a Democratic outcome or “Lean-D.”

Table 2: Illinois Competitive and Potentially Competitive Elections

Race	<i>Cook Political Report</i> Ranking	Electorate	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Congressional 13th District	Tossup-R	Congressional District	1.38%
Congressional 14th District	Likely-D	Congressional District	0.51%
Congressional 17th District	Lean-D	Congressional District	0.87%

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Cook Political Report, Accessed October 30, 2020.

AI/AN voters can impact the outcomes of races where the current polling shows the candidates are expected to receive a similar percentage of votes and in areas where the percent of AI/AN voters is larger than the difference in polling percentages between the candidates. **Figure 2** illustrates the AI/AN voting age population percentages and recent polling spread or percent margins for the races in Illinois.



Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; FiveThirtyEight, Accessed October 30, 2020.

The *Cook Political Report* does not consider control of the upper or lower state legislative houses to be competitive, nor does the state have any Native candidates running for state legislative office according to *Indian Country Today*.

NCAI Midwest Region – Iowa

Iowa Competitive & Potentially Competitive Races

- 1 Senate Race**
- 1 Electoral College Race**
- 3 Congressional District Races**
- Both Upper and Lower State Legislative House**
- 1 Native Candidate**

In Iowa, the latest *Cook Political Report* ranks five competitive and potentially competitive races.

Table 3 illustrates the competitive races for Iowa, the *Cook Political Report* ranking, the voting electorate or district, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in those districts. The races include the Senate race between incumbent Joni Ernst and challenger Theresa Greenfield, the Electoral College (Presidential) race, and Iowa’s third Congressional district race. The Senate and Electoral College races rank as tossups. Iowa’s

first and second Congressional districts both rank competitive and tossups, with slight leans toward Democratic outcomes, or “Tossup-D.” Iowa’s third Congressional district ranks competitive and potentially may result in a Democratic outcome, or “Lean-D.” Iowa’s upper and lower state legislative houses rank competitively as well. Iowa’s upper state legislative

house ranks likely to result in a Republican win, or “Likely-R,” and its lower state legislative house potentially to result in a Republican win, or “Lean-R.”

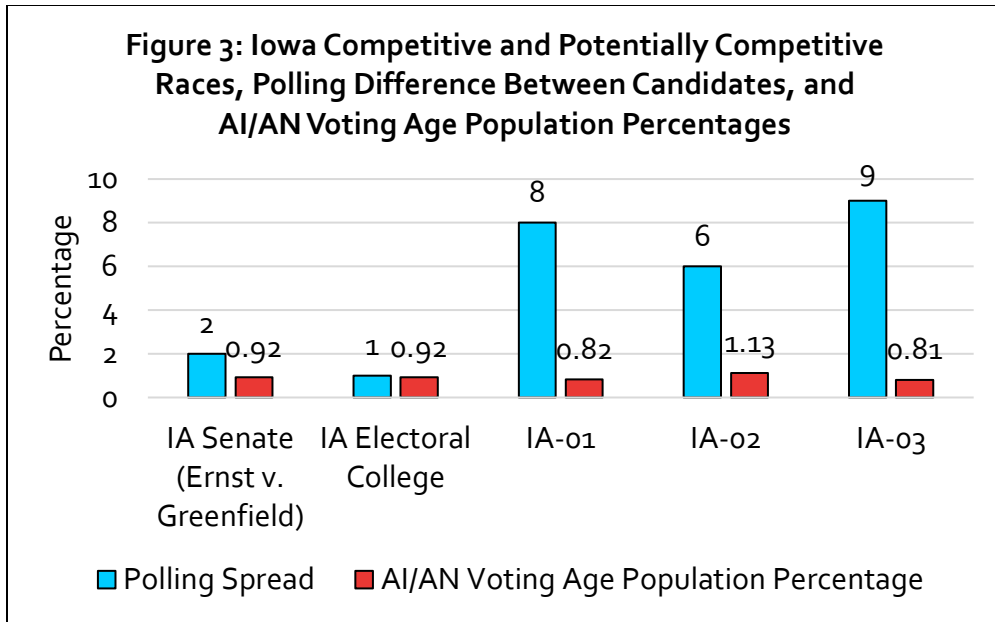
Table 3: Iowa Competitive and Potentially Competitive Elections

