



**University of North Florida**  
Public Opinion Research Lab  
[www.unf.edu/coas/porl/](http://www.unf.edu/coas/porl/)

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***\*\*\*\*\*EMBARGO UNTIL 5:00AM Wednesday, February 7, 2018\*\*\*\*\****

**New UNF Poll Shows Sen. Bill Nelson Leading Gov. Rick Scott in 2018 Senate Election**  
***President Donald Trump's Job Approval Rating Low But Improving***

The Public Opinion Research Lab at the University of North Florida has a new poll that reveals Sen. Bill Nelson in the lead for the upcoming Senate election, with Gov. Rick Scott trailing close behind. The survey also shows that President Trump's job approval rating has risen some since last fall.

The poll, comprised of Florida registered voters, shows that of likely voters in 2018, 48 percent plan to vote for Nelson, the Democratic candidate in the upcoming election for U.S. Senate, while 42 percent plan to vote for Scott, the Republican. Of those likely voters, 7 percent don't know who their choice will be.

Regarding the U.S. House of Representatives, when asked who they would vote for if the election were held today, 42 percent of likely voters indicated they would vote for the Democratic candidate, 40 percent would plan to vote for the Republican candidate and 14 percent didn't know.

"Even though it appears Nelson has a reasonable lead in the poll, the election results will ultimately get determined by who shows up in November," said Michael Binder, faculty director of the Public Opinion Research Lab at UNF. "Historically, Republicans have enjoyed a turnout advantage in midterms, but with the current mood of the country, and a large number of Republican retirements, Democrats are optimistic about an impending blue wave."

Of registered voters who were asked whether they approve or disapprove of the way Nelson is handling his job as senator, 52 percent of registered voters claim to somewhat or strongly approve, with only 20 percent somewhat or strongly disapproving. Notably, 26 percent of voters expressed they don't know how Nelson is handling his job. When asked about the way Scott is handling his job as Florida governor, 63 percent reported to strongly or somewhat approve, with 31 percent disapproving either somewhat or strongly.

“Both senate candidates have net positive job approval ratings of 32 percentage points,” said Binder. “This high level of job approval is very unusual and is going to lead to a hotly contested election.”

When asked about how Sen. Marco Rubio is handling his job, 55 percent strongly or somewhat approve, compared to the 35 percent who reported to somewhat or strongly disapprove.

When asked about President Donald Trump's job approval rating, 43 percent of the overall sample strongly or somewhat approve of how he's handling his job, with 53 percent disapproving somewhat or strongly. A large amount of registered Democrats—87 percent—disapprove of Trump, while only 16 percent of registered Republicans disapprove. On the contrary, Trump held 81 percent job approval among registered Republicans, compared to 40 percent approval among nonpartisans and a dismal 10 percent job approval among registered Democrats.

“Most presidents would consider 43 percent approval and net negative 10 percentage points a troubling number, but Trump's approval is up 6 percentage points from his approval level in October, and his net negatives have improved by 12 percentage points,” noted Binder.

In light of the recent investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 election, when asked about the way Robert Mueller is handling his job as Special Counsel for the United States Department of Justice, 40 percent of registered voters somewhat or strongly approve, 28 percent of voters somewhat or strongly disapprove and 29 percent of voters don't know how he's handling his job.

“Even though Mueller is acting in a legal capacity, and has a 12-percentage point net positive job approval, there are partisan divisions as Democrats are much more supportive than Republicans in their views on Mueller,” said Binder.

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

## Survey Results

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

| Answer Options             | February 2018<br>Florida Likely<br>Voters<br>n=429** | October 2017<br>Florida Likely Voters<br>n=706* | February 2017<br>Florida Registered<br>Voters<br>n=957 |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Bill Nelson, the Democrat  | 48%  | 37%   | 44%  |
| Rick Scott, the Republican | 42%  | 36%   | 38%  |
| Someone else               | 2%   | 7%  | 3%   |
| Don't Know                 | 7%   | 20%   | 12%  |
| Refusal                    | -  | -   | -  |

\*Respondents that indicated that they would vote in the upcoming senatorial election

\*\* Respondents that indicated active voting and/or enthusiasm for the upcoming midterm election

| Answer Options             | Democrats | Republicans | NPA/Others |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Bill Nelson, the Democrat  | 86%       | 14%         | 42%        |
| Rick Scott, the Republican | 7%        | 79%         | 42%        |
| Someone else               | 2%        | 1%          | 6%         |
| Don't Know                 | 5%        | 7%          | 10%        |
| Refusal                    | -         | -           |            |

