

October 25, 2022

Florida Pre-Election Survey

Summary: Researchers at the University of South Florida conducted a statewide survey of 600 Floridians to measure public opinion around the upcoming election. This report summarizes responses related to the most important issues heading into the election, favorability ratings of candidates for Governor and Senate, presidential/gubernatorial job approval, and perceptions of the Democratic and Republican parties. The survey included a representative sample of Floridians, fielded between October 14 and 23. Topline results are reported below with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/- 4.

For most Floridians, a high stakes election for Governor is all about “pocketbook issues”. More than 80% of Floridians say that this year’s election for Governor will be “very important” in “shaping Florida’s future”. Another 15% say that it will be at least “somewhat important”. When asked to identify the issues that will have the most impact on how they vote, more than half (52%) said “inflation”. Nearly three quarters (73%) said that “pocketbook issues” are more important to them than “social values issues” heading into the election.

Governor DeSantis has strong approval among Floridians in several key areas. A majority of Floridians (57%) say that they either “strongly” or “somewhat approve” of the job being done by Governor DeSantis when it comes to jobs and the economy. A large majority (72%) also say that they approve of the Governor’s job in responding to Hurricane Ian. The Governor received plurality support in several other key areas, including immigration (48%), climate change (43%) and unifying Floridians (50%).

Candidate favorability ratings for key statewide races. Respondents provided their favorability ratings for major party candidates in the races for Governor and Senate:

- Ron DeSantis 52% Favorable/39% Unfavorable
- Charlie Crist 31% Favorable/39% Unfavorable

- Marco Rubio 40% Favorable/40% Unfavorable
- Val Demings 33% Favorable/35% Unfavorable

Consistent with national trends, President Biden’s approval ratings have improved slightly but remain low in key areas. Among Floridians, 40% say that they approve of the job that Joe Biden is doing on “jobs and the economy”, while 35% approve of the job that he is doing in the area of “foreign policy”. In contrast, only 25% approve of the President’s handling of recent inflation, while 69% disapprove. A third (33%) approve of the President’s handling of “immigration and border security”, while 58% disapprove”.

Looking ahead to 2024, most Floridians say they're ready for something new. When asked if they believe that Joe Biden should run for a second term as President, only 19% of Floridians said “yes”, while 66% said “no”. Similarly, only 28% said that Donald Trump should run for a second term as President in 2024, while 64% said “no”. When asked if they feel that Ron DeSantis should run for President in 2024, Floridians were more divided; 43% said “yes”, while 46% said “no”.

Many Floridians feel unrepresented by the Democratic and Republican parties. Less than half of Floridians say that they have a favorable view of the Democratic or Republican party (41% and 43% respectively). Nearly one in five (24%) say that the Democratic Party now represents the values of only its most extreme voters, while even more (30%) say the same about the Republican party. In each case, only 38% of respondents felt that either party was representative of “moderate” voters

Voters lack confidence in the ability of Democrats and Republicans to work together in the common interest. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents said that they were either “not very” or “not at all confident” in the ability of Democratic and Republican leaders in Florida to work together in the state’s best interest. Nationally, the numbers were even worse, as 74% said that they lacked confidence in the ability of Democrats and Republicans in Washington D.C. to work together in the nation’s best interest.

Many Floridians are finding it hard to stay optimistic in the current political environment. When asked about America’s future, a majority of respondents (57%) said that they worry that the country’s best days may be behind us. Only 27% expressed confidence that America’s best days are still to come. Only 46% felt that Democratic party leaders “are optimistic when they talk about America’s future”. Only 41% said the same of Republicans.

Nearly half of Floridians say that they're open to supporting a more moderate “third party”. When asked if they would support the formation of a more centrist third party, 46% of Floridians said that they would be at least somewhat supportive of the idea, while 46% also said that they would be at least somewhat likely to vote for a third party candidate for President (if the candidate were qualified to serve in the office and held centrist views that were compromise between traditional Republican and Democratic positions).

