

THE BUZZ



Donald Trump polling higher in Florida, but many say he's responsible for rise in hate crimes

Floridians also give Ron DeSantis high marks so far.



Gov. elect Ron DeSantis (left) talks with President Donald Trump during a meeting with newly elected governors in the Cabinet Room of the White House on Dec. 13. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

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Floridians are decidedly split on President Donald Trump's job performance but he's doing better here than he was a month ago.

A new poll released Thursday found 43.6 percent approve of Trump, up from 41 percent in February. He's still underwater here, though, with 44.7 percent disapproving of the president.

The same survey, from Florida Atlantic University, also found 55 percent of Floridians think Trump is very or somewhat responsible for a recent surge in hate crimes. Trump has dismissed such criticism, despite his unwillingness to initially condemn the deadly white supremacy rally in Charlottesville, his embrace of the term "nationalism" and his targeting of Muslims with his travel ban.

But Trump's ally in the Sunshine State, Gov. Ron DeSantis, earns much higher marks from Floridians. About 54 percent approve of the governor's work so far, with just 19 percent expressing disappointment with his first three months in

office. That includes support from 51 percent of those who identified themselves as independents.

Most of DeSantis' legislative priorities have more support than not, including his proposals to import prescription drugs from Canada, expand school vouchers and ban so-called sanctuary cities. The exception is DeSantis' pitch to arm teachers. Half of those surveyed said they don't want teachers to carry firearms in classrooms, compared to 38 percent who are for it.

The survey of 500 registered voters was conducted between March 22 and 24. The poll's margin of error is 4.3 percent.

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