

FLORIDIANS REMAIN DIVIDED ON RAISING THE STATE'S MINIMUM WAGE

AHEAD OF A STATEWIDE BALLOT MEASURE, FLORIDIANS REMAIN DIVIDED ON RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE, WITH SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES ALONG PARTISAN, RACIAL/ETHNIC AND GENERATIONAL LINES.

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SUMMARY

Floridians hold differing views about raising the state's minimum wage according to survey data collected by the University of South Florida and Nielsen. Democrats are substantially more likely than Republicans to support raising the minimum wage, as are younger Floridians and racial/ethnic minorities. These data suggest that electoral dynamics related to voter turnout will be critical in determining the outcome of the November ballot referendum.

SURVEY RESULTS

In November of this year, Floridians will vote on a ballot referendum that would incrementally raise the state's minimum wage to \$15 per hour by the year 2026. Data collected by the annual Sunshine State Survey suggests that Floridians remain largely divided on the issue.

Survey respondents were given a sliding "feeling thermometer" and asked to rate how they would "feel if the state government in Tallahassee were to... increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour" (with 0 equaling the "coldest" possible rating and 100 equaling the "warmest" possible rating). The responses resulted in an average rating of 64.2, with a standard deviation of 33.7, suggesting a wide distribution of responses around the mean (Figure 1).

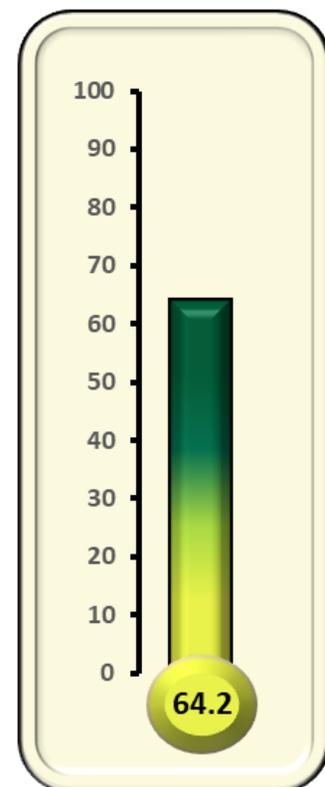


Figure 1

Average Feelings Toward Raising the Minimum Wage

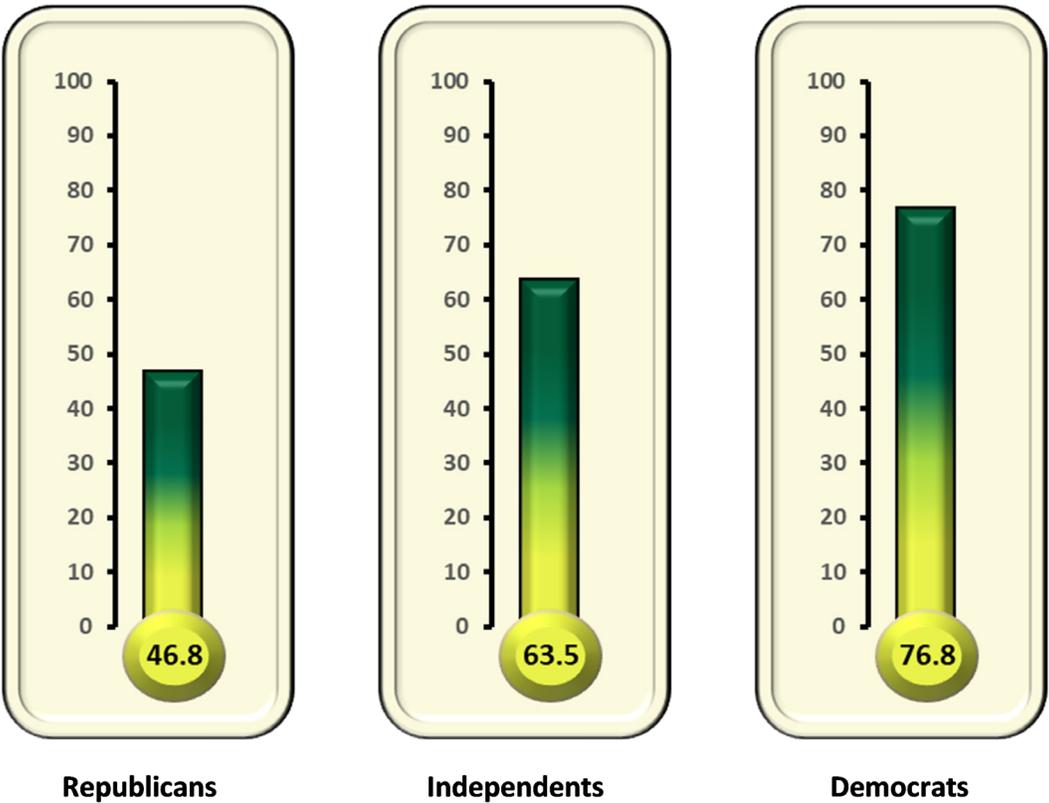
Source: 2019 Sunshine State Survey

PARTISAN DIFFERENCES

Feelings toward raising the minimum wage differed notably based on partisan affiliation. Democrats reported significantly “warmer” feelings toward the proposal, while Republicans reported much “colder” feelings (Figure 2). Average responses for Independents were centered between the two.

