Legacy media caught falling for more completely fake election polls

A political polling firm that spent months publishing election surveys cited by major news outlets and polling aggregators has admitted that its numbers were fabricated, claiming the entire operation was a “social experiment” designed to expose just how easily fake data can influence American elections.

Wedgewood Polls made the admission Tuesday night in a statement posted to X (see page 3 below), acknowledging that it had invented polling results throughout the 2026 election cycle despite having no legitimate data to support its findings.

The group claimed its objective was to expose the polling industry's lack of accountability and demonstrate how easily an organization with no credentials or established reputation could gain credibility.

“We wanted to test a simple hypothesis: How easy is it for an entirely fabricated polling firm to gain traction, be taken seriously, and expose how little scrutiny exists in media and public commentary?” the statement read. “The short answer: Far too easy.”

Apparently, the experiment worked. Wedgewood published at least 18 polls involving races across the country, with its manufactured numbers making their way into prominent election forecasting platforms, including FiftyPlusOne, Decision Desk HQ, and the New York Times.

The consequences, however, extended well beyond misleading political commentators.

Former Michigan state Sen. Mallory McMorrow, who withdrew from the state's Democrat Senate primary, said one of Wedgewood's fabricated surveys had a devastating impact on her campaign.

The poll, released in late June, placed McMorrow at just 9 percent in a three-way contest against Abdul El-Sayed and Haley Stevens. McMorrow said the numbers contradicted her campaign's internal polling but nevertheless triggered serious political and financial consequences.

“Donations dried up. Volunteers were devastated and pleading for guidance on what to do. Reporters hounded me with calls to drop out,” McMorrow wrote on X.

McMorrow, who left the race shortly afterward, blasted those responsible for treating a legitimate political campaign as an experiment.

“Sure, a point was proven. Polling is broken. But tens of thousands of people poured their hearts, time, energy, hard-earned money into something they believed in — for a year-and-a-half, and it was treated like a game,” she wrote.

While McMorrow described the fallout, the extent to which the fabricated survey independently influenced her decision to withdraw remains unclear.

Wedgewood's bogus polling operation also covered elections in Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, Ohio, and Texas.

Perhaps the most embarrassing part of the admission was the firm's explanation of how little effort it took to fool organizations responsible for interpreting election data.

“Despite having no history, formal credentials, or real data behind the vast majority of our releases, Wedgewood Polling was added to major polling aggregators, and repeatedly treated as a legitimate data source,” the group acknowledged.

Wedgewood also claimed its fabricated findings were referenced by national media outlets, including MS NOW, giving the invented figures an appearance of legitimacy before they were repeated throughout political coverage.

And Wedgewood isn't even the first outfit to pull this stunt.

In August, another mysterious polling operation called Median Strategies published surveys involving Democrat primaries and other elections in Wisconsin, Nevada, and Los Angeles before offering a similar explanation that its polling had been part of a social experiment.

The revelations raise serious questions about an industry that already faces longstanding criticism over its accuracy, particularly after major polling organizations underestimated President Trump's support in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections.

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PRESS STATEMENT

WEDGEWOOD POLLING PUBLIC STATEMENT

WEDGEWOOD POLLING, an experimental project to demonstrate the vulnerabilities, lack of oversight, and overall **low barrier to entry** in the modern political polling industry, makes this public statement.

Why We Did This

Having previously worked in the polling and research sector, we watched as the public's trust in polling eroded alongside a rise in unverified, low-quality methodology. We wanted to test a simple hypothesis: How easy is it for an entirely fabricated polling firm to gain traction, be taken seriously, and expose how little scrutinization exists in media and public commentary?

The short answer: Far too easy.

How Far It Went

Despite having no history, formal credentials, or real data behind the vast majority of our releases, Wedgewood Polling was added to major polling aggregators, including The New York Times, FiftyPlusOne, and VoteHub, and repeatedly treated as a legitimate data source.

Our fabricated numbers were given instant credibility across national media platforms—including being cited on air and in reporting by outlets such as MS NOW. The ease with which unverified figures were absorbed into mainstream political narratives highlights a systemic breakdown in media vetting and data aggregation.

The Scope of the Project

- **The Experiment:** Most data published under the Wedgewood Polling name was generated to test whether media outlets, aggregators, and commentators would report on data without verifying the source, methodology, or underlying firm legitimacy.
- **The Exception:** Out of curiosity and for our own internal baseline, we did conduct one fully legitimate, crowdfunded Nebraska poll during this run. That single poll utilized standard, rigorous methodology to give us a real baseline to compare against synthetic data.

Moving Forward

Wedgewood Polling was never intended to sway an election or permanently mislead the public; it was designed as a wake-up call. If a fictional entity run by a small group of industry veterans can be integrated into major polling averages and cited by major news organizations, the standards for how polling data is vetted, aggregated, and reported must change.

We hope this experiment sparks a necessary conversation about data integrity, media literacy, and accountability across the political research landscape.