If the election for the U.S. House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for (the Democratic candidate) or (the Republican candidate) in your congressional district?

| Answer Options           | February 2018<br>Florida Likely Voters<br>n=429** |
|--------------------------|---|
| The Democratic candidate | 42%   |
| The Republican candidate | 40%   |
| Other                    | 5%  |
| Don't Know               | 13%   |
| Refusal                  | -   |

| Answer Options           | Democrats | Republicans | NPA/Others |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| The Democratic candidate | 82%       | 6%          | 35%        |
| The Republican candidate | 6%        | 82%         | 26%        |
| Other                    | 2%        | 2%          | 13%        |
| Don't Know               | 10%       | 10%         | 26%        |
| Refusal                  | -         | -           | -          |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Bill Nelson is handling his job as United States senator?

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>February 2018<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters<br/>n=619</b> | <b>October 2017<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters n=834</b> | <b>February 2017<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters<br/>n=945</b> |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| Strongly Approve      | 19%  | 12%   | 13%  |
| Somewhat Approve      | 33%  | 23%   | 29%  |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 8%   | 9%  | 16%  |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 12%  | 6%  | 12%  |
| Don't Know            | 26%  | 49%   | 29%  |
| Refusal               | 2%   | 1%  | -  |

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>Democrats</b> | <b>Republicans</b> | <b>NPA/Others</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Approve      | 28%              | 12%                | 14%               |
| Somewhat Approve      | 41%              | 22%                | 38%               |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 5%               | 14%                | 3%                |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 7%               | 22%                | 8%                |
| Don't Know            | 19%              | 28%                | 35%               |
| Refusal               | -                | 2%                 | 2%                |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Rick Scott is handling his job as governor of Florida?

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>February 2018<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters<br/>n=619</b> | <b>October 2017<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters n=834</b> | <b>February 2017<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters<br/>n=957</b> |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| Strongly Approve      | 29%  | 26%   | 17%  |
| Somewhat Approve      | 34%  | 33%   | 29%  |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 14%  | 15%   | 14%  |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 17%  | 13%   | 26%  |
| Don't Know            | 5%   | 11%   | 14%  |
| Refusal               | 1%   | 1%  | -  |

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>Democrats</b> | <b>Republicans</b> | <b>NPA/Others</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Approve      | 12%              | 51%                | 25%               |
| Somewhat Approve      | 30%              | 31%                | 41%               |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 19%              | 8%                 | 14%               |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 32%              | 3%                 | 14%               |
| Don't Know            | 6%               | 6%                 | 5%                |
| Refusal               | -                | 1%                 | 1%                |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Marco Rubio is handling his job as United States senator?

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>February 2018<br/>Florida<br/>Registered Voters<br/>n=619</b> | <b>October 2017<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters n=834</b> | <b>February 2017<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters<br/>n=956</b> |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| Strongly Approve      | 17%  | 13%   | 15%  |
| Somewhat Approve      | 38%  | 29%   | 25%  |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 14%  | 18%   | 17%  |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 22%  | 19%   | 31%  |
| Don't Know            | 9%   | 20%   | 12%  |
| Refusal               | 1%   | 1%  | -  |

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>Democrats</b> | <b>Republicans</b> | <b>NPA/Others</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Approve      | 7%               | 31%                | 13%               |
| Somewhat Approve      | 29%              | 41%                | 46%               |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 21%              | 11%                | 9%                |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 36%              | 9%                 | 18%               |
| Don't Know            | 8%               | 7%                 | 12%               |
| Refusal               | -                | 2%                 | 1%                |

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

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>February 2018<br/>Florida<br/>Registered Voters<br/>n=619</b> | <b>October 2017<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters n=834</b> | <b>February 2017<br/>Florida Registered<br/>Voters<br/>n=957</b> |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| Strongly Approve      | 30%  | 19%   | 28%  |
| Somewhat Approve      | 13%  | 18%   | 16%  |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 9%   | 9%  | 7%   |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 44%  | 50%   | 44%  |
| Don't Know            | 2%   | 2%  | 4%   |
| Refusal               | 2%   | 1%  | -  |

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>Democrats</b> | <b>Republicans</b> | <b>NPA/Others</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Approve      | 4%               | 64%                | 22%               |
| Somewhat Approve      | 6%               | 17%                | 18%               |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 11%              | 4%                 | 13%               |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 76%              | 12%                | 44%               |
| Don't Know            | 2%               | 2%                 | 1%                |
| Refusal               | 1%               | 1%                 | 3%                |

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Robert Mueller is handling his job as Special Counsel for the United States Department of justice?

