

July 20, 2022

Florida Policy Survey

Summary: Researchers from the University of South Florida and Florida International University conducted a statewide survey of 600 Floridians to measure public opinion on several current policy issues. This report covers the second data release from the survey, which was sponsored by the Florida Center for Cybersecurity at USF. The results presented in this report address how Floridians are being affected by rising gasoline prices, the use of digital applications to save money on gas purchases, and Elon Musk’s potential purchase of the social media platform Twitter. The survey included a representative sample of Floridians, fielded between July 2nd and July 10th, 2022. Topline results are reported below with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/- 4.

Over the past year, Floridians have been significantly impacted by the rising price of gasoline.

- A majority of Floridians (83%) say that they are spending “a lot more” on gas than they were a year ago;
- 51% have changed travel or vacation plans in the past year due to the price of gas;
- A third of Floridians (38%) report that rising gas prices have affected their ability to pay other monthly bills;
- More than three-quarters (78%) have less money available for discretionary spending due to the rising price of gasoline;
- 28% say that the price of gas is negatively affecting their ability to get to work on a regular basis;
- Over a third of Floridians (43%) have begun using digital apps to save money on gasoline.

Most Floridians are dissatisfied with the government’s response to rising gas prices. A majority of Floridians are dissatisfied with President Biden (65%) and Congress’s (75%) handling of rising gas prices. This includes large majorities who indicated they are “very dissatisfied” (49%; and 54% respectively).

There is strong, bipartisan support for policy interventions to lower the price of gasoline. A majority of Floridians (72%) are in favor of increasing domestic oil production as a means of lowering the price of gasoline. A similar number (70%) would support a temporary suspension of the U.S. federal gas tax. In each case, majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents support these measures.

While Elon Musk’s purchase of Twitter remains in question, Floridians are divided on what it will mean for American democracy if the deal is finalized. 42% of respondents “neither support nor oppose” Musk’s purchase of the social media platform. However, Floridians are divided on whether its implications for American democracy would be good (24%), bad (20%), or neutral (33%). However, a majority are supportive of some specific measures he has proposed for the platform, such as...

- Making Twitter’s algorithm for targeting content and ads publicly available (64%)
- Only limiting offensive content if it is illegal (50%)
- Doing more to eliminate “bots” (non-human accounts) from the platform (88%)

Social media platforms are viewed by most as “private spaces” that should not be regulated by government. The potential sale of Twitter has raised significant questions about the role of social media platforms in American public life. More than half of Floridians (52%) say that platforms such as Twitter are “private spaces” that should be regulated only by private companies. Far less (28%) view such platforms as “public squares” where government should regulate content, while 20% remain “unsure”.

Most believe that these platforms have a responsibility to remove content deemed harmful or dangerous, but opinions are split when it comes to other limitations on speech. Floridians believe that social media platforms should remove content deemed false/misleading (77%) or harmful/dangerous to individuals or groups (77%). However, there is less agreement on whether users should be allowed to post content that may be considered offensive by others. 61% say that people should be allowed to say whatever they want, regardless of whether others find it offensive, while 39% disagree.

A majority of Floridians do not trust social media companies to monitor the appropriateness of content in a fair and neutral way. While a majority of Floridians say that social media platforms should be regulated self-regulated as private companies, most say that they don’t trust social media platforms to do so in an fair and neutral way. Two-thirds (66%) indicated little to no belief in the possibility for fair moderation of content, with a plurality (32%) having no faith in their neutrality.

Summary of Responses

Which of the following statements most accurately describes your spending on gasoline/fuel purchases?

	Frequency	% of Total Respondents Selecting
I'm spending A LOT MORE on gas than I was a year ago	435	82.8
I'm spending A LITTLE MORE on gas than I was a year ago	66	12.6
I'm spending LESS on gas than I was a year ago	16	3.0
I'm spending ABOUT THE SAME on gas as I was a year ago	8	1.5

N = 525 drivers of gasoline or hybrid automobiles

Over the past year, have you made a deliberate attempt to drive less often due to the price of gasoline?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	425	80.9
No	100	19.0

N = 525 drivers of gasoline or hybrid automobiles

Over the past year, have you canceled or changed travel/vacation plans due to the price of gasoline?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	270	51.4
No	255	48.6

N = 525 drivers of gasoline or hybrid automobiles

Over the past year, has the price of gasoline affected your ability to pay other monthly bills?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	201	38.3
No	324	61.7

N = 525 drivers of gasoline or hybrid automobiles

Over the past year, has the price of gasoline affected your ability to get to work?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	95	27.9
No	245	72.1

N = 340 (respondents who drive to work)

Over the past year, has the price of gasoline affected the amount of money that you have available for discretionary spending?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	407	77.5
No	118	22.5

N = 525 drivers of gasoline or hybrid automobiles

Over the past year, have you used any of the following apps to help reduce or offset your spending on gasoline? (please choose 'yes' or 'no' for each option) -

	# Yes	% of Total
Gas Buddy	114	21.7
Get Upside	97	18.5
Gas Guru	14	2.7
Other	30	5.7

N = 525 drivers of gasoline or hybrid automobiles (255 respondents reported using at least one app).