Race	Cook Political Report Ranking	Electorate	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Senate (Ernst v. Greenfield)	Tossup	Statewide	0.92%
Electoral College	Tossup	Congressional District	0.92%
Congressional 1st District	Tossup-D	Congressional District	0.81%
Congressional 2nd District	Tossup-D	Congressional District	0.81%
Congressional 3rd District	Lean-D	Congressional District	0.81%
State Legislative Upper House	Likely-R	State Legislative District	Varies by District
State Legislative Lower House	Lean-R	State Legislative District	Varies by District

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Cook Political Report, Accessed October 30, 2020.

AI/AN voters can impact the outcomes of races where the current polling shows the candidates are expected to receive a similar percentage of votes and in areas where the percent of AI/AN voters is larger than the difference in polling percentages between the candidates.

Figure 3 illustrates the AI/AN voting age population percentages and recent polling spread or percent margins for the races in Iowa. In the Electoral College race, the AI/AN voter percentage is close to the polling spread. AI/AN voters can impact the outcome in this race.



Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; FiveThirtyEight, Accessed October 30, 2020.

One Native candidate is running for office in Iowa according to *Indian Country Today*. **Table 4** illustrates the Native candidate running for state legislative office, their district race, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in the state legislative district.

Table 4: Iowa State Congressional Candidates and AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage

Candidate	District Race	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Christina Blackcloud	State House District 72	4.16%

Source: Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Indian Country Today, Accessed October 30, 2020.

For this Iowa race, the AI/AN voting age population is over 4%. AI/AN voters can impact the outcome of this race if it is close.

NCAI Midwest Region – Michigan



In Michigan, the latest *Cook Political Report* shows six competitive and potentially competitive races. **Table 5** illustrates the competitive races for Michigan, the *Cook Political Report* ranking, the voting electorate or district, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in those districts. The races include the Electoral College (Presidential) race, the Senate race, between incumbent Gary Peters and challenger John James, and four Congressional district races. The Electoral College and Senate races in Michigan rank as competitive, potentially to result in Democratic wins, or “Lean-D.” Michigan’s third district ranks competitive and a tossup, with a slight lean toward a Republican

outcome, or “Tossup-R.” The sixth Congressional districts rank as competitive and potentially may result in a Republican outcome, or “Lean-R,” while Michigan’s eight and eleventh districts rank competitive and potentially may result in Democratic outcomes, or “Lean-D.” *Cook Political Report* also considers control of Michigan’s lower state legislative houses to be a tossup.

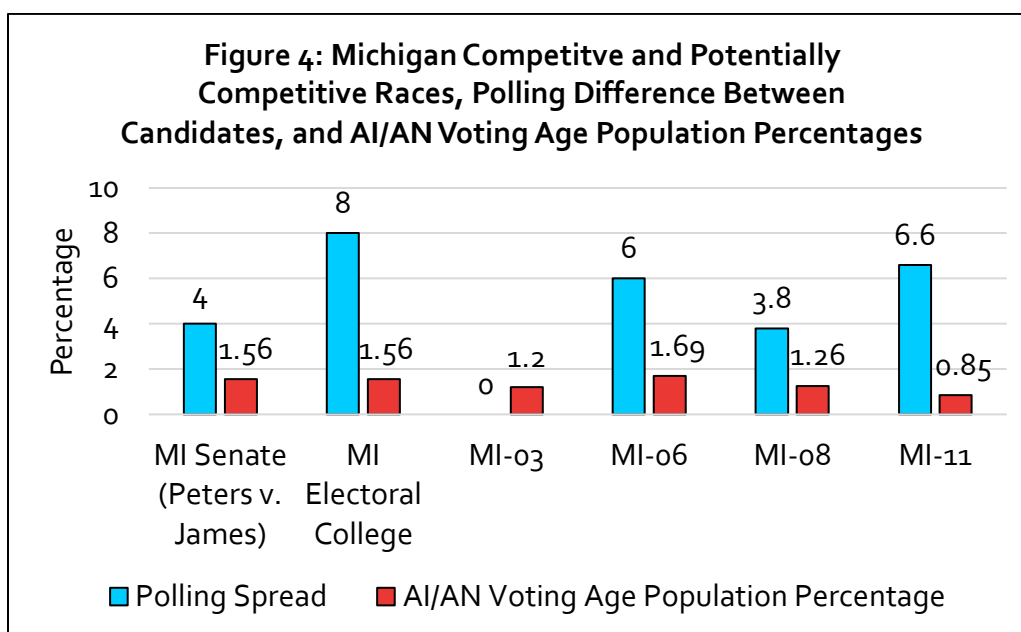
Table 5: Michigan Competitive and Potentially Competitive Elections

