



To: Interested Parties
From: Stephen Clermont, Change Research
Date: May 15, 2023
Re: Florida Survey Results

Any election to beat an incumbent comes down to two simple questions - do voters see a reason(s) to vote out the incumbent and is the challenger an acceptable alternative. To answer the first question, in a survey of 1,721 Florida voters conducted from May 6th to 9th, we find that voters have reason to vote out Rick Scott. They do not like him, don't support his re-election, and he begins the campaign within the margin of error against unknown Democrats. Additionally, Scott is weighed down by his political and business record. To answer the second question, when voters are introduced to Frentrice Driskell, she has a small edge. The following summarizes key results from this survey:

- Rick Scott is the most unpopular Republican politician in the state.** His favorable rating trails those of Ron DeSantis, Marco Rubio, and Donald Trump overall and with Independents. Just 15% of Independents view him favorable with 59% holding an unfavorable opinion of him. Among Republicans, Scott's strongly favorable rating is 50 points lower than DeSantis's. Scott's favorable rating has fallen seven points, and his unfavorable rating has risen by 9 points, over the last two years (35% favorable-50% unfavorable in March 2021).

| | <u>All Voters</u> | | | <u>Independents</u> | | | <u>GOP</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | Fav | Neutral | Unfav | Fav | Neutral | Unfav | Strong Fav |
| Ron DeSantis | 46 | 4 | 50 | 37 | 5 | 58 | 73 |
| Donald Trump | 38 | 8 | 47 | 28 | 10 | 61 | 51 |
| Marco Rubio | 36 | 14 | 48 | 23 | 20 | 53 | 36 |
| Rick Scott | 28 | 16 | 51 | 15 | 20 | 59 | 23 |

- Only a quarter of voters (28%) say they would definitely vote to re-elect Rick Scott to the U.S. Senate.** 40% say they would definitely vote for someone else. Only a bare majority (56%) of Republicans are committed to his re-election. Democrats begin this race firmly united against Scott.

| | All | Dem | Ind | GOP |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Definitely vote to re-elect Rick Scott | 28 | 2 | 18 | 56 |
| Consider someone else | 21 | 13 | 26 | 23 |
| Definitely vote for someone else | 40 | 80 | 44 | 6 |
| Not sure | 11 | 5 | 13 | 15 |

- **Fentrice Driskell starts out competitive against Scott - 42% Scott, 39% Driskell.** When voters hear more about both candidates¹, she leads 46% to 43%. This poll assumes a more Republican electorate than in 2020. While Democrats have not won a top of the ticket statewide race in Florida since 2012, and Fentrice does not reach 50%, Scott begins in a far weaker position than DeSantis and Rubio did in 2022. Fentrice gains most with younger voters, Democrats, Independents, voters in all race/ethnicity groups², and in every region of the state. Scott stays in the low 40s with everybody.

| | Fentrice Driskell | | | Rick Scott | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Initial | Post Bio | Net | Initial | Post Bio | Net |
| All Voters | 39 | 46 | +7 | 42 | 43 | +1 |
| Women | 42 | 51 | +9 | 36 | 37 | +1 |
| Men | 34 | 41 | +7 | 51 | 51 | 0 |
| 18-34 | 38 | 53 | +15 | 35 | 32 | -3 |
| 35-49 | 39 | 49 | +10 | 33 | 34 | +1 |
| 50-64 | 36 | 40 | +4 | 49 | 50 | +1 |
| 65+ | 41 | 45 | +4 | 48 | 50 | +2 |
| White | 35 | 41 | +6 | 48 | 49 | +1 |
| Black | 59 | 72 | +13 | 15 | 15 | 0 |
| Hispanic | 38 | 48 | +10 | 42 | 39 | -3 |
| Democrats | 88 | 97 | +9 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Independents | 36 | 47 | +11 | 29 | 32 | +3 |
| Republicans | 2 | 3 | +1 | 86 | 87 | +1 |
| Ft. Myers/Naples | 28 | 36 | +8 | 53 | 54 | +1 |
| Jacksonville | 29 | 36 | +7 | 55 | 53 | -2 |
| Miami | 51 | 60 | +9 | 31 | 31 | 0 |
| Mobile/Pensacola | 19 | 30 | +11 | 67 | 69 | +2 |
| Orlando | 43 | 52 | +9 | 39 | 37 | -2 |
| Tampa-St. Pete | 33 | 41 | +8 | 44 | 45 | +1 |
| West Palm | 40 | 45 | +5 | 42 | 44 | +2 |

¹ See the methodology for the exact text

² Black voters in southern states usually report support of little known Democratic candidates in the 60-70% range with low levels of Republican support. In most cases, the undecided Black vote goes almost entirely to the Democratic candidate by election day.