Midterm Elections – General Questions

Q: In your opinion, how important will this year’s election for Governor be in shaping Florida’s Future? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Very Important	81.8%	83.3%	74.3%	94.3%
Somewhat Important	15.3%	14.1%	20.9%	5.7%
Not Very Important	2.4%	1.5%	3.4%	0.0%
Not at All Important	0.8%	1.0%	1.4%	0.0%

Q: Thinking about how you will vote in this Fall’s midterm elections, which of the following is MOST important to you? (n=500 likely voters)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Pocketbook Issues (i.e. jobs, economy, inflation)	73.4%	55.6%	74.6%	90.3%
Social Values Issues (i.e. abortion, equity, LGBTQ rights)	26.6%	44.4%	25.4%	9.7%

Q: Thinking about the upcoming elections in November, which three of the following issues will have the most significant impact on how you decide to vote? (n=500 likely voters)

1. Inflation 52%
2. Economy/Jobs 48%
3. Immigration 32%
4. Abortion 28%
5. Gun Violence/Crime 27%
6. Healthcare 22%
7. Education 17%
8. Climate Change 15%

*All other options selected by 10% or less of respondents.

Favorability and Approval

Q. For each of the following individuals, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion? (n=600, reported as % of row total)

	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
Ron DeSantis	32.0%	20.3%	8.5%	12.5%	26.7%
Charlie Crist	8.2%	22.7%	30.0%	14.7%	24.5%
Marco Rubio	18.2%	21.7%	19.7%	15.0%	25.5%
Val Demings	13.7%	19.5%	31.5%	15.8%	19.5%

Q: Do you approve or disapprove of the job that Governor DeSantis has done in responding to Hurricane Ian? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Strongly Approve	43.2%	22.7%	33.8%	76.2%
Somewhat Approve	28.8%	34.3%	33.1%	16.6%
Somewhat Disapprove	11.3%	17.2%	12.8%	2.6%
Strongly Disapprove	10.8%	17.7%	14.2%	3.6%
Unsure	5.8%	8.1%	6.1%	1.0%

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the job that **Governor Ron DeSantis** is doing in each of the following areas? (As a percentage of total respondents by row)

	Total Approval	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapproval	Somewhat Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	Unsure
Jobs and the Economy	57.3	30.0	27.3	36.3	15.3	21.0	6.3
Social Policy (i.e. abortion, LGBTQ Issues, etc.)	43.1	21.8	21.3	49.0	12.7	36.3	8.3
Immigration	47.6	31.8	15.8	45.4	12.2	33.2	7.0
Race Relations	46.5	24.5	22.0	41.3	13.3	28.0	12.2
Climate Change	43.3	19.0	24.3	39.2	14.0	25.2	17.5
Unifying Floridians	49.5	27.7	21.8	42.3	11.3	31.0	8.2

N=600; (Statistically significant differences in approval exist across each policy area by political partisanship. Detailed partisanship data available upon request.)

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the job that **President Joe Biden** is doing in each of the following areas? (As a percentage of total respondents by row)

	Total Approval	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapproval	Somewhat Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	Unsure
Jobs and the Economy	40.0	11.3	28.7	55.1	14.8	40.3	4.8
Social Policy (i.e. abortion, LGBTQ issues, etc.)	41.6	13.8	27.8	47.8	13.3	34.5	10.5
Inflation	25.4	6.7	18.7	68.8	18.0	50.8	5.8
Foreign Policy	34.7	12.7	22.0	53.5	15.5	38.0	11.8
Immigration and Border Security	33.2	9.2	24.0	58.2	13.7	44.5	8.7
Climate Change	44.3	14.0	30.3	43.0	14.2	28.8	12.7
Unifying Americans	36.3	11.5	24.8	51.5	13.3	38.2	12.2

N=600; (Statistically significant differences in approval exist across each policy area by political partisanship. Detailed partisanship data available upon request.)

Potential 2024 Candidates

Q: In your opinion, should Joe Biden Run for a second term as President in 2024? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Yes	18.7%	39.4%	6.1%	5.7%
No	65.7%	37.4%	76.4%	89.6%
Unsure	15.7%	23.2%	6.1%	4.7%

Q: In your opinion, should Donald Trump Run for a second term as President in 2024? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Yes	27.5%	7.1%	20.9%	52.3%
No	63.7%	89.4%	70.3%	34.7%
Unsure	8.8%	3.5%	8.8%	13.0%

Q: Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has recently been discussed as a potential Presidential candidate in 2024. In your opinion, should Governor DeSantis run for President in 2024? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Yes	42.5%	18.2%	37.8%	71.5%
No	46.0%	73.7%	47.3%	19.2%
Unsure	11.5%	8.1%	14.9%	9.3%

