

April 14, 2022

Florida Policy Survey

Summary: Researchers at the University of South Florida conducted a statewide survey of 600 Floridians to measure public opinion on several current policy issues. The results presented in this report address COVID-19, the U.S response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and presidential/gubernatorial job approval. The survey included a representative sample of Floridians, fielded between March 31st and April 12th, 2022. Topline results are reported below with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/- 4.

Economic concerns have surpassed COVID-19 as the most important issue for a plurality of Floridians.

More than a third of respondents identified the economy and jobs as the most important issues facing the state today (34%). The COVID-19 pandemic was identified as the most important issue by only 9% of Floridians, falling below the economy/jobs (34%) and immigration (10%).

A majority of Floridians approve of the job being done by Governor DeSantis on “jobs and the economy”, despite partisan splits on many issues. Over half of Floridians either “strongly” or “somewhat approve” of the job being done by Governor DeSantis when it comes to jobs and the economy (56%), while a plurality also supported his efforts around COVID-19 (50%) and conservation (49%). Governor DeSantis received his lowest public support when it came to climate change, with only 42% of Floridians approving of his job in that area.

Consistent with national polls, President Biden’s approval rating among Floridians remained relatively low, despite overall satisfaction with his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. While a majority of Floridians approve of the job being done by President Biden on COVID-19 (52%), his approval ratings were significantly lower in the areas of immigration (36%), foreign policy (43%), and unifying Americans (43%).

More than two-thirds of Floridians say that “the worst is behind us” when it comes to COVID-19, but many are still concerned about a Spring/Summer surge. Most respondents (71%) agreed that “when it comes to COVID-19, the worst is behind us”. However, a majority (59%) indicated that they are still either “somewhat” or “very concerned” about the potential for a surge of cases in the Spring/Summer.

Most Floridians are confident in the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, though a notable minority remain skeptical. Nearly three quarters of Floridians (73%) are confident that COVID-19 vaccines are safe, and most believe that the vaccines reduce the risk of hospitalization (76%) and death (76%) from a COVID-19 infection. However, in each case, roughly a quarter of Floridians disagree.

A majority of Floridians are satisfied with the state’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than half of Floridians (60%) indicated that they are either “very” or “somewhat satisfied” with the state’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than two thirds say that Florida has done either as well (32%) or better (36%) than other states in responding to the pandemic.

A majority of Floridians support an aggressive U.S. response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Most Floridians (79%) are paying close attention to the conflict in Ukraine. While 34% say that U.S. economic sanctions imposed against Russia have been appropriate, just under half (45%) feel that the U.S. response has not been aggressive enough. A large majority (74%) are in favor of the United States providing additional military support to Ukraine in the form of conventional weapons and ammunition.

Most Floridians say that it’s important for the state to divest of assets linked to Russian businesses. The state of Florida currently holds as much as \$300 million in investments linked to Russia and Russian based companies; 86% say that it is either “somewhat” or “very important” for the state to divest of those assets in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Summary of Responses

Do you approve or disapprove of the job that President Joe Biden is doing in each of the following areas? (As a percentage of total respondents by row)

	Total Approval	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapproval	Somewhat Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	Unsure
Jobs and the Economy	44.1	16.3	27.8	51.7	14.0	37.7	4.2
Foreign Policy	42.7	18.0	24.7	51.3	14.5	36.8	6.0
Race Relations	47.0	21.2	25.8	46.6	13.8	32.8	6.3
Immigration/Border	35.5	12.5	23.0	56.7	16.7	40.0	7.8
COVID-19 Pandemic	51.5	27.2	24.3	43.6	13.3	30.3	4.8
Climate Change	45.6	16.8	28.8	44.3	13.8	30.5	10.0
Unifying Americans	42.5	17.7	24.8	49.7	12.2	37.5	7.8

N=600; (Statistically significant differences in approval exist across each policy area by political partisanship. Detailed partisanship data available upon request.)

Do you approve or disapprove of the job that Governor Ron DeSantis is doing in each of the following areas? (As a percentage of total respondents by row)

	Total Approval	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapproval	Somewhat Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	Unsure
Jobs and the Economy	56.2	30.7	25.5	35.2	14.5	20.7	8.7
Race Relations	46.4	25.2	21.2	42.5	13.5	29.0	11.2
COVID-19 Pandemic	49.7	33.7	16.0	45.1	11.8	33.3	5.2
Climate Change	41.8	23.0	18.8	43.5	15.5	28.0	14.7
Conservation/ Environment	48.7	27.0	21.7	41.0	15.0	26.0	10.3
Unifying Floridians	45.2	27.0	18.2	46.0	12.7	33.3	8.8

N=600; (Statistically significant differences in approval exist across each policy area by political partisanship. Detailed partisanship data available upon request.)

