



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

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**Poll Shows Somewhat Favorable Governor Job Approval, Gun Bills/Tax Plan Opposition**

Jacksonville, Fla. - A new poll of registered voters in Florida by the Public Opinion Research Laboratory (PURL) at the University of North Florida shows that 46 percent strongly or somewhat approve of how Gov. Rick Scott is handling his job, while 40 percent strongly or somewhat disapprove and 14 percent were uncertain.

There are large partisan differences in Florida among registered Republicans; the approval for Scott is 74 percent, compared to 24 percent for Democrats and 39 percent for no party affiliation (NPA).

Overall, 39 percent of Florida registered voters approve of the way the state legislature is handling its job; 40 percent disapprove and 21 percent don't know.

"In a little bit of a surprise, the Florida legislature is almost break-even with their approval, a very positive number for them compared to most polling on Congress," said Dr. Michael Binder, UNF Public Opinion Research Laboratory faculty director.

The majority of Florida registered voters don't want concealed handguns on college or university campuses, with 62 percent who oppose the proposed legislation, 48 percent strongly oppose, and only 34 percent in support.

"If the legislature is paying attention to public opinion, this signals that House Bill 6005 might not make it to the governor's desk for the second time in two years," Binder said.

Additionally, the majority of Florida registered voters (53 percent) also oppose allowing licensed individuals to openly carry a handgun in the state, except in police stations, prisons, courthouses, schools, athletic events and establishments that dispense alcohol.

"In what could be another signal to Tallahassee about Senate Bill 140, voters aren't supportive of bringing open carry laws to Florida," Binder noted. "While Floridians might not be

open to expanding gun laws, they don't support prohibiting the sale of assault weapons, which could signal that House Bill 167 isn't going to get passed either."

Only 13 percent of Florida registered voters support a reduction in the tax businesses pay on corporate leases by an estimated \$454 million, whereas 40 percent think the tax shouldn't be reduced, and the money should be dedicated to public universities. Thirty-three percent think the tax shouldn't be reduced, and the money should be dedicated to improving infrastructure.

In what is shaping up to be a contentious session between the governor and the legislature, this survey suggests that the public isn't on board with Scott's plan to cut the business-lease taxes, according to Binder. He suggests these findings could give Senate President Joe Negron some added support in his efforts to secure additional funding for state universities in Florida.

Florida registered voters were asked about other policy issues on the table when the legislative session starts next week. When asked about the "tampon sales tax exemption" (Senate Bill 176), 59 percent said they support the policy and 28 percent oppose.

For the prohibition of employment discrimination based on gender identity, the majority—50 percent—of Florida registered voters are in overall support of the policy, while 45 percent oppose it.

"Jacksonville recently passed the human rights ordinance, but without overwhelming support from the voters, it's unlikely that House Bill 319 and Senate Bill 410 are going to make it to Scott's desk this spring," said Binder.

On another note, support for out-of-school suspension for elementary school students is only 40 percent, while opposition is at 49 percent. "This should bolster support in the legislature for Senate Bill 438 on out-of-school suspension and encourage legislators to take further measures to limit the use of these practices in schools," said Dr. Angela Mann, UNF assistant professor of psychology. "Florida currently leads the country in the use of exclusionary discipline practices, which increases student risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system."

Florida registered voters think that education (20 percent), health care (15 percent) and crime (13 percent) are the most important problems facing Florida today. Among Florida registered voters, 10 percent think the environment is the most important problem facing the state today. However, when asked to what extent Florida's government is spending the right amount of resources on protecting the environment, a scant 4 percent think Florida should be spending less resources on protecting the environment. Twenty-seven percent think the state is spending about the right amount of resources protecting the environment, while the majority (55 percent) think the state should be spending more resources on protecting the environment.

"Despite the fact that Floridians don't consider environmental issues to be among the most important problems facing the state, a clear majority want the government to allocate more resources to protecting our natural environment," said Dr. Josh Gellers, UNF assistant professor of political science.

For crosstabs by partisanship, gender and race, go to <http://www.unf.edu/coas/porl/>.

