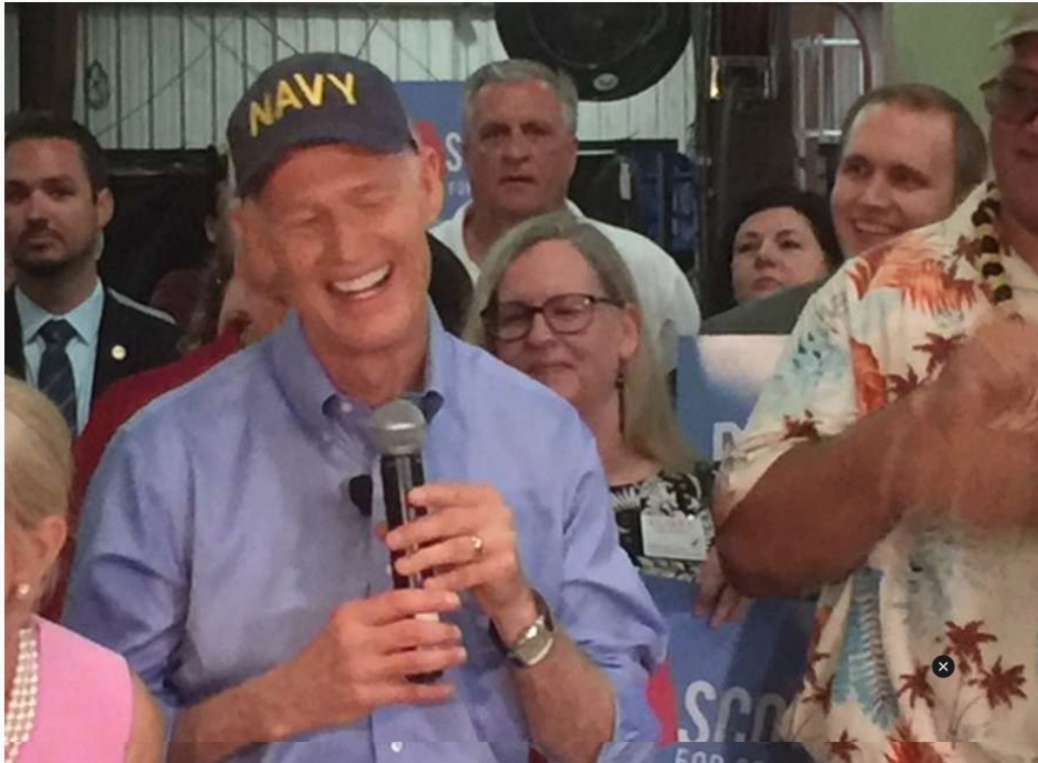


New Florida poll shows dead heat governors' races, Rick Scott edging Bill Nelson

More than 42 percent of Republicans and Democrats remain undecided in gubernatorial primaries

By Adam C. Smith May 8



Rick Scott's Navy cap feature a "45" on the back, as in 45th governor of Florida ADAM SMITH

Rick Scott has pulled narrowly ahead of Bill Nelson in Florida's closely watched U.S. Senate race, while both parties have neck and neck gubernatorial primary, according to a new poll.

The May 4-7 robo poll by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative shows Scott leading Nelson 44 percent to 40 percent, a 6 point swing in Scott's direction since the last FAU poll in February. Scott has spent at least \$5 million on TV ads already, but among those polled who said they are "very likely" to vote, Scott and Nelson are dead even with 45 percent support.

The gubernatorial contests likewise are neck and neck. On the Democratic side, more than four in 10 Democratic voters remain undecided, but Philip Levine leads Gwen Graham 16 percent to 15 percent, followed by Chris King with 10 percent — his best showing yet in any poll — and Andrew Gillum at 6 percent.

A similarly high proportion of Republicans as Democrats remain undecided in the governor's race, 43 percent, but Ron DeSantis leads Adam Putnam 16 percent to 15 percent. Florida House Speaker Richard Corcoran, who has been flirting with a run, was not included in the poll, but every other little-known candidate was. David Adams of Miami drew more than 8 percent support



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"The race for governor remains wide open in Florida, with large numbers of undecided voters in both races," said Monica Escaleras, director of the BEPI. "It is not unusual to have so many undecided voters at this early stage, as even the leading candidates are still introducing themselves to much of Florida."

Voters' most important issues were immigration (23 percent), healthcare (20 percent), the economy (13 percent) and gun control (12 percent).

Democrats hope to beat Gov. Scott by linking him to President Trump, but the poll shows Trump with his highest Florida approval rating in Florida since taking office, 43 percent. His disapproval rate is 45 percent.

"President Trump's approval ratings in Florida are edging up, and if that continues, it could help Rick Scott and other Republicans on the midterm ballot," said FAU political scientist Kevin Wagner, a research fellow of the Initiative.

Asked about the recent federal tax cut package, 29 percent of those surveyed said it helped them financially, 19 percent said it hurt them, and 52 percent said it made no difference to them financially. Asked whether they would prefer Trump or Barack Obama in the White House, 49 percent said Obama and 43 said Trump.