In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing the state of Florida today?

	Frequency	Percentage
Economy	160	26.7
Immigration	59	9.8
COVID-19 Pandemic	54	9.0
Government Corruption	50	8.3
Unemployment/Jobs	43	7.2
Climate Change	36	6.0
Healthcare	35	5.8
Crime	34	5.7
Education	31	5.2
Environment and Conservation	24	4.0
Race Relations	16	2.7
Infrastructure (i.e. roads and bridges)	18	3.0
Other	40	6.7

N=600 (Statistically significant differences in perception of the most important issue exist by political partisanship. Detailed partisanship data available upon request.)

How concerned are you about a Spring/Summer surge in COVID-19 cases?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Concerned	123	20.5
Somewhat Concerned	232	38.7
Not Very Concerned	144	24.0
Not at All Concerned	101	16.8

N=600 (Very/Somewhat Concerned: Democrats = 74.8%; Independents = 62.5%; Republicans = 42.0%)

*Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: **When it comes to COVID-19, the worst is behind us.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	131	21.8
Somewhat Agree	296	49.3
Somewhat Disagree	122	20.3
Strongly Disagree	51	8.5

N=600 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 65.4%; Independents = 65.8%; Republicans = 80.9%)

How satisfied are you with Florida's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Satisfied	172	28.7
Somewhat Satisfied	188	31.3
Somewhat Dissatisfied	102	17.0
Very Dissatisfied	138	23.0

N=600 (Very/Somewhat Satisfied: Democrats = 34.0%; Independents = 56.6%; Republicans = 87.2%)

Do you believe that Florida should have adopted a statewide vaccine mandate?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	246	41.0
No	354	59.0

N=600 (YES: Democrats = 62.3%; Independents = 40.8%; Republicans = 22.9%)

Do you believe that businesses in Florida should be able to require their employees to be vaccinated if they choose to do so?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	334	55.7
No	266	44.3

N=600 (YES: Democrats = 75.9%; Independents = 58.6%; Republicans = 38.3%)

How confident are you that the COVID-19 vaccines are safe?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Confident	241	40.2
Somewhat Confident	194	32.5
Not Very Confident	77	12.8
Not at All Confident	87	14.5

N=600 (Very/Somewhat Confident: Democrats = 86.4%; Independents = 71.7%; Republicans = 62.3%)

How confident are you in the COVID-19 guidance being provided by the CDC and public health officials?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Confident	116	19.3
Somewhat Confident	268	44.7
Not Very Confident	119	19.8
Not at All Confident	97	16.2

N=600 (Very/Somewhat Confident: Democrats = 86.9%; Independents = 63.1%; Republicans = 44.1%)

How do you feel Florida has done compared to other states in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?

	Frequency	Percentage
Florida has done better than other states	215	35.8
Florida has done about the same as other states	192	32.0
Florida has done worse than other states	193	32.2

N=600 (BETTER: Democrats = 14.1%; Independents = 30.9%; Republicans = 64.9%; WORSE: Democrats = 58.1%; Independents = 32.2%; Republicans = 9.0%)

Have you spoken to your primary care physician about whether or not a COVID-19 vaccine is right for you?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	289	48.2
No	311	51.8

Have the COVID-19 vaccines been more effective, less effective, or about as effective as you expected them to be?

	Frequency	Percentage
More effective than I expected	121	20.2
About as effective as I expected	373	62.2
Less effective than I expected	106	17.7

N=600 (MORE: Democrats = 27.7%; Independents = 21.1%; Republicans = 13.8%; LESS: Democrats = 5.2%; Independents = 21.7%; Republicans = 26.1%)

Do you believe that COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of hospitalization from COVID-19?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	458	76.3
No	142	23.7

N=600 (YES: Democrats = 88.0%; Independents = 77.0%; Republicans = 68.6%)

Do you believe that COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of death from COVID-19?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	458	76.3
No	142	23.7

N=600 (YES: Democrats = 90.6%; Independents = 75.7%; Republicans = 66.0%)

Have you already received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	455	75.8
No	145	24.2

How likely will you be to receive annual booster shots of the COVID-19 vaccine if they are recommended by public health experts?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Likely	244	53.6
Somewhat Likely	114	25.1
Not Very Likely	59	12.9
Not at All Likely	38	8.3

Question was only asked to those who are currently vaccinated. (N=455)

For which of the following reasons would you not be willing to receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot? (please check all that apply)

	Frequency	Percentage
I don't think that a booster shot is necessary	86	40.7
I had side effects from the original COVID-19 vaccine	51	24.2
Regular booster shots would be an inconvenience	43	20.3
I'm no longer worried about COVID-19	39	18.5
I don't think that the vaccines work to prevent COVID-19	36	17.1
Concerned about the potential costs of future booster shots	34	16.1
Other	13	6.2

