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One Year from 2018 Florida Primary, FAU Poll Shows Tight Race for U.S. Senate, Most Voters Undecided on Governor *Trump's Approval Rating at 37 Percent in Florida*

BOCA RATON, Fla. (August 29, 2017) – With the 2018 state primary election now one year away, voters in Florida give a slight edge to Sen. Bill Nelson over current Gov. Rick Scott in a hypothetical matchup in the U.S. Senate race. Voters, however, are still widely undecided on the candidates vying to be the state's next governor, according to a statewide survey by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative ([FAU BEPI](#)).

Nelson has a slim 42-40 percent lead over Scott, who has set up a political action committee ahead of a likely run for Nelson's seat, which he has held since 2001.

“Our poll found younger voters 18 to 34 years old are more likely to vote for Scott, while voters 55 and over favor Nelson,” said [Monica Escaleras](#), Ph.D., director of the BEPI. “It will be interesting to see what the candidates do to try to draw support from each of those generations.”

A majority of Republicans (53 percent) in the survey said they are undecided on their choice to succeed Scott as governor. Adam Putnam, Florida's commissioner of agriculture, has distanced himself from the rest of the GOP field, with 27 percent of those surveyed supporting him, compared to 10 percent for House Speaker Richard Corcoran, 9 percent for Congressman Ron DeSantis and just 2 percent for Jack Latvala, a member of the Florida Senate.

The race is wide open among Democrats, with activist and attorney John Morgan leading with 19 percent, compared to 14 percent for former U.S. Congresswoman Gwen Graham, 9 percent for Tallahassee mayor Andrew Gillum and 8 percent for Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine. Over 47 percent of Democratic voters polled are undecided.

U.S. President Donald Trump's job approval rating stands at 37 percent, up slightly from his 35 percent approval rating in BEPI's June survey.

“Donald Trump's success has encouraged nontraditional candidates to consider running for office, and our results suggest that well-known attorney John Morgan may

have an opportunity in the Democratic gubernatorial race,” said [Kevin Wagner](#), Ph.D., associate professor of political science at FAU and a research fellow of the Initiative. “But, it is very early with many undecided voters.”

Voters also were asked about current issues in the news. Nearly half of the respondents (49 percent) said that statues honoring leaders of the Confederacy should remain in public places, while 30 percent said they should be removed and 21 percent were unsure.

Voters were split in their opinions about Trump’s remarks following the events in Charlottesville, Va., that “there is blame on both sides,” with 44 percent disagreeing with the president, 42 percent agreeing with him and 14 percent undecided.

Asked about what limitations, if any, should be placed on carrying handguns in a public place, 43 percent said Floridians should be allowed to carry a concealed handgun in a public place, as long as they have a license, while 15 percent said they should be allowed to openly carry a handgun in public places with a license. More than one-third of respondents (34 percent) said Floridians should never be allowed to carry a handgun in a public place. Only 7 percent said Floridians should be allowed to carry a handgun in a public place without a license.

Voters were split on the debate over the future of the Affordable Care Act. While 37 percent said Obamacare should be replaced completely, 33 percent said it should be repealed in part and 30 percent said it should be kept as is.

The survey, which polled 800 Florida registered voters between Aug. 24-26, was conducted using an online sample supplied by [Survey Sampling International](#) using online questionnaires and via an automated telephone platform (IVR) using registered voter lists supplied by [Aristotle, Inc.](#)

The survey has a margin of error of +/- 4 percentage points (the margin of error for either the Democratic or Republican primary was +/- 6.5 percentage points). Responses for the entire sample were weighted to reflect the statewide distribution of the Florida population by gender, race/ethnicity, region, education and age according to latest American Community Survey data. The polling results and full cross-tabulations are available at www.business.fau.edu/bepi.

About FAU BEPI:

The Florida Atlantic University Business and Economic Polling Initiative conducts surveys on business, economic, political and social issues with a focus on Hispanic attitudes and opinions at regional, state and national levels via planned monthly national surveys. The initiative subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research and is a resource for public and private organizations, academic research and media outlets. In addition, the initiative is designed to contribute to the educational mission of the University by providing students with valuable opportunities to enhance their educational experience by designing and carrying out public opinion research.

About Florida Atlantic University

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.