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POLL MUST BE SOURCED:

NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist Poll*

Florida: Clinton and Trump Competitive

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

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This NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist Poll Reports:

In a poll completed before Hurricane Matthew affected Florida, just 3 points separate Democrat Hillary Clinton, 45%, and Republican Donald Trump, 42%, among likely voters statewide including those who are undecided yet leaning toward a candidate or who have already voted. Support for Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson, 5%, or for Green Party candidate Jill Stein, 3%, is in single digits. One percent support someone else, and 4% are undecided.

“Florida has voted for the winner in 12 of the last 13 presidential elections dating back to 1964,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “In terms of pathways to 270, it’s hard to see how Trump can win the White House without carrying this state.”

Support among many demographic groups in Florida mirrors patterns seen in other battleground states. Clinton has secured the support of her Democratic base, 89%, while Trump is on firm footing with the Republican faithful, 86%. Among likely voters who are independents, Clinton, 42%, leads Trump, 33%, by 9 points. Johnson, 13%, garners a notable proportion of independent voters, and Stein receives 7%.

Clinton’s support is bolstered by likely voters in Florida who are African American, 83%, or Latino, 61%. Among African Americans who are likely to vote, Trump’s support, 6%, is in single digits. Among Latinos he trails Clinton by 36 points and receives only 25% of the vote among this group. Among likely voters who are white, Trump has majority support, 54%, and is ahead of Clinton, 35%, by 19 points.

*All references to the survey must be sourced as “NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist Poll”

Education also plays a role. Trump, 61%, outpaces Clinton, 28%, by more than two to one among white likely voters without a college education. However, the contest is closer among likely voters who are white and have a college degree, 47% for Trump to 42% for Clinton.

Looking at gender, Clinton, 51%, leads Trump, 38%, among likely voters who are women. Among men who are likely to cast a ballot, Trump, 47%, is ahead of Clinton, 38%.

Age differences also exist. Clinton, 54%, bests Trump, 30%, among likely voters who are under the age of 45. Among those 45 and older, Trump, 49%, leads Clinton, 40%.

Among registered voters in this multi-candidate field, Clinton receives the support of 45% to 39% for Trump. Johnson garners 6% and Stein has 3%. Two percent mention someone else, and 4% are undecided.

In a head-to-head two-way matchup just between Clinton and Trump, the two are also in a close contest, 46% to 44%, among likely voters. Six percent say they do not support either candidate, and 1% report they support someone else. Three percent are undecided.

74% of likely voters with a candidate preference in the two-way contest say they strongly support their choice of candidate for president. 73% of Clinton's supporters, compared with a similar 75% of Trump's backers, express a firm level of commitment to their candidate selection.

Like elsewhere, Clinton and Trump are not well-liked in Florida. Clinton's net negative rating is 16 points. 40% of likely voters in Florida have a favorable opinion of her while 56% have an unfavorable one. Trump experiences a similar reality. With a favorable score of 39% and an unfavorable rating of 56%, Trump's net negative is 17 points.

Turning to the election for U.S. Senate in Florida, Republican incumbent Marco Rubio, 48%, is in a competitive contest against his Democratic challenger Patrick Murphy, 46%. Two percent support someone else, and 4% are undecided. 54% of likely voters with a candidate preference for U.S. Senate report they firmly support their choice of candidate. 56% of Rubio's backers, compared with 52% of Murphy's backers, say they are strongly committed to their candidate choice.

"In the battle for control of the U.S. Senate, Florida is one of the key contests to watch," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Rubio currently is outperforming Trump by 6 points among likely voters, and Murphy is running 1 point ahead of Clinton."

49% of Florida adults approve of the job President Barack Obama is doing in office. 43% disapprove, and 7% are unsure. Likely voters divide. 48% of Florida likely voters approve of the president's job performance while 47% disapprove.

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