



Let's Build: Freedom. Fair Shot. Future.

TO: Interested Parties
FR: Mark Riddle, President of Future Majority
DT: August 23, 2021
RE: FL and VA: Voter Opinions on Defending Freedom and Democracy

Since the 2020 election, Future Majority has surveyed 42,385 voters in swing congressional districts and battleground states with our partners at Change Research. This memo includes data from a recent survey of 1,585 likely voters statewide in **Florida** (August 14-17, 2021) and 1,334 likely voters statewide in **Virginia** (August 14-18, 2021).

Three Big Takeaways from the Poll:

1. **Voters Do Not Feel Represented:** 98% of voters in Florida and 96% of voters in Virginia are concerned about elected officials not caring about what ordinary people think.
2. **The American Flag:** Only 57% of Democrats in Florida say they are comfortable hanging the American flag outside of their home. This, compared to 99% of Republicans and 81% of Independents who feel comfortable doing so.
3. **Voters Differ Greatly on Freedom and Health:** Only 21% of Republicans in Florida agree with the statement that “my freedom ends when it is endangering your health.” 88% of Democrats agree and 56% of Independents agree.

Florida Headline: Governor Ron DeSantis is one of the most polarizing politicians in America.

- 96% of Florida Democrats strongly disapprove of DeSantis’ job versus 93% of Florida Republicans who strongly approve of DeSantis’ job. DeSantis leads potential Democratic nominee Charlie Crist 49% to 45%, and potential nominee Nikki Fried 49% to 44%.
- The data suggests a very low ceiling for DeSantis but an uphill climb for Democrats in a state that’s been trending more Republican over recent election cycles. However, the Governor’s naked national ambition could be DeSantis’ riptide:
 - 51% of voters say DeSantis “cares more about running for president in 2024” vs. 46% who say he “cares more about the future of Florida.”
 - 51% of voters say DeSantis “puts his political ambitions first” vs. 45% who say, “puts people first.”
 - 50% say he is a “a typical politician” compared to 46% who say he is “a leader.”
 - 50% say DeSantis is “concerned most with the needs of corporations and wealthy special interests” versus 45% who say the Florida governor is “concerned with small business and people like you.”
 - 49% say he “doesn’t really understand problems facing regular people” versus 47% who say he is “in touch with problems facing regular people.”

- 64% of Floridians say they are falling behind the cost of living.
- Senator Marco Rubio leads Congresswoman Val Demmings in the 2022 election for U.S. Senate by three points, 47% to 44%.

Florida Schools Reopening During the Pandemic:

- 65% of Florida voters are concerned about the spread of the COVID-19 through the Delta variant, including 47% who are “very concerned.”
- 50% of voters think it is safe for Florida’s students to go back to school this fall versus 48% who think it is unsafe (Safe: 90% of Republicans, 4% of Democrats, 48% of Independents vs. Unsafe: 95% of Democrats, 50% of Independents, and 7% of Republicans).
 - 60% of Florida voters oppose withholding funding from schools that impose mask mandates, including 27% of Republicans. 52% of voters strongly oppose withholding funds.
 - 52% of voters support allowing employers to mandate vaccinations versus 46% of voters who oppose employer mandates.
 - When asked, “What do you think should be the greatest priority for public education this fall,” 40% of voters say opening schools to normal full-time in-person schooling with no mandates for masks or social distance, 38% say requiring masks and distancing in school, but return to normal full-time, in-person instruction, 16% say provide remote learning to prevent the spread of the Delta variant, and 5% are not sure.
- 63% of Republican voters in Florida think the virus coming through the U.S. Border with Mexico is the most responsible for the recent rise of Covid-19 infections and deaths. (60% of frequent Fox News viewers, 75% of frequent OANN viewers).

Virginia Headline: Democrats must not take Virginia for granted. McAuliffe up 47% to 44%.