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>February 2018<br/>Florida Registered Voters<br/>n=619</b> |
|-----------------------|--|
| Strongly Approve      | 19%  |
| Somewhat Approve      | 21%  |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 11%  |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 17%  |
| Don't Know            | 29%  |
| Refusal               | 3%   |

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>Democrats</b> | <b>Republicans</b> | <b>NPA/Others</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Approve      | 33%              | 7%                 | 13%               |
| Somewhat Approve      | 22%              | 21%                | 21%               |
| Somewhat Disapprove   | 9%               | 16%                | 7%                |
| Strongly Disapprove   | 11%              | 25%                | 16%               |
| Don't Know            | 24%              | 28%                | 39%               |
| Refusal               | 1%               | 3%                 | 4%                |

How often do you vote in non-presidential elections? Rate your involvement on a scale of one to five, where one is never and five is always.

| <b>Answer Options</b> | <b>February 2018<br/>Florida Registered Voters<br/>n=619</b> |
|-----------------------|--|
| One (never)           | 17%  |
| Two                   | 9%   |
| Three                 | 17%  |
| Four                  | 14%  |
| Five (always)         | 43%  |
| Don't Know            | 1%   |
| Refusal               | <1%  |

Thinking about the upcoming Florida midterm election in November, overall, would you say you are:

| <b>Answer Options</b>   | <b>February 2018<br/>Florida Registered Voters<br/>n=619</b> |
|-------------------------|--|
| Not at all enthusiastic | 27%  |
| Somewhat enthusiastic   | 44%  |
| Very enthusiastic       | 25%  |
| Don't Know              | 3%   |
| Refusal                 | 1%   |

## Survey Demographics

| <b>Party Registration</b> | <b>Florida Registered Voters n=619</b> |
|---------------------------|--|
| Republican                | 35%                                    |
| Democrat                  | 37%                                    |
| NPA and other             | 27%                                    |

| <b>Age</b>   | <b>Florida Registered Voters n=619</b> |
|--------------|--|
| 18 to 24     | 9%                                     |
| 25 to 34     | 15%                                    |
| 35 to 44     | 14%                                    |
| 45 to 55     | 16%                                    |
| 56 to 64     | 18%                                    |
| 65 and older | 28%                                    |

| <b>Race</b>          | <b>Florida Registered Voters n=619</b> |
|----------------------|--|
| White (not Hispanic) | 64%                                    |
| Black (not Hispanic) | 13%                                    |
| Hispanic             | 16%                                    |
| Other                | 7%                                     |

| <b>Sex</b> | <b>Florida Registered Voters n=619</b> |
|------------|--|
| Male       | 46%                                    |
| Female     | 54%                                    |

| <b>Telephone</b> | <b>Florida Registered Voters n=619</b> |
|------------------|--|
| Landline         | 27%                                    |
| Cell phone       | 73%                                    |
| Don't Know       | <1%                                    |
| Refusal          | <1%                                    |

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

| <b>Education</b>      | <b>Florida Registered Voters n=619</b> |
|-----------------------|--|
| Less than high school | 3%                                     |
| High school graduate  | 20%                                    |
| Some college          | 41%                                    |
| College graduate      | 21%                                    |
| Post graduate degree  | 14%                                    |
| Don't Know            | <1%                                    |
| Refusal               | 1%                                     |

What is your annual household income?

| <b>Income</b>         | <b>Florida Registered Voters n=619</b> |
|-----------------------|--|
| Less than \$25,000    | 14%                                    |
| \$25,000 to \$50,000  | 16%                                    |
| \$50,000 to \$75,000  | 17%                                    |
| \$75,000 to \$100,000 | 12%                                    |
| Above \$100,000       | 22%                                    |
| Don't Know            | 7%                                     |
| Refusal               | 14%                                    |

What language was this survey completed in?

| <b>Survey language completed in...</b> | <b>Florida Registered Voters n=619</b> |
|--|--|
| English                                | 97%                                    |
| Spanish                                | 3%                                     |

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