University of North Florida
Public Opinion Research Lab

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New UNF Poll Shows Andrew Gillum Leading Ron DeSantis in 2018 Governor's Race
Sen. Bill Nelson Narrowly Leading Over Gov. Rick Scott in 2018 Senate Election

The Public Opinion Research Lab at the University of North Florida has a new poll of likely voters that reveals Andrew Gillum in the lead for the upcoming gubernatorial election in Florida, with Ron DeSantis close behind and Sen. Bill Nelson with a slight lead over Gov. Rick Scott in the upcoming Senate election for the state of Florida. The survey also shows that a supermajority of respondents support restoring the voting rights of individuals with felony convictions after they have served their sentences.

The poll, comprised of likely Florida voters, shows that 49 percent of respondents plan to vote for Gillum, the Democratic candidate in the upcoming election for Florida governor, while 43 percent plan to vote for the Republican candidate, DeSantis.

Of those likely voters, 7 percent don't know who their choice will be. Among Democrats, 87 percent indicate they plan to vote for Gillum, 7 percent for DeSantis and 6 percent don't know where they'll cast their vote. Ten percent of Republican likely voters say they will vote for Gillum, while 84 percent indicate they'll vote for DeSantis; 7 percent don't know. Among Non-Party Affiliates (NPA) and other party likely voters, 56 percent plan to vote for Gillum, 31 percent for DeSantis and 13 percent are undecided.

Regarding the upcoming U.S. Senate race, when asked who they would vote for if the election were held today, 47 percent of likely voters indicated they would vote for Nelson, the Democratic candidate, 46 percent would vote for Scott, the Republican and 7 percent didn't know. Of Democratic likely voters, 81 percent claim they will vote for Nelson, while 9 percent for Scott; 7 percent don't know. Among Republican respondents, 10 percent say they will vote for Nelson, 86 percent for Scott and 5 percent don't know.

"Almost 3 million people have already voted, and Gillum is clearly leading in the gubernatorial race. The senate race with Nelson and Scott is neck and neck, and the few remaining undecided voters are going to play a pivotal role in the outcome," said Dr. Michael Binder, faculty director of the Public Opinion Research Lab at UNF. "The big leads that both Gillum and Nelson have among NPA/Others highlights the importance of having the right amount of independents in your poll. Currently less than 18 percent of ballots cast have been by NPA/Others, we estimate that number will be 19 percent by November 6Th."

When asked about the election for Florida Attorney General, 47 percent plan to vote for Ashley Moody, the Republican, and 40 percent of respondents indicated that they would vote for Sean Shaw, the Democrat; 13 percent don't know. In regards to the election for the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, 43 percent of likely voters plan to vote for Nikki Fried, the Democrat, 41 percent for Matt Caldwell, the Republican, and 17 percent don't know.

"Moody appears to have a comfortable lead in the Attorney General race, but the Agricultural Commission race is much tighter. Fried has a small lead, but there are a lot of undecided voters in both of the lower information cabinet races," Binder stated.

Additionally, the poll reveals that respondents continue to show high support for restoring felon voting rights. When asked whether they would vote "yes" or "no" on a proposition to restore the voting rights of Floridians with felony convictions, 69 percent of likely voters claimed they would vote "yes" on the proposition, with 23 percent voting "no." Only 8 percent didn't know how they would vote. Regarding race, 93 percent of African-American respondents indicated they would vote "yes" on the amendment, while 66 percent of white respondents and 61 percent of Hispanic respondents claimed they would vote "yes" on the proposition.

"Compared to our most recent poll in September, support for Amendment 4 has slipped a couple of points, but it still remains well above the 60 percent mark required for passage. Republican support has fallen by 9 percent, most likely due to some prominent Republican candidates expressing hesitation about the amendment," said Binder.

When likely voters were asked about banning offshore oil drilling and adding restrictions on vaping, 48 percent indicated that they would vote "yes," while 36 percent say they will vote "no". Sixteen percent don't know how they will vote. Of Democratic likely voters, 55 percent say they will vote "yes," 33 percent will vote "no," and 12 percent don't know. Thirty-eight percent of Republican likely voters say they will vote "yes," 42 percent will vote "no," and 20 percent don't know.

"The CRC bundled amendment that combines an offshore drilling ban and a workplace vaping ban has very little chance of passing based on these results. It's extremely rare for a ballot measure to garner more support in an election than it does in polling leading up to the election," Binder noted.