Political Party Perceptions

Q: Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the Democratic Party (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Very Favorable	15.7%	40.4%	1.4%	2.6%
Somewhat Favorable	25.0%	41.9%	30.4%	4.7%
Neither Favorable or Unfavorable	16.0%	8.6%	26.4%	8.8%
Somewhat Unfavorable	16.2%	6.6%	22.3%	21.2%
Very Unfavorable	27.2%	2.5%	19.6%	62.7%

Q: Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the Republican Party (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Very Favorable	17.8%	3.0%	6.1%	45.1%
Somewhat Favorable	25.3%	11.1%	27.7%	41.5%
Neither Favorable or Unfavorable	16.5%	13.6%	27.0%	5.2%
Somewhat Unfavorable	14.0%	22.7%	13.5%	5.7%
Very Unfavorable	25.3%	49.5%	25.7%	2.6%

Q: In your opinion, which of the following statements most accurately describes the Democratic Party today? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
The Democratic party represents the values of most liberal voters.	25.0%	25.3%	18.2%	33.2%
The Democratic party represents the values of most liberal AND moderate voters.	37.7%	57.6%	36.5%	17.1%
The Democratic party represents the values of only its most extreme voters.	23.5%	7.1%	24.3%	41.5%
Unsure	13.8%	10.1%	20.9%	8.3%

Q: In your opinion, which of the following statements most accurately describes the Republican Party today? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
The Republican party represents the values of most conservative voters.	22.3%	22.2%	15.5%	27.5%
The Republican party represents the values of most conservative AND moderate voters.	38.2%	17.7%	34.5%	63.7%
The Republican party represents the values of only its most extreme voters.	30.3%	50.5%	37.2%	5.7%
Unsure	9.2%	9.6%	12.8%	3.1%

Q: Thinking about the messages that you hear from Democratic Party leaders, which of the following statements do you feel is MOST accurate? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Democratic leaders are mostly optimistic when they talk about America's future.	46.2%	70.7%	42.5%	23.3%
Democratic leaders are mostly pessimistic when they talk about America's future.	31.8%	13.1%	30.4%	56.0%
Unsure	22.0%	16.2%	27.0%	20.7%

Q: Thinking about the messages that you hear from Republican Party leaders, which of the following statements do you feel is MOST accurate? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Republican leaders are mostly optimistic when they talk about America's future.	41.3%	21.7%	30.4%	73.1%
Republican leaders are mostly pessimistic when they talk about America's future.	39.5%	61.6%	43.2%	16.6%
Unsure	19.2%	16.7%	26.4%	10.4%

Q: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: The Democratic Party is welcoming to people of all backgrounds. (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Strongly Agree	28.5%	58.1%	16.9%	7.3%
Somewhat Agree	31.8%	34.8%	40.5%	23.8%
Somewhat Disagree	12.5%	3.0%	16.9%	17.6%
Strongly Disagree	22.0%	3.0%	16.9%	48.2%
Unsure	5.2%	1.0%	8.8%	3.1%

Q: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: The Republican Party is welcoming to people of all backgrounds. (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Strongly Agree	22.3%	3.0%	9.5%	56.0%
Somewhat Agree	22.2%	13.6%	25.7%	27.5%
Somewhat Disagree	17.5%	20.7%	23.6%	7.8%
Strongly Disagree	32.3%	59.6%	34.5%	5.7%
Unsure	5.7%	3.0%	6.8%	3.1%

Q: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Democratic Party leaders talk about their values in a way that inspires me. (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Strongly Agree	14.8%	37.9%	3.4%	1.0%
Somewhat Agree	22.0%	38.9%	22.3%	6.2%
Somewhat Disagree	15.2%	9.1%	21.6%	14.0%
Strongly Disagree	39.0%	8.1%	37.2%	76.2%
Unsure	9.0%	6.1%	15.5%	2.6%

Q: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Republican Party leaders talk about their values in a way that inspires me. (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Strongly Agree	22.3%	5.1%	10.8%	52.3%
Somewhat Agree	21.8%	11.1%	25.0%	32.6%
Somewhat Disagree	14.2%	18.7%	17.6%	6.7%
Strongly Disagree	34.3%	61.6%	35.8%	6.2%
Unsure	7.3%	3.5%	10.8%	2.1%

Q: How confident are you in the ability of Democratic and Republican leaders in Florida to work together to serve the best interests of Floridians? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Very Confident	6.2%	7.6%	2.7%	7.8%
Somewhat Confident	23.5%	17.2%	4.7%	32.1%
Not Very Confident	40.7%	44.9%	39.2%	37.3%
Not at All Confident	24.3%	27.3%	32.4%	17.1%
Unsure	5.3%	3.0%	4.7%	5.7%

