



PORL Public Opinion Research Lab

Embargo: October 20, 2020 - 5 a.m. EST

New UNF Poll Puts Biden Barely Ahead in Florida

Florida Voters Polarized on Trump's Job Performance

A new poll of likely Florida voters, conducted by the Public Opinion Research Lab (PORL) at the University of North Florida, shows former Vice President Joe Biden has a razor thin lead on President Donald Trump in the 2020 race for President of the United States. The poll also revealed that a plurality of likely voters in Florida disapprove of Trump's job performance as president.

When asked who they would vote for if the election were held today, 48% of respondents indicated an intention to vote for Joe Biden, putting him a single percentage point ahead of Donald Trump, for whom 47% of respondents said they would vote.

"While some polls have shown Biden with a big lead in Florida and other key states, we made an effort to capture hard-to-reach voters and our results suggest that it might be a long night on November 3rd," said Dr. Michael Binder, PORL faculty director and associate professor of political science. "This is Florida, and elections are never easy here, I expect this race to come down to the wire."

President Trump's job approval is polarized, but closely split as 47% of likely voters approve of the job he is doing while 49% disapprove. Very few people find themselves in the middle with Trump as 82% of the respondents have strong approval or disapproval.

Regarding voting method, 43% said they would vote by mail, with 29% planning to vote early in person, and just 26% on election day. Extensive mail in balloting has led to 25% of respondents indicated they had already cast their vote by mail.

"It is extremely important to remember that with the increased use of mail-in ballots across the country and some competitive states in the Midwest not allowed to start counting their mail ballots until Election Day, we might not know the winner of the election for a few days – and that is just fine," said Binder. "It does not mean there is anything improper occurring that would threaten the integrity of the electoral process."

In an effort to capture difficult-to-reach voters, respondents that indicated a vote preference prior to the end of the survey were also included when calculating who the survey participants would vote for. Additionally, respondents who refused to give a stated vote choice had their vote choice imputed. If the respondent indicated that they had already voted or were at least probably going to vote and strongly approved of the job that President Trump was doing, that voter was calculated as voting for President Trump. If a respondent already voted or was at least probably going to vote but had a strong disapproval of the job President Trump was doing, they were classified as a Biden voter.

Methodology

The UNF PORL Florida Statewide Poll is comprised of 863 registered, likely Florida voters and was conducted Monday, October 12 through Saturday, October 16, 2020 by the Public Opinion Research Lab (PORL) at the University of North Florida. The sample frame was comprised of registered, likely Florida voters, 18 years of age or older. Likely voters were determined through vote history and a self-identified likelihood to vote. The landline and cell phone numbers used for this survey were sourced from the September 2020 update of the Florida voter file.

Respondents were contacted by live callers via the telephone from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m. daily with up to two callbacks attempted. PORL employees conducted interviews in both English and Spanish. Data collection took place, both at the PORL facility with its 27-station Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system, as well as remotely, using specialized CATI software.

The margin of sampling error for the total sample is +/- 3.3 percentage points. Through hand dialing, an interviewer upon reaching the individual as specified in the voter file asked that respondent to participate, regardless of landline telephone or cellphone. Data were then weighted by partisan registration, age, race, sex, education, geography, self-identified likelihood to vote and 2016 vote choice. Education weights were created from the Census' 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) estimate for the percent of college-educated individuals within each strata in the state of Florida, approximately 29% statewide. Partisan registration, sex, race, and age weights were created from the September update of the Florida Voter File to match the active registered voters in Florida combined to a turnout model similar to 2016. To ensure a representative sample of likely voters, the 10 Florida designated media market areas were stratified into 18 strata. Heavily urban and highly educated counties were separated out from their media markets and given their own stratum. Quotas were placed on each of these stratified areas to ensure a proportionate number of completed surveys.

All weighted demographic variables were applied using the SPSS version 26 rake weighting function, which will not assign a weight if one of the demographics being weighted on is missing. In this case, respondents missing a response for any of the demographic information, specifically education, were given a weight equal to their weight for the remaining demographics. There were no statistical adjustments made due to design effects. This study had a 9% response rate. The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Response Rate 3 (RR3) calculation was used which consists of an estimate of what proportion of cases of unknown eligibility are truly eligible. This survey was 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. As members of AAPOR, the PORL's goal is to support sound and ethical practices in the conduct of survey and public opinion research. For more information about methodology, contact Dr. Michael Binder at porl@unf.edu.

About University of North Florida

UNF is a nationally ranked university in Jacksonville, Florida, nestled on a beautiful 1,300-acre nature preserve, featuring six colleges of distinction as well as nationally recognized flagship programs, with 60 bachelor's degree programs and over 75 areas of concentration. UNF offers a unique student-centered academic experience that is creating the next generation of thinkers, leaders and problem solvers. More information at www.unf.edu.