Regarding Trump's job approval, 45 percent of likely voters indicate that they approve of the way that Donald Trump is handling his job as president, while 51 percent disapprove. Four percent don't know.

For details about the methodology of the survey and additional crosstabs by sex, race, partisanship, education and age go to: http://www.unf.edu/coas/porl/2018FL2Fall.aspx

Survey Results
*Due to rounding, some columns may add up to more 100%
** Candidate choices were randomly rotated

If the election for Florida governor were being held today, how would you vote if the candidates were…

Answer Options	Florida Likely Voters n=1,048
Andrew Gillum, the Democrat	49%
Ron DeSantis, the Republican	43%
Someone Else	<1%
Don't Know	7%

Answer Options	Democratic Likely Voters n=422	Republican Likely Voters n=431	NPA/Other Likely Voters n=194
Andrew Gillum, the Democrat	87%	10%	56%
Ron DeSantis, the Republican	7%	84%	31%
Someone Else	1%	-	1%
Don't Know	6%	7%	13%

If the 2018 election for U.S. Senator from Florida were being held today, how would you vote if the candidates were…

Answer Options	Florida Likely Voters n=1,045
Bill Nelson, the Democrat	47%
Rick Scott, the Republican	46%
Someone Else	<1%
Don't Know	7%

Answer Options	Democratic Likely Voters n=420	Republican Likely Voters n=431	NPA/Other Likely Voters n=193
Bill Nelson, the Democrat	81%	10%	53%
Rick Scott, the Republican	9%	86%	36%
Someone Else	1%	-	-
Don't Know	9%	5%	10%

If the election for Florida Attorney General were being held today, how would you vote if the candidates were…

Answer Options	Florida Likely Voters n=1,048
Sean Shaw, the Democrat	40%
Ashley Moody, the Republican	47%
Someone Else	<1%
Don't Know	13%

Answer Options	Democratic Likely Voters n=422	Republican Likely Voters n=431	NPA/Other Likely Voters n=195
Sean Shaw, the Democrat	74%	6%	39%
Ashley Moody, the Republican	13%	84%	40%
Someone Else	<1%	-	-
Don't Know	13%	10%	22%

If the election for Florida Commissioner of Agriculture were being held today, how would you vote if the candidates were…

Answer Options	Florida Likely Voters n=1,046
Nikki Fried, the Democrat	43%
Matt Caldwell, the Republican	41%
Someone Else	<1%
Don't Know	17%

Answer Options	Democratic Likely Voters n=424	Republican Likely Voters n=430	NPA/Other Likely Voters n=194
Nikki Fried, the Democrat	79%	8%	41%
Matt Caldwell, the Republican	7%	77%	34%
Someone Else	-	<1%	1%
Don't Know	14%	15%	25%

Amendment 4 restores the voting rights of Floridians with felony convictions after they complete all terms of their sentence, including parole or probation. The amendment would not apply to those convicted of murder or sexual offenses, who would continue to be permanently barred from voting unless the Governor or Cabinet vote to restore their voting rights on a case by case basis. If the election were held today, would you vote "yes" or "no" for this proposition?

Answer Options	Florida Likely Voters n=1,049
Yes	69%
No	23%
Don't Know	8%

Answer Options	Democratic Likely Voters n=422	Republican Likely Voters n=430	NPA/Other Likely Voters n=196
Yes	84%	53%	71%
No	10%	37%	22%
Don't Know	6%	10%	7%

Answer Options	White Likely Voters n=721	Black Likely Voters n=139	Hispanic Likely Voters n=132	Other Race Likely Voters n=56
Yes	66%	93%	61%	63%
No	26%	6%	27%	25%
Don't Know	8%	1%	13%	13%

Amendment 9 prohibits drilling for the exploration or extraction of oil and natural gas beneath all state-owned waters between the mean high water line and the state's outermost territorial boundaries. Adds use of vapor-generating electronic devices to current prohibition of tobacco smoking in enclosed indoor workplaces with exceptions; permits more restrictive local vapor ordinances. If the election were held today, would you vote "yes" or "no" for this proposition?

