




set station news arts & life music programs shop  







3:55

+ QUEUE

DOWNLOAD

EMBED



< Why Florida May Really Feel A Potential 'Blue Wave' This Year

August 27, 2018 · 4:47 PM ET

Transcript

ARI SHAPIRO, HOST:

On tomorrow's primary ballot in Florida, there are seven Democratic candidates in a competitive race for governor. They want to replace Republican governor Rick Scott and be the first Democrat elected to that office in 20 years. From member station WFSU, Ryan Dailey has more.

RYAN DAILEY, BYLINE: Florida is one state that may really feel a potential blue wave in 2018. For the first time in decades, Democrats have a chance to take control of the state's Senate, a possibility of taking the attorney general's office, and then there's the governor's race.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

GWEN GRAHAM: There have been huge crowds, lots of excitement, engagement, recognition of the significance of this race.

DAILEY: That's Democratic candidate for governor and former Congresswoman Gwen Graham after traveling the state and making it back to Tallahassee last week to get in her early vote.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

GRAHAM: This race is going to determine Florida's future.

DAILEY: Graham has had the advantage of name recognition thanks to her father, former governor Bob Graham, who served two terms in the early 1980s. And she recently got an endorsement from one of her dad's longtime friends, Jimmy Buffett.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

JIMMY BUFFETT: I'd like to thank Alan Jackson for calling me.

DAILEY: Just last week, thousands of Parrotheads rallied at a Get Out The Vote concert in Hollywood, Fla.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

BUFFETT: So with people like you - with Gwen in office, I think we are in pretty good shape. Better days are in the cards, I have a feeling - you know?

DAILEY: But Graham's not the only frontrunner.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

PHILIP LEVINE: You know, when I entered the race early on, I was in last place.

DAILEY: That's former Miami Beach mayor Philip Levine talking to early voters at the state's Capitol.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

LEVINE: Now I understand myself and Gwen are right at the top, the two of us together.

DAILEY: Levine and Graham have taken turns exchanging razor-thin leads the past month. He's casting himself as the only candidate who can fight President Trump's agenda.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

LEVINE: The only way we're going to do it is to put the best person on the field who's going to go toe-to-toe with the White House.

DAILEY: And then there's Tallahassee mayor Andrew Gillum, who has been touting what he calls a surge in his campaign's popularity in the 11th hour.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

ANDREW GILLUM: The grassroots capacity that has picked up is taking us the distance. I mean, people are now sharing and spreading. And that's the only way you can explain how it is that I could be in front of somebody who has now spent - what? - \$30 million on television.

DAILEY: There, Gillum's bashing billionaire candidate Jeff Greene, who has campaigned on being able to self-finance. And a fifth candidate, Orlando businessman Chris King, is continuing his bus tour despite polling in the single digits. But perhaps what all the Democrats have in common is trying to figure who they might face from the solidly two-man Republican race. Some last-minute polls have shown Congressman Ron DeSantis sneaking ahead of his competition, Florida Agriculture commissioner Adam Putnam. DeSantis was in Jacksonville recently, where he's been endorsed by Mayor Lenny Curry. It's another endorsement, though, that could have accounted for DeSantis' surge.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

RON DESANTIS: I'm a Navy veteran. I served down the road at Naval Station Mayport. I'm a proven, principled conservative leader, and I am endorsed by President Donald Trump.

DAILEY: Trump himself acknowledged during a recent rally that his endorsement

gave DeSantis an edge.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: And he was at three. This was a few months ago. He was at three, and I gave him a nice shot and a nice little tweet - ding-ding.

(LAUGHTER)

TRUMP: And he went from three to, like, 20-something.

DAILEY: Meanwhile, Putnam has tried to contrast himself as the homegrown candidate to DeSantis' establishment pick.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

ADAM PUTNAM: And this election is a choice between the Washington way and putting Florida first.

DAILEY: As Florida faces a toxic algae crisis and grapples with highly publicized shootings, Putnam's agency has been criticized for supporting controversial water policies and botching gun permit background checks. Yet the Republican race appears to be up for grabs. A recent Florida Atlantic University poll favors DeSantis by just one point. Floridians will have to wait until November to find out if the governor's mansion will remain red or get its first Democrat in 20 years. For NPR News, I'm Ryan Dailey in Tallahassee.

(SOUNDBITE OF "IN THE MIDDLE")

Copyright © 2018 NPR. All rights reserved. Visit our website [terms of use](#) and [permissions](#) pages at www.npr.org for further information.

NPR transcripts are created on a rush deadline by [Verb8tm, Inc.](#), an NPR contractor, and produced using a proprietary transcription process developed with NPR. This text may not be in its final form and may be updated or revised in the future. Accuracy and availability may vary. The authoritative record of NPR's programming is the audio record.