Race	<i>Cook Political Report</i> Ranking	Electorate	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Senate (Peters v. James)	Lean-D	Statewide	1.56%
Electoral College	Lean-D	Statewide	1.56%
Congressional 3rd District	Tossup-R	Congressional District	1.20%
Congressional 6th District	Lean-R	Congressional District	1.69%
Congressional 8th District	Lean-D	Congressional District	1.26%
Congressional 11th District	Lean-D	Congressional District	0.85%
Lower State Legislative House	Tossup	State Legislative District	Varies by District

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Cook Political Report, Accessed October 30, 2020.

AI/AN voters can impact the outcomes of races where the current polling shows the candidates are expected to receive a similar percentage of votes and in areas where the percent of AI/AN voters is larger than the difference in polling percentages between the candidates.

Figure 4 illustrates the AI/AN voting age population percentages and recent polling spread or percent margins for the Electoral College, Senate and Congressional district races for Michigan. For Michigan’s sixth and eleventh Congressional districts current polling is not available; in place of polling results between the candidates, the margin of victory from the past election has been used for comparison (*27otowin*, 2020). In the third Congressional district races, the AI/AN population is higher than the current polling difference between candidates. AI/AN voters can potentially impact the outcome in this race.



Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; FiveThirtyEight, Accessed October 30, 2020; 27otowin, Accessed September 15, 2020.

Though control of Michigan’s lower state legislative house is considered competitive, the state does not have any Native candidates running for state legislative office according to *Indian Country Today*.

NCAI Midwest Region – Minnesota



In Minnesota, the latest *Cook Political Report* shows four competitive and potentially competitive races. **Table 6** illustrates the competitive races for Minnesota, the *Cook Political Report* ranking, the voting electorate or district, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in those districts. The races include the Electoral College (Presidential) race and three Congressional district races. The Electoral College race in Minnesota ranks as competitive, potentially to result in a Democratic win, or “Lean-D.” The first Minnesota Congressional district ranks competitive and a tossup, with a slight lean toward a Republican outcome, or “Tossup-R.” Minnesota’s second district ranks as potentially competitive and likely to result in a Democratic win, or “Likely-

D,” while the Minnesota seventh Congressional district ranks as a tossup, with a slight lean towards a Democratic outcome, or “Tossup-D.” *Cook Political Report* also considers control of Minnesota’s upper state legislative house a tossup, and the lower house ranks as potentially to result in a Democratic win, “Lean-D.”