- **Voters express a great deal of concern about Rick Scott’s record committing Medicare fraud and then writing a plan to cut Medicare, along with Social Security, for the rest of us.** Majorities have a great deal of concern with both of these aspects of Scott’s record.

| | | All | Dem | Ind | GOP |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| "Last year, Rick Scott proposed that every American should pay a minimum income tax and that every federal law, including Social Security and Medicare, would expire in 5 years unless Congress writes new laws." | Great Deal of Concern | 58 | 85 | 58 | 33 |
| | Total Concern | 72 | 93 | 70 | 53 |
| "When Rick Scott ran a former hospital company, it was fined \$1.7 billion for Medicare fraud, the largest Medicare fraud fine in history." | Great Deal of Concern | 60 | 95 | 64 | 24 |
| | Total Concern | 70 | 98 | 73 | 43 |

- **Our freedom messaging beats the DeSantis freedom messaging.** By a 53% to 40% margin, people are more likely to vote for someone who centers Democratic values and policy goals around freedom than someone who defines themselves around DeSantis’s narrative. Independents, young voters, and suburban women support our message by an even wider margin. Our economic message beats the Trump message by 10 points overall and by even more among the key voter groups in this election.

| All | Dem | Ind | 18-34 | Sub Wom | |
|-----|-----|-----|-------|---------|---|
| 53 | 97 | 55 | 52 | 57 | A candidate who will defend our basic freedoms - the freedom for women to make their own health care decisions. The freedom for our children to be safe from gun violence. The freedom to vote and have your vote counted. The freedom of seniors to live with dignity. The freedom that comes with a fair shot for all Americans to build a good life. |
| 40 | 3 | 28 | 39 | 33 | A candidate who is on the cultural frontlines in the battle for your freedom to live - the freedom to send your child to the school of your choice, free from woke indoctrination. The freedom from medical bureaucrats mandating shots and imposing restrictions on where you can go and what you can do. The freedom from high taxes that stifle innovation and small business. And freedom from woke corporations imposing their values on the rest of us. |
| 52 | 97 | 54 | 61 | 56 | A candidate who is for the people and is fighting to make America healthy, prosperous, and safe by investing in infrastructure and families, creating millions of middle-class jobs, cracking down on corruption, and defending democracy and freedom. |
| 42 | 2 | 33 | 30 | 38 | A candidate who will make America great again by closing the border with Mexico, fixing the economy, lowering inflation, expanding energy exploration, protecting children from freaks, cracking down on drug dealers and criminals, and ending the war in Ukraine. |

- **Voters in Florida believe there are more Republican political extremists than Democrats.** Overall, 47% believe Republicans have more extremists while 43% say that Democrats do. Independents (46% Republicans, 35% Democrats), young voters under 35 (52% Republicans, 32% Democrats), and suburban women (51% Republicans, 39% Democrats). Many aspects of the Republican agenda in Florida and the rest of the country are viewed as extreme.

| % View as Extreme | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-------|---------|--|
| All | Dem | Ind | 18-34 | Sub Wom | |
| 85 | 97 | 85 | 86 | 86 | Expelling or censuring other elected officials they do not agree with |
| 83 | 92 | 83 | 74 | 85 | Amending child labor laws, allowing children as young as 14 to serve alcohol |
| 83 | 99 | 89 | 80 | 84 | Banning abortion entirely, with no exceptions |
| 82 | 97 | 82 | 88 | 87 | Targeting businesses when they speak out against politicians or laws |
| 71 | 98 | 77 | 74 | 75 | Banning abortion at six weeks, before most women know they are pregnant |
| 69 | 96 | 69 | 66 | 73 | Taking custody away from parents of children undergoing gender-affirming care |
| 63 | 97 | 65 | 62 | 66 | Making it harder to vote |
| 56 | 87 | 57 | 57 | 60 | Preventing state investment funds from investing in companies that consider the environmental, social and governance impacts when making decisions |
| 56 | 89 | 58 | 55 | 59 | Rejecting the increase in unemployment benefits |
| 52 | 98 | 55 | 60 | 55 | Banning Critical Race Theory from being taught in public schools |
| 46 | 86 | 45 | 55 | 50 | Banning transgender children from school sports |

In conclusion, despite the success of Ron DeSantis and Republicans in Florida in 2022, Rick Scott does not begin his re-election with the same advantages. He is largely disliked and is not boosted by a rabid fan base within his party. In the past, he overcame that by spending lots and lots of money. He outspent Alex Sink by \$62.4 to \$11.4 million to win by a 1.2 point margin to become Governor in 2010. He became Senator by just 0.2 points by outspending Bill Nelson \$83.8 to \$33.4 million. He will need to do the same this time just to make up for his self-inflicted wounds from his Social Security and Medicare plan. Fentrice Diskell would be competitive as the alternative to him in this race from the outset.

Methodology - Polling was conducted online from May 6 - 9, 2023. Using its Bias Correct Engine to attain a representative sample, Change Research polled 1,721 likely voters in Florida. Post-stratification was performed on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, media market, and 2020 presidential vote. This poll assumes an electorate that went for Donald Trump by 6.4 points in 2020. The modeled margin of error is 2.6%.

Text for Bio statements about Fentrice Driskell and Rick Scott:

- *Born and raised by working-class parents in Polk County, Fentrice Driskell is the leader of Democrats in the Florida House of Representatives. Her supporters say that she's committed to expanding every Floridian's freedom so they can live healthy, safe, and prosperous lives. She will fight the radical MAGA extremists who want to ban books, end Social Security and Medicare, and take away our freedoms. Her opponents say that she is another far-left radical Democrat who will raise taxes, defund the police, and will be a rubber stamp for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.*
- *Rick Scott has served Florida as Governor and in the US Senate. His supporters say that he is standing up to the radical, woke Democrats, bringing common sense to Washington, and fighting for the families all across our state. He is running for re-election to rescue our great country from the destruction the Democrats have caused and keep working to make Florida the best state to live, work and raise a family. His opponents say that he wrote the Republican plan to end Medicare and Social Security and raise taxes on working families and continues to support that plan today.*