In the past year, have you used a gasoline rewards/loyalty program to offset the price of gas? (rewards/loyalty program are typically associated with a single store/provider)

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	253	48.2
No	272	51.8

N = 525

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the Biden Administration's response to rising gasoline prices?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Satisfied	23	3.8
Somewhat Satisfied	79	13.2
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	110	18.3
Somewhat Dissatisfied	92	15.3
Very Dissatisfied	296	49.3

N=600 (Very + Somewhat Dissatisfied: Democrats = 33.7; Independents = 69.1%; Republicans = 91.8%)

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the U.S. Congress's response to rising gasoline prices?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Satisfied	10	1.7
Somewhat Satisfied	33	5.5
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	105	17.5
Somewhat Dissatisfied	129	21.5
Very Dissatisfied	323	53.8

N=600 (Very + Somewhat Dissatisfied: Democrats = 59.6%; Independents = 75.7%; Republicans = 90.8)

Would you support or oppose the United States increasing domestic oil drilling to lower the price of gasoline?

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	269	44.8
Somewhat Support	165	27.5
Somewhat Oppose	49	8.2
Strongly Oppose	40	6.6
Unsure	77	12.8

N=600 (Strongly + Somewhat Support: Democrats = 59.1%; Independents = 70.6%; Republicans = 89.1%)

Gasoline prices include a federal tax of 18.4 cents per gallon. Would you support or oppose a temporary suspension of the federal gas tax to offset the rising cost of gasoline?

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	253	42.2
Somewhat Support	165	27.5
Somewhat Oppose	63	10.5
Strongly Oppose	43	7.2
Unsure	76	12.7

N=600 (Strongly + Somewhat Support: Democrats = 74.6%; Independents = 70.6%; Republicans = 64.1%)

Do you support or oppose Elon Musk's attempt to purchase Twitter?

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	122	20.3
Somewhat Support	85	14.2
Neither Support nor Oppose	254	42.3
Somewhat Oppose	57	9.5
Strongly Oppose	82	13.7

N=600

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements: **The algorithm that Twitter uses to target content and ads should be made publicly available.**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	222	37.0
Somewhat Agree	164	27.3
Somewhat Disagree	59	9.8
Strongly Disagree	19	3.2
Unsure	136	22.7

N=600

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements: **Twitter should not restrict offensive posts unless the content is illegal.**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	161	26.8
Somewhat Agree	138	23.0
Somewhat Disagree	100	16.7
Strongly Disagree	153	25.5
Unsure	48	8.0

N=600

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements: **Platforms such as Twitter should do more to identify and eliminate "bots" (i.e. non-human accounts).**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	407	67.8
Somewhat Agree	122	20.3
Somewhat Disagree	14	2.3
Strongly Disagree	7	1.2
Unsure	50	8.3

N=600

Some experts and commentators have suggested that social media platforms such as Twitter represent "public spaces", and as such, they feel that these platforms should be regulated by the government to ensure that content is not false, misleading, or hateful. However, others argue that as private companies, social media platforms represent private spaces, and should therefore not be subject to government regulation of speech. **Which of the following statements do you believe is most accurate?**

	Frequency	Percentage
Social media platforms are "public spaces" and SHOULD be regulated by government	169	28.2
Social media platforms are private spaces and should NOT be regulated by the government	310	51.7
Unsure	121	20.2

N=600

Although the content posted on social media platforms is not currently regulated by the federal government, private companies such as Twitter do have the option of restricting content on their platforms should they choose to do so. **Do you believe that private social media companies should restrict content that they deem to be false, misleading, or hateful?**

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	388	64.7
No	118	19.7
Unsure	94	15.7

N=600

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements: **Social media platforms have a responsibility to restrict content that is false/misleading.**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	294	49.0
Somewhat Agree	166	27.7
Somewhat Disagree	77	12.8
Strongly Disagree	63	10.5

N=600

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements: **Individuals have a fundamental right to express their opinions/say what they'd like, regardless of whether their words are considered offensive by others.**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	170	28.3
Somewhat Agree	195	32.5
Somewhat Disagree	163	27.2
Strongly Disagree	72	12.0

N=600

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements: **Individuals have a fundamental right to express their opinions/say what they'd like, regardless of whether their words are true or false.**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	134	22.3
Somewhat Agree	164	27.3
Somewhat Disagree	178	29.7
Strongly Disagree	124	20.7

N=600

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements: **Social media platforms have a responsibility to restrict content that they deem hateful/offensive toward specific people/groups.**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	295	49.2
Somewhat Agree	168	28.0
Somewhat Disagree	88	14.7
Strongly Disagree	49	8.2

N=600

How much do you trust social media companies to monitor the appropriateness of content in a fair and neutral way?