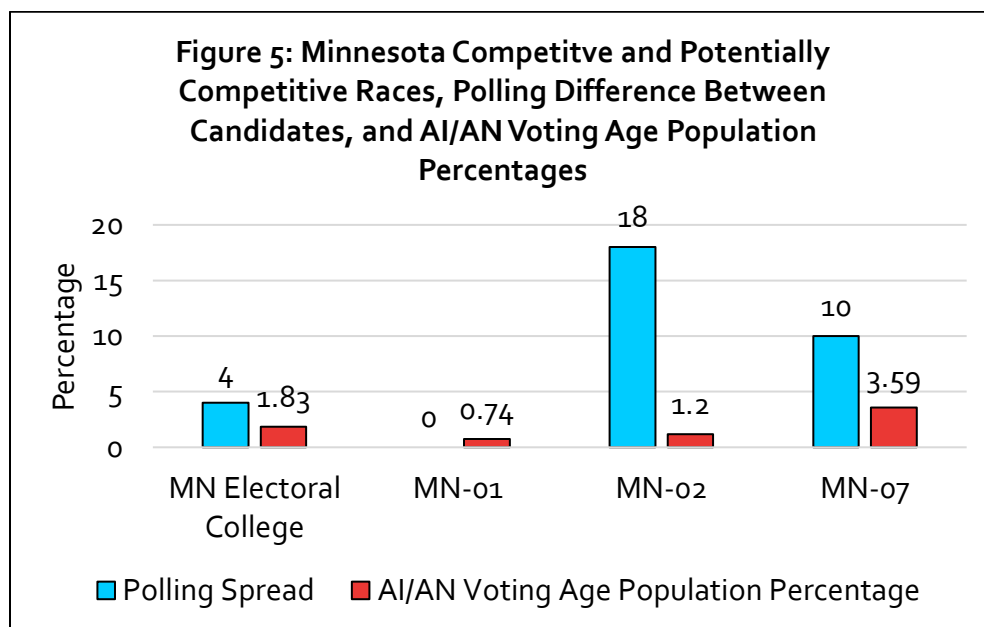
Table 6: Minnesota Competitive and Potentially Competitive Elections

Race	<i>Cook Political Report</i> Ranking	Electorate	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Electoral College	Lean-D	Statewide	1.83%
Congressional 1st District	Tossup-R	Congressional District	0.74%
Congressional 2nd District	Likely-D	Congressional District	1.20%
Congressional 7th District	Tossup-D	Congressional District	3.59%
State Legislative Upper House	Lean-D	State Legislative District	Varies by District
State Legislative Lower House	Lean-D	State Legislative District	Varies by District

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Cook Political Report, Accessed October 30, 2020.

AI/AN voters can impact the outcomes of races where the current polling shows the candidates are expected to gain a similar percentage of votes and in areas where the percent of AI/AN voters is larger than the difference in polling percentages between the candidates.

Figure 5 illustrates the AI/AN voting age population percentages and recent polling spread or percent margins for the Electoral College and Congressional district races for Minnesota. In Minnesota’s first Congressional district, the AI/AN population is larger than the current polling difference between candidates. AI/AN voters can impact the outcome in this race.



Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; FiveThirtyEight, Accessed October 30, 2020.

Six Native candidates are running for office in Minnesota according to *Indian Country Today*. **Table 7** illustrates each Native candidate running for state legislative office, their district race, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in those state legislative districts.

Table 7: Minnesota State Congressional Candidates and AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage

Candidate	District Race	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Jamie Becker-Finn	State House District 42B	2.36%
Donna Bergstrom	State Senate District 7	2.82%
Heather Keeler	State House District 4A	1.95%
Mary Kunesh-Podein	State Senate District 41	1.57%

Alan Roy	State Senate District 2	13.31%
Gaylene Spolarich	State House District 10B	1.84%

Source: Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Indian Country Today, Accessed October 30, 2020.

Three of the races in Minnesota have an AI/AN percentage over 2%, with Alan Roy running in a state senate district with over 13% AI/AN voting age population percentage. In upcoming the Minnesota legislative district elections, AI/AN voters can impact the outcomes of these races if they are close.

NCAI Midwest Region – Wisconsin



In Wisconsin, the latest *Cook Political Report* shows two potentially competitive races. **Table 8** illustrates the competitive races for Wisconsin, the *Cook Political Report* ranking, the voting electorate or district, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in those districts. The races includes the Electoral College race and the third Congressional district race. Both races rank as competitive and possibly to result in Democratic wins, or “Lean-D.” **Table 8** also includes Wisconsin’s seventh Congressional district race where Native candidate Tricia Zunker is running for office according to *Indian Country Today*. She previously ran for the district in Wisconsin’s special election to fill the remainder of the previous term earlier this year and lost. *Cook Political Report* also considers control of

Wisconsin’s upper and lower state legislative houses potentially competitive and ranked as likely to result in a Republican win, or “Likely-R.”

