

Crist Retains lead in Florida Senate Race, While Gubernatorial Race Remains Close

Florida Governor and Independent Senate Candidate Charlie Crist leads over his Republican and Democrat opponents

In the Gubernatorial race, Democrat Alex Sink leads Republican contender Bill McCollum by one point, and trails the other Republican contender Rick Scott by three points – but about a quarter of Florida voters remain undecided

Political Polling undertaken for Reuters

by



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Washington, DC – Ipsos' recent poll of 600 registered voters in Florida shows that Independent candidate Charlie Crist, current Florida Governor and a former Republican, is polling ahead of Republican Marco Rubio and either of the two possible Democrat candidates Kendrick Meek and Jeff Greene. Crist's approval ratings as Governor are positive (53% approve / 41% disapprove of the way he is doing his job as Governor), and this popularity – as well as public frustration with the main political parties – may help him sustain this support through to November's elections.

The Florida Gubernatorial race is closer, with Democrat Alex Sink polling just ahead of potential Republican candidate Bill McCollum, but a few points behind potential Republican candidate Rick Scott. However, more people are unsure how they will vote for this race, with just under a quarter refusing to answer or saying they're not sure how they will vote¹.

- SENATE: Rubio (R) 28% vs. Meek (D) 17% vs. Crist (I) 35%
- SENATE: Rubio (R) 29% vs. Greene (D) 18% vs. Crist (I) 34%
- GOVERNOR: McCollum (R) 30% vs. Sink (D) 31% vs. Chiles (I) 12%
- GOVERNOR: Scott (R) 34% vs. Sink (D) 31% vs. Chiles (I) 13%

As is the case with many national polls, Republicans are more likely to vote than are Democrats: 72% of Republicans say they are 'completely certain' they will vote this November, compared to 51% of Democrats, and 40% of Independents.

Interest in the campaign and campaign coverage is fairly high, with 59% saying they have a 'great deal' or 'quite a bit' of interest in following news about the midterm campaigns; again, this figure is highest among Republicans (69%) and lower among Democrats (50%) and Independents (47%).

Registered voters in Florida are – on balance – more unhappy than happy with the direction in which their State is heading: 57% feel things in Florida are on the 'wrong track', and a third (34%) think they're heading in the right direction.

The survey contained a question asking about the biggest problems currently facing Florida:

- Over half (51%) feel that the **economy and jobs** is among Florida's biggest problems
- About one in seven (15%) are concerned about the **environment and pollution** – with fewer (6%) naming the oil spill specifically
- The same proportion (14%) list issues around the **Government, politics and politicians** generally – which includes both state and national level concerns
- **Education** (13%) and **energy** generally (11%) are also listed as key concerns

¹ Neither of the above support measures includes the 'leaners' question often asked of those who are unsure; while we did ask the question in this survey, Ipsos does not allocate 'leaners' at this stage of the electoral cycle



When asked about the extent to which they feel their personal well-being has been affected by the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, half (51%) say they have not been affected at all. One in five (20%) say it has been affected 'a lot' and a further quarter (27%) have been affected 'a little', yielding a total of 47% of Floridians who say they have been affected 'a lot' or 'a little' by the spill. This figure is higher for Democrats (53%) than Republicans (41%) – and still higher (56%) for Independents. This suggests that people's 'lens' for interpreting the magnitude of this issue is absolutely influenced by their political leanings.

When it comes to who is to blame for the spill, there is near-universal agreement that oil company BP has a great deal of the responsibility (99% feel BP has a great deal or some responsibility for the spill). Two in five (40%) think the US Government has 'a great deal' of responsibility for the spill, and another 49% think it shares some of the responsibility. Florida's state government is seen as less culpable, with one in five (19%) believing it has a great deal of responsibility, and 55% that it has 'some' responsibility for the spill.

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