###

Media Contact:

Amanda Ennis
Media Relations Coordinator
(904) 620-2192

Methodology Results Contact

Dr. Michael Binder
Public Opinion Research Lab Director
(904) 620-2784



2020 Fall Statewide Poll - October 20th, 2020

As you may know, there is a presidential election coming up on November 3rd. How likely are you to vote in the upcoming election...																					
n=819																					
	Race					Party Registration			Sex		Bachelor's Degree		Age						2016 Vote Choice*		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	R	D	NPA	M	F	Yes	No	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Trump	Clinton	Other
You will definitely vote	68%	66%	69%	79%	51%	74%	61%	68%	65%	69%	68%	68%	81%	72%	69%	63%	75%	60%	69%	65%	70%
You will probably vote	6%	6%	7%	2%	8%	5%	5%	9%	4%	7%	5%	6%	6%	5%	8%	4%	5%	6%	8%	2%	11%
You will probably not vote	1%	1%	0%	1%	3%	<1%	0%	5%	2%	<1%	1%	1%	0%	5%	1%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%
Already voted by mail	25%	26%	24%	18%	38%	21%	34%	18%	28%	23%	27%	25%	14%	18%	22%	32%	18%	34%	23%	32%	16%

*2016 Vote Choice - Other Option (Someone Else/Didn't Vote/Don't Know)

If you do vote, what method do you plan to use to vote in the upcoming November elections?																					
n=813																					
	Race					Party Registration			Sex		Bachelor's Degree		Age						2016 Vote Choice*		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	R	D	NPA	M	F	Yes	No	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Trump	Clinton	Other
Vote in-person on Election Day	26%	29%	15%	29%	12%	37%	12%	29%	29%	22%	24%	26%	25%	26%	29%	23%	34%	20%	39%	14%	22%
Vote early in-person	29%	26%	40%	31%	28%	24%	32%	33%	25%	32%	29%	29%	27%	30%	30%	25%	34%	26%	22%	37%	27%
Vote by mail	43%	43%	41%	39%	61%	37%	55%	37%	43%	44%	44%	43%	46%	41%	39%	48%	29%	53%	36%	48%	50%
Don't Know	2%	2%	4%	1%	0%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%	3%	1%	3%	1%	1%

*2016 Vote Choice - Other Option (Someone Else/Didn't Vote/Don't Know)

If the presidential election were held today and the candidates were Donald Trump for the Republican Party and Joe Biden for the Democratic Party, who would you vote for? [This includes respondents who said they were leaning towards a candidate, as well as respondents who designated a vote preference prior to the end of the survey]																					
n=863																					
	Race					Party Registration			Sex		Bachelor's Degree		Age						2016 Vote Choice*		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	R	D	NPA	M	F	Yes	No	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Trump	Clinton	Other
Donald Trump, REP	47%	60%	10%	43%	27%	89%	10%	40%	56%	41%	40%	51%	30%	35%	36%	45%	60%	54%	92%	9%	29%
Joe Biden, DEM	48%	37%	87%	50%	68%	7%	89%	50%	40%	56%	57%	45%	64%	58%	54%	51%	39%	44%	6%	88%	59%
Someone Else	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	4%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	4%
Don't Know	3%	1%	3%	7%	5%	2%	1%	6%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	7%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	9%

*2016 Vote Choice - Other Option (Someone Else/Didn't Vote/Don't Know)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Donald Trump is handling his job as president?																					
n=800																					
	Race					Party Registration			Sex		Bachelor's Degree		Age						2016 Vote Choice*		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	R	D	NPA	M	F	Yes	No	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Trump	Clinton	Other
Strongly Approve	38%	48%	8%	39%	19%	75%	6%	29%	45%	33%	29%	43%	18%	25%	24%	31%	50%	51%	76%	10%	17%
Somewhat Approve	9%	11%	5%	6%	7%	13%	3%	12%	10%	7%	11%	7%	14%	14%	9%	7%	9%	6%	12%	3%	13%
Somewhat Disapprove	5%	4%	8%	7%	7%	3%	4%	12%	7%	4%	6%	5%	12%	12%	4%	10%	2%	2%	2%	6%	12%
Strongly Disapprove	44%	36%	75%	39%	59%	7%	83%	39%	36%	50%	51%	40%	55%	47%	53%	46%	35%	40%	6%	79%	49%
Don't Know/Refusal	4%	3%	4%	9%	9%	2%	4%	8%	2%	7%	3%	4%	2%	2%	10%	3%	4%	2%	4%	3%	9%

*2016 Vote Choice - Other Option (Someone Else/Didn't Vote/Don't Know)

Sample Characteristics	
Total Sample	n=863
Party Registration	
Republican	39%
Democrat	38%
No Party Affiliation	24%
Interview Language	
English	97%
Spanish	3%
2016 Vote Choice	
Trump	42%
Clinton	41%
Someone Else/Didn't Vote/Don't Know	16%
Media Market	
1 = Pensacola	4%
2 = Panama City	2%
3 = Tallahassee (Not Leon County)	1%
4 = Jacksonville (Not Duval County)	3%
5 = Gainesville (Not Alachua County)	2%
6 = Orlando (Not Orange or Seminole Cnty)	9%
7 = Tampa (Not Pinellas or Hillsborough Cnty)	12%
8 = West Palm Beach (Not Palm Beach/Martin Cnty)	3%
9 = Naples (Not Collier County)	5%
10 = Broward and Monroe County	10%
11 = Miami-Dade County	12%
12 = Leon County	1%
13 = Duval County	5%
14 = Alachua County	1%
15 = Orange and Seminole County	9%
16 = Pinellas and Hillsborough County	12%
17 = Palm Beach and Martin County	8%
18 = Collier County	2%
Age	
18-24	6%
25-34	12%
35-44	15%
45-54	15%
55-64	20%
65+	32%
Race	
White	61%
Black	14%
Hispanic	17%
Other	8%
Hispanic Origin*	
Cuban	26%
Puerto Rican	22%
Something Else	52%
Education (Bachelor's Degree)	
No College	71%
College Graduate	29%
Sex	
Male	46%
Female	54%

*Only asked of Hispanic respondents