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Bill Nelson, Rick Scott Running Close in New 2018 Senate Poll

By KEVIN DERBY
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Bill Nelson and Rick Scott

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., and Gov. Rick Scott are running close in a new poll looking at what is expected to be one of the leading Senate races in the nation come 2018.

Florida Atlantic University (FAU) released a poll on Tuesday showing Nelson with a narrow lead over Scott, taking 42 percent while 40 percent are for the governor and 18 percent remain undecided.

Nelson is above water in the poll with 36 percent of those surveyed approving of his performance in Washington D.C. while 32 percent disapprove of it. Despite Nelson being on the Florida political stage for more than four decades, almost a third of those surveyed--32 percent--are undecided on him.

FAU did not include a question in the poll on what voters think of Scott's performance in Tallahassee.

Monica Escaleras, the director of FAU's Business and Economics Polling Initiative (BEPI), noted that there is something of a generational gap in Florida when it comes to the Senate race.

"Our poll found younger voters 18 to 34 years old are more likely to vote for Scott, while voters 55 and over favor Nelson," Escaleras said on Tuesday. "It will be interesting to see what the candidates do to try to draw support from each of those generations."

Nelson is in better shape than his Senate colleague according to the poll. FAU's poll shows U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., who won a second term last year and is not up again until 2020, is upside down with 40 percent disapproving of him while 34 percent approve of him. More than a quarter of those surveyed--26 percent--are unsure of Rubio, who ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016.

Despite carrying Florida last year over former U.S. Sec. of State Hillary Clinton, President Donald Trump is also upside down in the poll with 47 percent disapproving of his performance while 37 percent approve of it and 16 percent are undecided.

The poll of 800 registered voters in Florida was taken from Aug. 24 through Aug. 26 and had a margin of error of +/- 4 percent.

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