# SwingLeft

# Know Before You Go: MN-01 District Primer

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**In the last election, Democrat Tim Walz won this district by only 2,000 votes (less than 1%).**
We need your help to keep this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

## About the Democratic Candidate

**Introduction:** **Democrat Dan Feehan** was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. Inspired by the public service of his parents, Feehan is an Iraq War veteran and a former Assistant Secretary of Defense under President Obama. He also was as a middle school teacher in Chicago's south side and Gary, Indiana. As a fifth generation Minnesotan and as a witness of the 9/11 terror attacks in Washington, D. C., Feehan's comprehensive public policy views are shaped by these hands-on overseas and domestic experiences.

**Issues:** Feehan promises to support universal healthcare, national security focusing on cooperation, smart spending and a military open to immigrants and the LGBTQ community. Feehan believes the best way for agriculture to thrive is a strong Farm Bill, measures to ensure healthy soil and clean water, encouraging new farmers by supporting the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, and improving the transportation infrastructure to increase efficiency and access to markets. Feehan also is a proponent of accessible and affordable early childhood and higher education. In foreign and defense policy, Feehan will bring new Congressional oversight to the war on terrorism while ensuring service members are only sent into harm's way with a clear mission and when it's absolutely necessary. He will work to help veterans find empowering opportunities after their military service has concluded.

**Strengths:** Feehan is well versed on the full range of issues important to constituents in his district, backed by relevant personal experience in the military and as a public school teacher. He has been endorsed by outgoing Representative Tim Walz, former VPs Joe Biden and Walter Mondale, Minnesota AFL-CIO, End Citizens United, Education Minnesota, VoteVets, the NEA, and the Minnesota Democratic Farmer Labor Party (DFL).
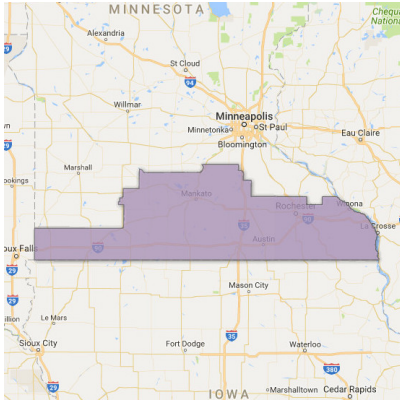
## About the Republican Candidate

**Introduction:** **Republican Jim Hagedorn** is a former US Treasury official and political blogger. This is his fourth attempt at a run for this seat and second as the GOP endorsed candidate, losing to Tim Walz in 2010, 2014, and 2016. Earlier this year the Washington Examiner called him "The worst candidate in America" due to his abhorrent statements, such as calling Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray from Washington state "undeserving bimbos in tennis shoes."

**Issues:** Hagedorn's website highlights the economy, agriculture, "rural values," and national defense as key issues. He wants to abolish most banking, healthcare and tax regulations. Hagedorn is pro-life, pro-gun, and extremely anti-immigrant, supporting Trump's vision to build a wall at the southern border and frequently equating Islam with terrorism.

**Strengths:** Hagedorn's tenacity has to some extent paid off. In 2016, Democratic incumbent Walz won by less than 1%. With his name recognition established, his extreme views on immigration resonate in a district that Trump won by a 15-point margin.

**Potential Weaknesses:** Hagedorn may be viewed as too unhinged to motivate conservatives to get to the polls in an off-year election. Despite receiving the GOP endorsement in the primary election, several notable conservative organizations, including the NRA, backed his primary challenger. Many people find his  disparaging, hateful, and misogynistic remarks repellent.

*Learn more at* **swingleft.org/resources/MN-01**

## MN-01: Facts & Stats

### Population Centers

- Rochester, 112,000 (state's largest city outside Twin Cities)
- Mankato, 41,044 (incumbent's hometown)
- Winona, 27,094
- Owatonna, 25,725
- Austin, 24,563
- Faribault, 23,650

### 2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 131K (38%)
- Trump: 182K (53%)

### 2016 House Results

- Walz (D): 169K (50%)
- Hagedorn (R): 167K (50%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 29K
- Eligible, not registered: 91K

### 2014 House Results

- Walz (D): 123K (54%)
- Hagedorn (R): 104K (46%)

## MN-01: Better Know the District

### Geography

MN-01 is a largely rural district in southern Minnesota with two dense population centers: Rochester and Mankato. The district boasts gorgeous rural vistas: valleys and bluffs, a portion of the Mississippi River, and (this being Minnesota) lots of lakes. There are also multiple state parks and a wildlife refuge. Everyone in this district will know about the Boundary Waters in Northeastern Minnesota, and many will have visited it.

### Demographics

The district's residents are mostly white farmers and urban low-skilled laborers, but there's been a recent uptick in immigrants from Somalia — a country included in the Trump travel ban — and various Latino-majority countries. There is a decent union presence, including UNITE HERE!, the Minnesota Nurses Association, SEIU Healthcare, and Education Minnesota.

### Issues

Crucial issues revolve around manufacturing jobs and protections for farmers. Almost 200,000 Minnesota residents gained healthcare partly through the ACA. Many residents fear Islamic terrorism, given that Minnesota has produced a number of American ISIS recruits. The "Release MN8" cause has a lot of support (the "Minnesota 8" are a group of Cambodians currently being detained by ICE).

### Elections

Rural citizens tend to be fairly conservative, but Rochester and Mankato are becoming more liberal, in accordance with the overall national trend in American cities. The district has historically been Republican, but Walz helped flip it blue in 2006, and it has stayed Democratic ever since. There was massive Sanders support during the primaries, as was true in other parts of the state. State legislature representatives are overwhelmingly Republican.

### Industries

The healthcare and social assistance industry accounts for 20% of employment in the region. Southeastern Minnesota is competitive in key areas including doctors' and dentists' offices as well as hospitals. The industry has relatively high wages and experienced strong wage growth between 2003 and 2013. The manufacturing industry is responsible for the creation of 35% of the region's output. Manufactured products are varied, from food products to computers. Minnesota's main farming areas are in the southern part of the state, where corn and soybeans for feed are important. The value of these products has increased dramatically in recent years and the labor market is tight. Hog farming is also a major industry; retail is the third-largest industry. Austin is home to the headquarters of food company Hormel, which is a huge employer there (and thus boosting local pride in Spam).