Table 8: Wisconsin Competitive, Potentially Competitive, and Native Congressional Candidate Elections

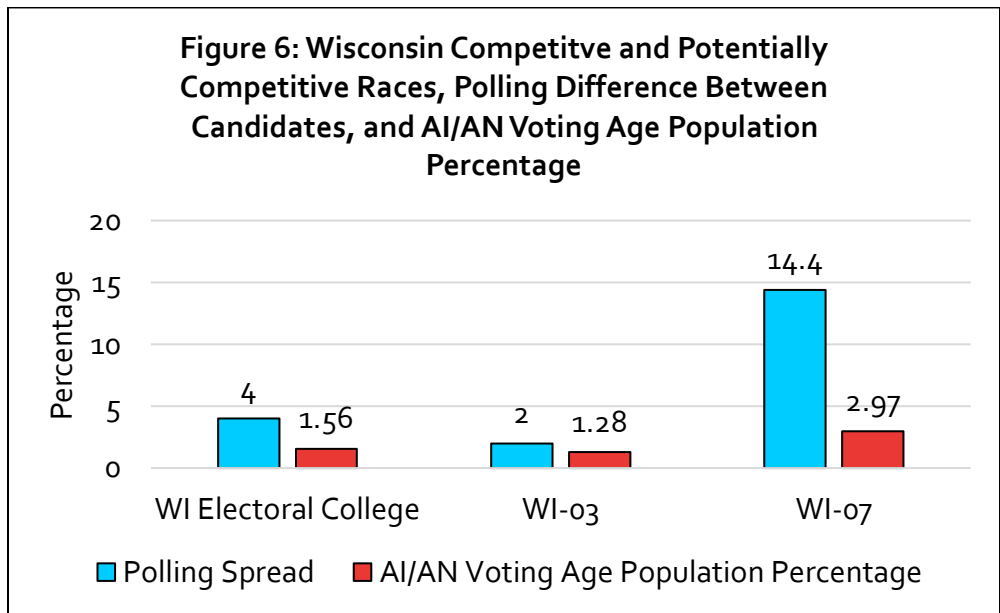
Race	<i>Cook Political Report</i> Ranking	Electorate	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Electoral College	Lean-D	Statewide	1.56%
Congressional 3rd District	Lean-D	Congressional District	1.28%

Congressional 8th District	Unranked	Congressional District	2.97%
State Legislative Upper House	Likely-R	State Legislative District	Varies by District
State Legislative Lower House	Likely-R	State Legislative District	Varies by District

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Cook Political Report, Accessed October 30, 2020.

AI/AN voters can impact the outcomes of races where the current polling shows the candidates are expected to gain a similar percentage of votes and in areas where the percent of AI/AN voters is larger than the difference in polling percentages between the candidates.

Figure 6 illustrates the AI/AN voting age population percentages and recent polling spread or percent margins for the Congressional district races for Wisconsin. In Wisconsin’s third Congressional district, the AI/AN population is close to the current polling difference between candidates. AI/AN voters can potentially impact the outcome in this race.



Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; FiveThirtyEight, Accessed October 30, 2020.

One Native candidate is running for state legislative office in Wisconsin according to *Indian Country Today*. **Table 9** illustrates each Native candidate running for state legislative office, their district race, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in their state legislative district.

Table 9: Wisconsin State Congressional Candidates and AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage

Candidate	District Race	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Amanda White Eagle	State Assembly 92	2.36%

Source: Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Indian Country Today, Accessed October 30, 2020.

In the Wisconsin race, the AI/AN voting age percentage over 2%. In upcoming the Minnesota legislative district elections, AI/AN voters can impact the outcomes of these races if they are close.

For more information, email research@ncai.org or visit NCAI’s Native Vote website at: <http://www.nativevote.org/>

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