## Methodology

The Florida statewide poll was conducted by PORL Monday, Feb. 13, through Sunday, Feb. 26, by live callers via the telephone, and calls were made from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. daily. The sample of phone numbers was created through the voter file provided by Florida's Division of Elections January 2017 update and selected through the use of randomization among registered voters. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish by 247 UNF undergraduate students. Overall, there were 973 completed surveys of Florida registered voters, 18 years of age or older.

The margin of error is +/- 3.14 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. The sample had quota for geography based on Florida media markets. To ensure a representative sample being collected, the state was stratified using the 10 Florida designated market areas. In addition, because of Miami-Dade County's unique population, it was separately accounted for in its own strata, creating 11 strata. Quotas were placed on each of these stratified areas to ensure a proportionate amount of completed surveys from across the state. The total sample was then weighted by partisan registration, gender, race and age from the Florida voter file to match the active registered voters in Florida. 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](mailto:porl@unf.edu) or at (904) 620-2784.

## Survey Results

What do you think is the most important problem facing Florida today?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n= 972</b>
Education	20%
Economy/Jobs/Unemployment	20%
Health Care	15%
Crime	13%
Environment	11%
Immigration	10%
Terrorism	2%
Other (Volunteered)	7%
Don't Know	3%

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

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=957</b>
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Strongly Approve	17%
Somewhat Approve	29%
Somewhat Disapprove	14%
Strongly Disapprove	26%
Don't Know	14%

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the Florida Legislature is handling its job?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=959</b>
Strongly Approve	7%
Somewhat Approve	32%
Somewhat Disapprove	21%
Strongly Disapprove	19%
Don't Know	21%

Early next month Florida's Legislative session will begin. Please tell me whether you support or oppose with the following policy changes in Florida:

There is currently a proposal to have Florida reduce the tax that businesses pay on corporate leases by an estimated \$454 million. Would you rather have Florida...

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=961</b>
Reduce the corporate lease tax	13%
Not reduce the tax and dedicate that money to public universities	40%
Not reduce the tax and dedicate that money to improving infrastructure	33%
Do all three (Volunteered)	1%
Do none (Volunteered)	1%
Something else (Volunteered)	3%
Don't Know	9%

Allowing licensed individuals to carry concealed handguns into a college or university facility.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=969</b>
Strongly Support	20%
Somewhat Support	15%
Somewhat Oppose	14%
Strongly Oppose	48%
Don't Know	3%

Allowing licensed individuals to openly carry a handgun in Florida except in police stations, prisons, courthouses, schools, athletic events and establishments that dispense alcohol.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=970</b>
Strongly Support	23%
Somewhat Support	21%
Somewhat Oppose	14%
Strongly Oppose	39%
Don't Know	2%

Prohibiting the sale of assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=965</b>
Strongly Support	34%
Somewhat Support	12%
Somewhat Oppose	14%
Strongly Oppose	36%
Don't Know	4%

Prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of gender identity.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=961</b>
Strongly Support	40%
Somewhat Support	10%
Somewhat Oppose	8%
Strongly Oppose	37%
Don't Know	5%

Exempting from state sales tax the purchasing of feminine hygiene products?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=963</b>
Strongly Support	39%
Somewhat Support	21%
Somewhat Oppose	12%
Strongly Oppose	16%
Don't Know	13%

To what extent do you support exclusionary discipline (out of school suspension) in elementary (K-5) schools?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=949</b>
Strongly Support	20%
Somewhat Support	20%
Somewhat Oppose	15%
Strongly Oppose	34%
Don't Know	10%

To what extent do you think Florida's government is spending the right amount of resources on protecting the environment?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=965</b>
Florida should be spending less resources on protecting the environment	4%
Florida is spending about the right amount of resources protecting the environment	27%
Florida should be spending more resources on protecting the environment	55%
Don't Know	14%

<b>Race</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=973</b>
White (not Hispanic)	65%
Black (not Hispanic)	14%
Hispanic	15%
Other	6%

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=973</b>
Men	46%
Women	54%

<b>Party Registration</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=973</b>
Republican	36%
Democrat	38%
NPA and other	26%

<b>Age</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=969</b>
18 to 24	9%
25 to 34	15%
35 to 44	14%
45 to 55	17%
56 to 64	18%
65 and older	27%

<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=969</b>
Landline	27%
Cell phone	73%

<b>Survey language completed in...</b>	<b>Florida Registered Voters n=969</b>
English	97%
Spanish	3%

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.