	Frequency	Percentage
A Great Deal	28	4.7
A Little	174	29.0
Not Much	209	34.8
Not At All	189	31.5

N=600

Would you support or oppose Twitter replacing advertisements with a small, monthly user fee (such as a fee of \$2.99 a month)?

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	8	3.3
Somewhat Support	29	11.9
Somewhat Oppose	52	21.4
Strongly Oppose	154	63.4

N = 243 Current Twitter Users

If Elon Musk owns Twitter at the end of the year, will you be more likely or less likely to use the platform?

	Frequency	Percentage
I will be MORE LIKELY to use Twitter if Elon Musk owns the platform	90	15.0
I will be neither more or less likely to use Twitter if Elon Musk owns the platform	367	61.2
I will be LESS LIKELY to use Twitter if Elon Musk owns the platform	143	23.8

N = 600

Which of the following statements do you believe is most accurate:

	Frequency	Percentage
Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter would be GOOD for American democracy	144	24.0
Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter would be NEITHER good nor bad for American democracy	196	32.7
Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter would be BAD for American democracy	120	20.0
Unsure	140	23.3

N=600

Survey Information

600 adult Floridians were surveyed via an online web-panel using an industry leading market research provider. The survey – which was sponsored by the Florida Center for Cybersecurity at USF – was fielded from July 2 through July 10, 2022, and the results are reported with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of +/- 4. Respondents were selected via stratified, quota sampling to ensure a representative sample. Balanced quotas for gender, age, race/ethnicity, education and party affiliation were determined based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Florida’s Department of State, and Florida’s Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR). Quotas were stratified by region of the state for geographical representativeness.

Table A1: Sample Comparison

	USF Survey Sample	Florida Demographics*
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	50.3%	51.1%
Male	49.0%	48.9%
Other	0.7%	-
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	11.2%	10.8%
25-44	30.0%	31.2%
45-64	33.3%	32.4%
65+	25.5%	25.6%
<i>Race</i>		
Black/African American	17.7%	16.9%
White/Caucasian	74.8%	77.3%
Other	7.5%	5.8%
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Hispanic	27.7%	26.4%
Non-Hispanic	72.3%	73.6%
<i>Education</i>		
Less than 4 Year Degree	69.0%	69.5%
4 Year Degree (or higher)	31.0%	30.5%
<i>Political Affiliation (registered voters only, n=540)</i>		
Democrat	36.2%	36.2%
Independent	25.5%	26.4%
Republican	34.5%	35.7%
Other	3.7%	1.7%
<i>Region</i>		
Panhandle	7.3%	7.2%
Northeast Florida	12.2%	12.4%
Central Florida	26.8%	25.5%
West Coast	22.7%	21.9%
Southeast Florida	31.0%	32.9%

*Gender, race, ethnicity, and region quotas based on U.S. Census Bureau’s Population Estimates Program (PEP): <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fl> Age quotas based on Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR): <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/population-demographics/data/index-floridaproducts.cfm> Political Affiliation quotas based on Florida Division of Elections <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/data-statistics/voter-registration-statistics/voter-registration-reportsxlsx/voter-registration-by-party-affiliation/>

About our Research Team

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About the University of South Florida

The University of South Florida is a high-impact global research university dedicated to student success. Over the past 10 years, no other public university in the country has risen faster in U.S. News and World Report's national university rankings than USF. Serving more than 50,000 students on campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee, USF is designated as a Preeminent State Research University by the Florida Board of Governors, placing it in the most elite category among the state's 12 public universities. USF has earned widespread national recognition for its success graduating under-represented minority and limited-income students at rates equal to or higher than white and higher income students. USF is a member of the American Athletic Conference. Learn more at www.usf.edu.

About Florida International University

[Florida International University](#) is a [top public university](#) that drives real talent and innovation in Miami and globally. Very high research (R1) activity and high social mobility come together at FIU to uplift and accelerate learner success in a global city by focusing in the areas of environment, health, innovation, and justice. Today, FIU has two campuses and multiple centers. FIU serves a diverse student body of more than 58,000 and 270,000 Panther alumni. U.S. News and World Report places dozens of FIU programs among the best in the nation, including international business at No. 2. Washington Monthly Magazine ranks FIU among the top 20 public universities contributing to the public good.

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