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NBC News/Marist Poll

**Florida Voters View Midterms as Important, Will Send a Message...
Nelson and Scott Competitive in Race for U.S. Senate...
Dem and GOP Primaries for Governor Wide Open**

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This NBC News/Marist Poll Reports:

Florida's political landscape is one underscored by notable political party, age, gender, and ethnic differences. However, there is consensus on the significance of this November's midterm elections. Most registered voters in Florida (95%) consider the elections to be important. This includes more than seven in ten (73%) Florida voters who describe the November contests as very important including 78% of registered voters under 30.

Most voters also think their participation in this fall's elections will send a message. 49% report they are voting for more Democrats to be a check and balance on President Donald Trump compared with 40% who say their vote will send a message that more Republicans are needed to help Trump pass his administration's agenda.

Florida registered voters divide about whether they prefer a Congress controlled by the Democrats (42%) or the Republicans (39%). But, when presented with a generic ballot for Congress, 46% of registered voters in the state choose the Democrat and 40% pick the Republican.

"In a state that is closely divided in registration between Democrats and Republicans, independents hold the balance of power," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Right now, independents are tipping in the Democrats' favor. They are plus 14 that their vote for Congress this November is a message for more Democrats to offset the president's agenda; by 8 points they prefer control of Congress to be in Democratic hands; and, again by 14 points, they support Democrats over Republicans on the

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congressional generic. But, they are also more undecided.”

Of note, a majority (56%) of Florida adults, including 54% of registered voters do not think President Donald Trump should be re-elected in 2020.

Against this political backdrop, Democratic incumbent Bill Nelson edges Republican Rick Scott in the race for U.S. Senate in Florida by 4 points among registered voters statewide including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate. Democratic incumbent Bill Nelson receives support from 49% of registered voters statewide compared with 45% for Republican Rick Scott.

“The Democrats are banking on Nelson holding this seat,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “But, this is a very competitive contest with 18% of registered voters still persuadable.”

Among Florida registered voters with a candidate preference for Senate, 56% say they strongly support their choice of candidate. Of note, slightly more of Scott’s supporters (59%) express a strong commitment to their candidate compared with those who back Nelson (53%).

In a crowded field of Democratic candidates for governor, nearly half of registered Democrats (47%) are undecided. Philip Levine (19%) and Gwen Graham (17%) are the only candidates whose support is in double digits. They are followed by Andrew Gillum (8%), Jeff Greene (4%), and Christopher King (3%). Among Democrats with a candidate preference for governor, only 32% strongly support their choice.

On the GOP side, nearly four in ten (39%) Republicans are undecided in the gubernatorial primary. 38% of Florida Republicans support Adam Putnam, and 21% back Ron DeSantis who has been endorsed by President Trump. 42% of Republicans with a candidate preference for governor strongly support their selection.

President Trump’s job performance receives mixed reviews in Florida. 43% of residents statewide approve. 46% disapprove. 29% strongly approve, only slightly less than the 34% of Floridians who strongly disapprove.

On the issue of the economy, Trump outperforms his overall job approval score. 46% of Florida residents say the U.S. economy has improved during the Trump presidency, and they give President Trump some of the credit. 24% of Florida residents say the economy is on an upswing but do not attribute that to Trump. 25% do not think the economy has improved under President Trump, and only 1% say it has gotten worse.

A plurality of Florida residents (46%) think Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into

possible wrongdoing and Russian interference in the 2016 election is a fair investigation. 37% believe it is a “witch hunt,” and nearly one in five (17%) is unsure.