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FAU Poll Finds Scott Maintains Lead on Nelson in Florida U.S. Senate Race as DeSantis and Graham Hold Edge for Governor
Floridians Very Concerned About Toxic Algae Blooms on Coasts

BOCA RATON, Fla. (July 25, 2018) – Florida Gov. Rick Scott has maintained a slight lead over U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson in the U.S. Senate race, 44 to 40 percent, with 17 percent still undecided, according to the statewide survey by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative (FAU BEPI).

Nelson has a 37 percent approval rating and 32 percent disapproval, while Scott has a 50 percent approval rating and 32 percent disapproval.

There was considerable movement among the leading candidates in both the Republican and Democratic primaries for governor of Florida. In the Republican race, Ron DeSantis has opened up a lead on Adam Putnam, 36 to 27 percent, after being up by only one point in May's BEPI poll.

“President Trump's backing of Congressman DeSantis appears to have pushed the congressman past the early favorite Adam Putnam in the Republican primary,” said [Kevin Wagner](#), Ph.D., professor of political science at FAU and a research fellow of the Initiative. “While the President can help Congressman DeSantis in the primary, Mr. Trump's underwater approval ratings may be a drag in the general election.”

Among the Democratic candidates, Gwen Graham leads Philip Levine, 20 to 16 percent, after trailing him by one point in May. Meanwhile, Jeff Greene has jumped into the race with 14 percent support, followed by Christopher King at 9 percent and Andrew Gillum at 7 percent. Overall, 23 percent of Republicans and 31 percent of Democrats said they are undecided.

“It appears that the Greene candidacy is a game-changer in the race for the Democratic nomination,” said Monica Escaleras, Ph.D., director of the BEPI. “In May, without Greene running, Levine and Graham were the front runners, now Greene is in the top tier of candidates.”

U.S. President Donald Trump had a small drop in his approval rating, which is at 41 percent, down two points from May, when he enjoyed his highest approval rating

among Florida voters since taking office. Trump's disapproval rating is at 47 percent.

The top issues for voters in the survey remains immigration (29 percent) and healthcare (26 percent), followed by the economy (13 percent) and gun control policy (10 percent). The most important issue for Democrats is healthcare at 34 percent, while Republicans rank immigration as the most important issue (43 percent). Independents put healthcare on top at 24 percent, followed closely by immigration at 23 percent.

A vast majority of Floridians expressed concern about the toxic algae blooms that have plagued the state's coasts, with 53 percent saying they are very concerned and 33 percent saying they are somewhat concerned. More than 6 in 10 said they are concerned Russia may try to interfere in the 2018 elections, with 39 percent saying they are very concerned and 24 percent saying they are somewhat concerned.

Party breakdown among the survey respondents was 35 percent registered Democrats, 33 percent registered Republicans and 32 percent registered Independents.

The survey, which polled 800 Florida registered voters July 20-21, 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 +/- 3.4 percentage points. The margin of error for the Democratic Primary is +/- 5.9 percentage points and for the Republican Primary is +/- 6.0 percentage points. Responses for the entire sample were weighted to reflect the statewide distribution of the Florida population. The polling results and full cross-tabulations are available at www.business.fau.edu/bepi.

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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.