Q: How confident are you in the ability of Democratic and Republican leaders in Washington D.C. to work together to serve the best interests of Americans? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Very Confident	3.7%	5.1%	2.7%	2.1%
Somewhat Confident	17.3%	21.7%	16.9%	14.0%
Not Very Confident	38.0%	39.9%	38.5%	36.3%
Not at All Confident	35.7%	28.3%	35.8%	45.1%
Unsure	5.3%	5.1%	6.1%	2.6%

*Q: Would you support or oppose the formation of a third major political party in the United States, if that party advanced centrist views (i.e. a compromise of positions held by Democrats and Republicans)?
(n=600)*

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Strongly Support	18.8%	16.7%	28.4%	13.5%
Somewhat Support	27.0%	31.8%	24.3%	25.9%
Neither Support/Oppose	37.7%	34.3%	38.5%	35.8%
Somewhat Oppose	8.2%	10.1%	6.1%	8.3%
Strongly Oppose	8.3%	7.1%	2.7%	16.6%

Q: How likely would you be to vote for a third party or Independent candidate for President in 2024, if that candidate was qualified to serve as President and held centrist views (i.e. a compromise of positions held by Democrats and Republicans)?

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Very Likely	15.5%	11.6%	29.7%	8.8%
Somewhat Likely	30.2%	33.8%	29.1%	26.9%
Not Very Likely	20.5%	20.2%	16.9%	25.4%
Not at All Likely	16.7%	19.2%	6.1%	23.3%
Unsure	17.2%	15.2%	18.2%	15.5%

Q: When you think about our country's future, do you feel that America's best years are yet to come, or do you worry that our best years are already behind us? (n=600)

	TOTAL	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
I think that our best years are still to come.	26.7%	34.8%	19.6%	25.4%
I worry that our best years are behind us.	56.5%	51.0%	58.8%	61.7%
Unsure	16.8%	14.1%	21.6%	13.0%

Survey Information

600 adult Floridians were surveyed via an online web-panel using an industry leading market research provider. The survey was fielded from October 14th through October 23rd 2022, and the results are reported with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of +/- 4. Respondents were selected via stratified, quota sampling to ensure a representative sample. Balanced quotas for gender, age, race/ethnicity, education and party affiliation were determined based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Florida's Department of State, and Florida's Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR). Quotas were stratified by region of the state for geographical representativeness.

Sample Comparison

	USF Survey Sample	Florida Demographics*
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	51.3%	51.1%
Male	48.0%	48.9%
Other	0.7%	-
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	10.8%	10.8%
25-44	31.0%	31.2%
45-64	32.2%	32.4%
65+	26.0%	25.6%
<i>Race</i>		
Black/African American	18.0%	16.9%
White/Caucasian	74.0%	77.3%
Other	8.1%	5.8%
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Hispanic	27.8%	26.4%
Non-Hispanic	72.2%	73.6%
<i>Education</i>		
Less than 4 Year Degree	71.0%	69.5%
4 Year Degree (or higher)	29.0%	30.5%
<i>Political Affiliation (registered voters only, n=541)</i>		
Democrat	36.6%	36.2%
Independent	27.4%	26.4%
Republican	35.7%	35.7%
Other	0.3%	1.7%
<i>Region</i>		
Panhandle	7.3%	7.2%
Northeast Florida	12.5%	12.4%
Central Florida	25.2%	25.5%
West Coast	22.5%	21.9%
Southeast Florida	32.5%	32.9%

*Gender, race, ethnicity, and region quotas based on U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (PEP): <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fl> Age quotas based on Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR): <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/population-demographics/data/index-floridaproducts.cfm> Political Affiliation quotas based on Florida Division of Elections <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/data-statistics/voter-registration-statistics/voter-registration-reportsxlsx/voter-registration-by-party-affiliation/>

About our Research Team

Stephen Neely (PhD, North Carolina State University, 2013) is an Associate Professor in the School of Public Affairs at the University of South Florida. He is coordinator of the School's undergraduate program in *Leadership and Public Service*. His areas of specialization include survey research, quantitative data analysis, and public policy. He is a faculty researcher on the Sunshine State Survey project and has conducted survey research on behalf of local governments throughout the state of Florida. For additional information please visit his [USF faculty page](#). Dr. Neely can be contacted by email at srneely@usf.edu

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***For media inquiries, please contact Stephen Neely at srneely@usf.edu**