

Florida voters losing confidence in Trump's handling of coronavirus pandemic



By ANTHONY MAN

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President Donald Trump speaks after exiting Air Force One at Lehigh Valley International Airport in Allentown, Pa., on May 14, 2020. (Evan Vucci/AP)

Florida voters' assessment of President Donald Trump's handling of the [new coronavirus](#) has declined significantly with the visibly widespread effects of the pandemic now in their third month.

A poll released Friday by Florida Atlantic University shows 45% of Florida voters approve of the job Trump is doing in handling the spread of the coronavirus in the United States and 45% disapprove.

That tie represents a significant decline over the past two months.

[In March, 51% of Florida voters approved](#) of Trump's handling of the coronavirus and 36% disapproved. That was a net positive of 15 percentage points — which has disappeared as people have sheltered at home, many have lost their jobs, and Trump's performance has been widely scrutinized and visible daily on cable news, and in the rising number of deaths.

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Floridians have a more positive assessment of Trump's performance than the nation as a whole.

National polling shows more people disapprove than approve of Trump's handling of coronavirus. The [RealClearPolitics average](#) of the five most recent national polls showed 43% approve and 53% disapprove of Trump's handling of the pandemic.

As Floridians' view of his coronavirus performance has declined, so has their overall assessment of Trump's performance as president.

Trump's overall approval rating is 43% and his disapproval now stands at 46%, a net negative of three percentage points.

[RELATED: In March, FAU poll found Trump's handling of coronavirus got much higher approval from Floridians than nationwide »](#)

In FAU's last poll, in March, his approval was 49% and disapproval was 41%, a net positive of eight points.

In January, the same poll found Trump's Florida approval at 45% and disapproval at 43%, a net positive of two points.

DeSantis performance

Florida voters give Gov. Ron DeSantis slightly higher approval than Trump for his handling of the coronavirus, but a smaller share of voters disapprove of his performance on the pandemic.

DeSantis handling of the coronavirus was approved by 49% and disapproved by 36% of Florida voters.

DeSantis' overall job approval rating — which was sky high for more than a year after he took office in January 2019 — has dipped.

The poll found 51% of Florida voters approve of the job he's doing as governor and 32% disapprove, a net positive of 19 points.

In March, he was at 54% approval and 20% disapproval, a net positive of 34 points. In March 2019, he was almost the same, with 54% approval and 19% disapproval.

Democrats and Republicans

As with just about everything connected with Trump, assessments of his handling of coronavirus break down largely on party lines.

Among Florida Republicans, 77% approve of Trump's handling of coronavirus (down from 86% approval in March).

Among the state's Democrats 79% disapprove (up from 64% Democratic disapproval in March).

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Kevin Wagner, an FAU political scientist and research fellow at the university's Business and Economics Polling Initiative, said such partisan assessments during a crisis aren't typical.



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"Natural disasters don't usually have partisan breakdowns," he said, adding that it shows "there's very little in America that people don't see through a partisan lens any more."

Among no party affiliation/independent voters, 48% approve and 39% disapprove of his performance, numbers which are little changed from March.

Fine print

The latest results come from an [FAU Business and Economics Polling Initiative](#) survey of 928 Florida registered voters conducted online and through automated calls to people with landline telephones from May 8-12.

It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Anthony Man can be reached at aman@sunsentinel.com or on Twitter [@browardpolitics](#)

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