Florida Southern College
Center for Polling and Policy Research

2016 Florida Presidential Primary Preference Poll

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Source institution: The Florida Southern College Center for Polling and Policy Research.

Title: Florida Presidential Primary Preference Poll

For press use, the institutional source name may be shortened to "Florida Southern College Poll" except *in first use in an article or broadcast.*

This poll was taken from Saturday, January 30th through Saturday, February 6th, 2016. Calls were made from the campus of Florida Southern College during the hours of 6-9pm; exclusive of Saturday, Jan. 30th (3pm-6pm); Sunday, January 31st (3pm-6pm) and Saturday, Feb. 6th (1pm-7:30pm).

The telephone numbers used in the survey were selected at random by a computer programmed to ensure that each area of the state was represented in proportion to its population. Both landlines and wireless phones were called.

The Florida Southern College Center for Polling and Policy Research's presidential primary poll was completed with survey answers from 608 voters. The results of the poll have a margin of sampling error of 4 percentage points. That means there is a 19 out of 20 chance that the results from the election survey are within 4 percentage points of the accuracy that would be obtained if every voter in Florida were interviewed. In questions where the subgroups are smaller, the margin of sampling error will be larger. In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any poll can induce other forms of error into the results.

Staff:

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With assistance from **R. Bruce Anderson, Ph.D.** (Director, Florida Southern College Poll; Florida Southern College).

Zachary Baumann, Ph.D. (Pennsylvania State University) cross-checked the data, the results, and the final report for this poll.

Mr. William Rufty (Political Editor, The Ledger [retired]) was responsible for logistics, scheduling, training, and press relations.

Call-room Supervisors: **Ms. Lauren Hansen**, **Ms. Michaela Royse**, and **Ms. Kassidy Watkins**.

Brandon Giczewski and **Lauren Hansen** were responsible for data input. The Student Intern this semester is **Nathan Willin**.

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Table 1: Democratic Primary Preferences

Florida Democrats will vote in March for the candidate to be their party's nominee for president. Among those running for the Democratic nomination, who would you vote for?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Hillary Clinton	42.95
Bernie Sanders	26.04
Martin O'Malley	1.63
Don't Know	21.94
No Answer	7.44
(Registered Democratic Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race)	

Table 2: Republican Primary Preferences

Florida Republicans will vote in March for the candidate to be their party's nominee for president. Among those running for the Republican nomination, who would you vote for?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Donald Trump	27.41
Marco Rubio	20.43
Ted Cruz	12.35
Ben Carson	6.04
Jeb Bush	3.71
John Kasich	1.61
Mike Huckabee	0.79
Chris Christie	0.34
Other	1.17
DK	25.47
No Answer	0.69
(Registered Republican Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race)	

In the primary matchups for Florida, Mr. Donald Trump and Sec. Hillary Clinton lead their respective fields, but it is a closer race for Trump. As may be seen in Table 1, Clinton leads Sen. Bernie Sanders among registered Democrats by nearly 17 points, with Martin O'Malley (now no longer in the race) barely registering at about 1.5%. The interesting note here is that nearly 22% of voters eligible to vote in the Democratic primary are undecided, clearly a large enough cohort to be of major interest to both candidates.

The Republican primary contest (Table 2) is tight, as it is everywhere, but with some major differences emerging in Florida, where two of the candidates are Floridians. The major battle seems to be between three entrants: businessman Donald Trump (at 26.4%),

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) in second place, running about 7 points behind Trump, and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), the winner in Iowa, a full 8 points behind Rubio. The support for the remaining Republican primary candidates is in the single digits. Dr. Ben Carson (a retired neurosurgeon) leads the secondary pack with about a 6% share; former Florida Governor Jeb Bush is a blip at 3.7%, followed by Governor John Kasich (1.6%). Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee (who has suspended his campaign) and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie are dragging the bottom with shares at less than 1%. As with the Democrats, there is a sizable undecided factor to be considered, at about 25%, or a fourth of the voters, still unsure.

We asked a series of questions of our respondents about hypothetical match-ups between the parties in the general election. These are the results:

Table 3: Trump v. Clinton

If the election for president were today and the candidates were Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton for whom would you vote?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Hillary Clinton	44.56
Donald Trump	37.56
Would Not Vote	8.08
Other	3.3
No Answer	6.5
(Registered Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race, & Party Registration)	

In a head-to-head election held between the two frontrunners, Hillary Clinton leads Donald Trump by nearly 8%; further, 8% of registered voters questioned said they would not bother to vote in the contest.

Table 4: Rubio v. Clinton

If the election for president were today and the candidates were Marco Rubio and Hillary Clinton for whom would you vote?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Marco Rubio	45.17
Hillary Clinton	42.67
Would Not Vote	5.42
Other	1.99
No Answer	4.75
(Registered Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race, & Party Registration)	

Sen. Marco Rubio, who placed second among Republicans in the overall preferencing, would edge Sec. Hillary Clinton by about 3% (which is within the margin of error). The "would not vote" factor is ever so slightly lower here, as well, which could suggest that more supporters of other candidates would be more likely to vote for Rubio, if their candidate were not in the race, than would vote for Trump. This is interesting, but caution should be used here as the margin is fairly small. Somewhat suggestively, as seen in Table 5, Sen. Ted Cruz also fails to top his Democratic opponent in a theoretical one-on-one matchup.

Table 5: Cruz v. Clinton

If the election for president were today and the candidates were Ted Cruz and Hillary Clinton for whom would you vote?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Hillary Clinton	44.9
Ted Cruz	41.69
Would Not Vote	5.58
Other	3.12
No Answer	4.71
(Registered Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race, & Party Registration)	

Sec. Clinton holds a statistical advantage over Sen. Cruz, though it is not as clear-cut (or as reliable) as the advantage she holds over Mr. Trump.