Figure 2

Party Differences in Feelings Toward Raising the Minimum Wage



Source: 2019 Sunshine State Survey

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Feelings toward raising the minimum wage also differed by age, with younger Floridians reporting significantly “warmer” feelings, which grew incrementally “colder” for each subsequent age cohort (Table 1). Intensity in favor of raising the minimum wage was highest among those between 18 and 29 years of age, with more than two-thirds in that age group reporting a “feeling” of 67 or higher. In contrast, feelings toward raising the minimum wage were “coldest” among those 50 years of age and older, with nearly a third of individuals in this age bracket reporting a “feeling” of less than 33.

Table 1
Generational Differences in Feeling Toward Raising the Minimum Wage

Age Group	Mean Thermometer Rating	% rating their feelings in the _____ part of the thermometer		
		Coldest (33 or below)	Middle (34-66)	Warmest (67 or Above)
18-29	72.8	12.8	22.7	64.5
30-49	69.9	15.6	21.6	62.8
50-64	59.1	30.9	17.9	51.2
65 +	55.6	29.8	26.6	43.6

Source: 2019 Sunshine State Survey

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Racial and ethnic minorities also reported significantly “warmer” feelings toward raising the minimum wage (Table 2). African Americans had a 20 point higher average thermometer rating than whites, and three-quarters of African American respondents rated their feelings in the top range, compared to just less than half of whites. Hispanic respondents also had a significantly higher average thermometer rating than non-Hispanics, though this difference was only half as large as that between African Americans and whites.

Table 2

Racial/Ethnic Differences in Feeling Toward Raising the Minimum Wage

% rating their feelings in the _____ part of the thermometer

Racial/Ethnic Group	Mean Thermometer Rating	Coldest (33 or below)	Middle (34-66)	Warmest (67 or Above)
White/Caucasian	59.5	26.9	24.1	49.1
African American	79.5	6.8	17.4	75.8
Other	75.9	12.9	15.1	72.0
Hispanic	71.9	14.4	19.0	66.6
Non-Hispanic	61.6	25.0	23.4	51.6

Source: 2019 Sunshine State Survey

ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS

The survey results are not predictive and do not provide a clear indication of what to expect from the November referendum. However, they do indicate that the outcome may hinge largely on electoral dynamics, particularly partisan enthusiasm and voter turnout among racial/ethnic minorities as well as younger voters.

SURVEY INFORMATION

For this survey, 1,200 Florida residents were recruited online by Prodege - a leading market research panel - via a partnership with Nielsen. The survey was fielded from October 26—November 20, 2019, and the results are reported with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/-3.

For sampling purposes, and to overcome drawbacks associated with online panel surveys, participants were recruited to match Florida's demography associated with gender, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and age as reported by the 2019 Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR). Table 2 details comparisons between the USF-Nielsen Sunshine State Survey sample and the BEBR 2019 estimates.

Table 2.

SAMPLE COMPARISON

	USF-NIELSEN SUNSHINE STATE SAMPLE	BEBR 2019 ESTIMATES
GENDER		
MALE	48.30%	49%
FEMALE	51.70%	51%
RACE/ETHNICITY		
WHITE	75.10%	77%
BLACK	17.20%	17%
OTHER	7.70%	6%
HISPANIC	25.40%	26%
AGE		
18-24	10.30%	11%
25-54	47.00%	47%
55-64	17.20%	17%
65+	25.50%	25%

Source: 2019 Sunshine State Survey; 2019 BEBR Population Estimates

The sample of participants was stratified by Florida region during recruitment to ensure the balance of the sample matched location dynamics (Northeast Florida, Tampa Bay Metro, Southwest Florida, Orlando/Daytona, Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Southeast Florida, and Northwest Florida). The sample was also representative by educational attainment: 17.5% had a high school diploma or less, 36.3% had some college or a technical school equivalent, and 46.2% had a four-year college degree or graduate degree.

For the purposes of analysis, survey responses were weighted for representativeness based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and region of the state. Weighting was conducted using an iterative proportional fitting method.

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