Answer Options	Florida Likely Voters n=1,046
Yes	48%
No	36%
Don't Know	16%

Answer Options	Democratic Likely Voters n=422	Republican Likely Voters n=427	NPA/Other Likely Voters n=196
Yes	55%	38%	54%
No	33%	42%	30%
Don't Know	12%	20%	17%

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

Answer Options	Florida Likely Voters n=1,039
Approve	45%
Disapprove	51%
Don't Know	4%

Answer Options	Democratic Likely Voters n=421	Republican Likely Voters n=427	NPA/Other Likely Voters n=192
Approve	11%	84%	36%
Disapprove	86%	13%	57%
Don't Know	4%	3%	7%

Survey Demographics

Party Registration	Florida Likely Voters n=1,051
Republican	41%
Democrat	40%
NPA and other	19%

Age	Florida Likely Voters n=1,051
18 to 24	8%
25 to 34	9%
35 to 44	11%
45 to 55	16%
56 to 64	21%
65 and older	35%

Race	Florida Likely Voters n=1,051
White (not Hispanic)	69%
Black (not Hispanic)	13%
Hispanic	13%
Other	5%

Sex	Florida Likely Voters n=1,051
Male	45%
Female	55%

Telephone	Florida Likely Voters n=1,047
Landline	27%
Cell phone	73%

What is the highest grade in school or year of college you have completed?

Education	Florida Likely Voters n=1,051
Less than high school	4%
High school graduate	21%
Some college	34%
College graduate	25%
Post graduate degree	16%

What language was this survey completed in?

Survey language completed in…	Florida Likely Voters n=1,051
English	96%
Spanish	4%

Methodology

The UNF Florida statewide poll was conducted and sponsored by the Public Opinion Research Lab at the University of North Florida, from Tuesday, Oct. 23 through Friday, Oct. 26, by live callers via the telephone; calls were made from 1 to 9 p.m. daily. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish by PORL interviewers. The phone numbers used for this survey were sourced from the voter file database provided by the Florida Division of Elections' October 10, 2018, update.

The sample frame was comprised of potentially likely voters who reside in Florida. Potentially likely voters were determined by vote history and having voted in the any of the following elections: 2014 primary election, 2014 general election, 2016 primary election, 2018 primary election or any two of these elections—the 2016 presidential preference primary, the 2016 general election or the 2012 general election.

All voters who were 22 years of age and younger were included as potentially likely since they were ineligible to vote in enough of the previous elections to qualify as potentially likely. Additionally, a small segment of 'unlikely' voters (11 percent of respondents), demographically representative of all registered voters, were included in the sample to capture potential new voters. The voters who met these requirements were then randomly contacted by probability sampling. Respondents who answered that they would "definitely vote," "probably vote" or have "already voted" in the upcoming Florida General Election qualified to participate in the survey. Overall, there were 1,176 completed surveys with a total of 1,051 likely Florida voters, 18 years of age or older. Only data from likely voters is presented here.

The margin of sampling error for the total sample is +/- 3 percentage points. The breakdown of completed responses on a landline phone to a cell phone was 27 to 73 percent. A single interviewer, through hand dialing, upon reaching the specific registered voter as identified

in the Florida voter file, asked the respondent to participate, regardless of landline telephone or cell phone. To ensure a representative sample being collected, the sample was stratified using the 10 Florida designated market areas (DMA). DMAs are defined as regions where the population can receive the same or similar television and radio station offerings, as well as other types of media including newspapers and internet content. In addition, because of Miami-Dade County's unique population, it was separately accounted for in its own strata, creating 11 strata from the 10 DMAs. Quotas were placed on each of these stratified areas to ensure a proportionate amount of completed surveys from across the state. Data were then weighted by partisan registration, sex, race, age and education.

Education weights were created from the 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 2014 exit polls. The ACS identifies 28 percent Floridians aged 25 and older as having a college degree, whereas 51 percent of the 2014 Florida exit polls were college educated. Due to the education bias in survey participation, the difference was split and weighted to 40 percent of the sample having a college degree. Partisan registration, sex, race and age weights were created from the October 10, 2018, update of the Florida voter file to match the active registered potentially likely voters in the state of Florida. These demographic characteristics were pulled from the voter file list. All weighted demographic variables were applied using the SPSS version 23 rake weighting function. There were no statistical adjustments made due to design effects. This survey was sponsored by the UNF PORL and directed by Dr. Michael Binder, UNF associate professor of political science.

The PORL is a full-service survey research facility that provides tailored research to fulfill each client's individual needs from political, economic, social and cultural projects. The PORL opened in 2001 and is an independent, non-partisan center, a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative and a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organization. For more information about methodology, contact Binder at porl@unf.edu or at (904) 620-2784.

UNF, a nationally ranked university located on an environmentally beautiful campus, offers students who are dedicated to enriching the lives of others the opportunity to build their own futures through a well-rounded education

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