Table 6: Bush v. Clinton

If the election for president were today and the candidates were Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton for whom would you vote?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Jeb Bush	44.97
Hillary Clinton	41.68
Would Not Vote	5.38
Other	2.65
No Answer	5.32
(Registered Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race, & Party Registration)	

Table 6 reports the results of a possible match between Gov. Jeb Bush and Sec. Clinton, the Democratic frontrunner. In this table, we can see that Bush has a bit of an edge – suggesting that despite the fact that though very few (about 3%) of Republicans polled favor Bush as their first choice, they would still turn out and vote for him in the general election.

While the margins for both Cruz and Trump seem weak against Clinton, both Floridians line up rather well with Hillary as a Democratic opponent. Of the four pseudo-elections examined here, the race with both frontrunners seems likely to turn out fewer voters, overall, than those with other candidates.

The other possible entrant on the Democratic side is Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), still technically an Independent.

The following tables report Sen. Bernie Sanders' performance in potential matchups between with key Republicans.

Table 7: Sanders v. Trump

If the election for president were today and the candidates were Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders for whom would you vote?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Bernie Sanders	47.99
Donald Trump	38.78
Would Not Vote	5.74
Other	1.89
No Answer	5.6
(Registered Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race, & Party Registration)	

Table 7 reports the results for a potential match-up between Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. Bernie Sanders currently leads Donald Trump by over 9% among registered voters, suggesting that either potential Democratic candidate would have a healthy advantage over Trump in Florida.

Table 8: Sanders v. Rubio

If the election for president were today and the candidates were Marco Rubio and Bernie Sanders for whom would you vote?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Bernie Sanders	44.27
Marco Rubio	43
Would Not Vote	4.96
Other	1.63
No Answer	6.14
(Registered Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race, & Party Registration)	

Sanders also currently leads Marco Rubio among registered voters in Florida, but the lead is quite small and within the margin of error. Again, Rubio performs well against a potential Democratic nominee.

Table 9: Sanders v. Cruz

If the election for president were today and the candidates were Ted Cruz and Bernie Sanders for whom would you vote?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Bernie Sanders	46.07
Ted Cruz	36.73
Would Not Vote	7.45
Other	2.15
No Answer	7.6
(Registered Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race, & Party Registration)	

Sanders' holds a large lead (almost 10%) over Ted Cruz in Florida. This lead is clearly larger than Clinton's 3-point advantage over Cruz.

Table 10: Sanders v. Bush

If the election for president were today and the candidates were Jeb Bush and Bernie Sanders for whom would you vote?	
Candidate	**Percentage**
Bernie Sanders	45.21
Jeb Bush	40.77
Would Not Vote	5.49
Other	2.05
No Answer	6.48
(Registered Voters weighted for Age, Sex, Race, & Party Registration)	

In Table 10, we see that Sanders also holds a small lead over Jeb Bush. This is interesting since Bush leads Clinton, suggesting that Bernie Sanders might be more successful against leading Republican candidates in Florida, even though Florida Democrats prefer Clinton.

Summary and Analysis

In both Florida primaries, if held today, there are clear and unequivocal preferences: among Republicans, Donald Trump is preferred by about 7 points over his nearest competitor, Sen. Marco Rubio; Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is preferred by a plurality of Democrats by a wide margin against Sen. Bernie Sanders. Sen. Ted Cruz may still be in the race, but his showing in Florida is nothing near his popularity in Iowa. Dr. Ben Carson is coasting along at about 6 points. While it would be incautious and possibly wildly inaccurate to write off the rest of the Republican field at this early juncture, it seems safe to say that Gov. Jeb Bush and Gov. John Kasich have a lot of ground to make up and that Chris Christie is a non-factor at this time. It seems that when Floridians are given a choice between two men from the home state, the preference is clearly for Rubio, and not for Bush.

Where the poll becomes truly interesting is in examining the effects of the hypothetical matchups between potential party nominees. Only Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush – favorite sons, if you will -- can claim the kind of strong support that might set a GOP entrant over Sec. Clinton in a two-party race. All of the rest fall short, with Sen. Ted Cruz running a statistical tie and Donald Trump – the current front-runner among GOP registrants – being the weakest candidate in the hypothesized one-on-one.

Perhaps most surprising is the current status of Bernie Sanders: weak among Democrats, where he lags nearly 17 points behind Hillary Clinton, Sanders "defeats" Trump by almost 9%; and also tags Cruz with a 9-point loss. As with Clinton, the GOP is most competitive against Sanders (though still technically "losing") when they run the Floridians: Bush is currently running 5 points back (barely above the margin of error) – but Rubio is in the closest race versus Sanders, statistically tied at 43-44.

Appendix: Poll Demographics

The Florida Presidential Primary Preference Poll includes 608 completed surveys from a statewide random sample of registered Florida voters. For this sample of 608 voters, we can say with 95% confidence that the results of the poll have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Poll Demographics					
51.2%	Male	23.3%	18-33	32.2%	Reg. Democrat
48.6%	Female	21.7%	34-48	44.5%	Reg. Republican
0.2%	No Answer	26.3%	49-64	23.2%	Independent/Other
		26.3%	65 & Over		
		2.4%	No Answer		
73.2%	White	15%	Hispanic Origin		
11.1%	Black	80%	Not Hispanic Origin		
9.8%	Other	5%	No Answer		
5.9%	No Answer				

The poll does include a slight oversampling of men, registered voters over 49 and registered Republicans. To address this, the final samples for Tables 1 and 2 are weighted for age, gender, and race. The final samples for Tables 3-10 are weighted for age, gender, race, and party registration.