Question was only asked to those who did NOT report being "Very Likely" to receive COVID-19 booster shots if recommended by public health guidance. (N=211)

How closely are you following news about the current war in Ukraine?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Closely	149	24.8
Somewhat Closely	326	54.3
Not Very Closely	100	16.7
Not at All	25	4.2

N=600 (Very/Somewhat Closely: Democrats = 82.8%; Independents = 82.3%; Republicans = 80.4%)

How satisfied are you with the Biden Administration's handling of the Russia-Ukraine conflict so far?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Satisfied	98	16.3
Somewhat Satisfied	162	27.0
Somewhat Dissatisfied	136	22.7
Very Dissatisfied	141	23.5
Unsure	63	10.5

N=600 (Very/Somewhat Satisfied: Democrats = 70.2; Independents = 41.4%; Republicans = 18.7)

Thinking about the economic sanctions that the United States has imposed on Russia, which of the following statements best describes your opinion?

	Frequency	Percentage
The U.S. response has not been aggressive enough	270	45.0
The U.S. response has been appropriately aggressive	202	33.7
The U.S. response has been too aggressive	26	4.3
Unsure	102	17.0

N=600 (Not Aggressive Enough: Democrats = 35.1%; Independents =42.8%; Republicans = 60.1%)

Would you support or oppose the United States providing additional military aid to Ukraine (in the form of conventional weapons and ammunition)?

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	259	43.2
Somewhat Support	183	30.5
Somewhat Oppose	48	8.0
Strongly Oppose	51	8.5
Unsure	59	9.8

N=600 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 79.0%; Independents = 71.7%; Republicans = 75.0%)

How concerned are you about the United States being drawn into a military conflict with Russia?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Concerned	149	24.8
Somewhat Concerned	295	49.2
Not Very Concerned	121	20.2
Not at All Concerned	35	5.8

N=600 (Very/Somewhat Concerned: Democrats =77.0%; Independents = 77.0%; Republicans = 69.2%)

In your opinion, how important is the NATO alliance to America's security?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Important	301	50.2
Somewhat Important	161	26.8
Not Very Important	44	7.3
Not at All Important	21	3.5
Unsure	73	12.2

N=600 (Very/Somewhat Important: Democrats = 85.3%; Independents = 75.7%; Republicans = 74.4%)

*The State of Florida currently holds as much as \$300 million in investments that are linked to Russia and Russian based companies. **In your opinion, how important is it for the State of Florida to divest of these assets in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine?***

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Important	256	42.7
Somewhat Important	260	43.3
Not Very Important	45	7.5
Not at All Important	39	6.5

N=600 (Very/Somewhat Important: Democrats = 91.6%; Independents = 84.9%; Republicans = 82.5%)

Would you support or oppose the State of Florida accepting Ukrainian refugees who have been displaced by the current conflict?

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	234	39.0
Somewhat Support	227	37.8
Somewhat Oppose	78	13.0
Strongly Oppose	61	10.2

N=600 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 89.0%; Independents = 77.0%; Republicans = 66.0%)

Survey Information

600 adult Floridians were surveyed via an online web-panel using an industry leading market research provider. The survey was fielded from March 31st through April 12th 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	51.5%	51.1%
Male	47.3%	48.9%
Other	1.2%	-
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	9.0%	10.8%
25-44	31.2%	31.2%
45-64	33.3%	32.4%
65+	26.5%	25.6%
<i>Race</i>		
Black/African American	17.3%	16.9%
White/Caucasian	77.7%	77.3%
Other	5.0%	5.8%
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Hispanic	27.0%	26.4%
Non-Hispanic	73.0%	73.6%
<i>Education</i>		
Less than 4 Year Degree	69.2%	69.5%
4 Year Degree (or higher)	30.8%	30.5%
<i>Political Affiliation (registered voters only, n=540)</i>		
Democrat	35.4%	36.2%
Independent	28.1%	26.4%
Republican	34.8%	35.7%
Other	1.7%	1.7%
<i>Region</i>		
Panhandle	7.2%	7.2%
Northeast Florida	13.0%	12.4%
Central Florida	25.7%	25.5%
West Coast	22.3%	21.9%
Southeast Florida	31.8%	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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Christina W. Stevens (MPA Candidate, University of South Florida). Christina Stevens is currently pursuing her Master of Public Administration at the University of South Florida. Her research interests include quantitative data analysis, survey research, and nonprofit management. Christina works as the Associate Director of Development for the USF Foundation, where she is responsible for all fundraising efforts and priorities for the USF Libraries. She holds a Bachelor of Science in public relations with a minor in political science from the University of North Florida. Christina can be reached at cwisz@usf.edu

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.

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