- President Biden’s earns the approval of 50% of Virginia voters, with 49% who disapprove of the job Biden is doing. 46% of Virginia voters strongly disapprove of Biden, and 30% strongly approve. Among Independent voters, 44% approve and 53% disapprove.
- Former Gov. Terry McAuliffe leads Republican Glenn Youngkin by 3 points, 47% to 44%. McAuliffe is down nine points with Independent voters 46% to 37%, with 17% of Independent voters who remain undecided.
 - The Path: McAuliffe must continue to tie Youngkin to Donald Trump. Trump’s favorable rating is 38% and unfavorable 56% with Virginia voters. With Independent voters, Trump’s favorable is 32% and unfavorable is 56%. 69% of undecided Independents: 11% favorable / 69% unfavorable.
- **Caution: 61% of Virginians say they are falling behind the cost of living.**

Florida and Virginia Voter Opinions on the National Landscape

- **Proposals to Invest in Infrastructure and Families:**
 - 60% of voters in Florida and 63% of voters in Virginia support the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure plan passed by the U.S. Senate.
 - 55% of voters in Florida and 59% of voters in Virginia support the proposed \$3.5 trillion in new spending over the next 10 years that would expand Medicare benefits, invest in preschool education, community college, childcare, family leave, affordable college, and fund efforts to combat climate change.

- **Filibuster Reform:**
 - 49% of voters in Florida and 52% of voters in Virginia support changing the filibuster rule to allow votes on bills to move forward with a simple majority of 51 out of 100. 44% in Florida and 40% in Virginia oppose. We explored the three options most discussed:
 - A majority of voters support prohibiting Members of Congress from filibustering or offering amendments that would water down bills concerning their own accountability to their constituents, such as those concerning political corruption, politicians choosing their voters, or anything related to their pay and conduct. In Florida, 52% support the proposal and 33% oppose. In Virginia, 53% support and 30% oppose.
 - Voters do not show majority support changing the Senate filibuster rule to require that Senators talk on the Senate floor indefinitely as long as they can keep it up instead of being able to block bills by merely threatening debate. 43% of voters support filibuster reform in Florida, and 49% in Virginia.
 - Voters do not support making an exemption to the filibuster just for bills that involve constitutional rights of American citizens. Only 34% of FL voters support this measure. In Virginia, only 33% support.

- **National Commission to Investigate the Jan. 6th Attack**
 - 70% of voters in Florida and 69% of voters in Virginia are following the National Commission to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol Complex closely.
 - 69% of voters in Florida and 70% of voters in Virginia say it is important to them that the Commission gets to the bottom of what happened on January 6th and let the chips fall where they may. 56% in Florida and 59% in Virginia say it is “very important” to them.

- 48% of voters in Florida and 51% of voters in Virginia agree more with the statement “Donald Trump led a coup to try to overthrow the United States government and failed” compared to 37% in Florida and 33% in Virginia who agree more than “Democrats and the far left have become hysterical. Donald Trump didn’t attempt a ‘coup.’ He got more votes and the election was stolen from him.” 16% in Virginia and 14% in Florida say they do not agree with either statement.

Florida and Virginia Voter Opinions on Freedom and Democracy

- Voters in Florida and Virginia were asked how concerned they were about a series of issues.
 - 98% of voters in Florida and 96% of voters in Virginia are concerned about elected officials not caring about what ordinary people think.
 - 94% of voters in Florida and 95% of voters in Virginia are concerned about the amount of unaccountable dark money spent to influence elections.
 - 94% of voters in Florida and 91% of voters in Virginia are concerned about news outlets focusing on controversy instead of reporting the news and giving us accurate information.
 - 94% of voters in Florida and 92% of voters in Virginia are concerned about lobbyists and their influence in Washington, DC.
 - 92% of voters in Florida and 92% of voters in Virginia are concerned about gerrymandering that lets politicians pick their voters instead of voters picking their politicians.
 - 90% of voters in Florida and 88% of voters in Virginia are concerned about the power of a few big tech companies that control what you see, hear, and read.
 - 80% of voters in Florida and 80% of voters in Virginia are concerned about the spread of misinformation on Facebook and other social media platforms.
 - 71% of voters in Florida 70% of voters in Virginia are concerned about QAnon and right-wing extremists. In Florida, 58% are “very concerned.” 56% are “very concerned” in Virginia.
 - 62% of voters in Florida and 57% of voters in Virginia are concerned about Antifa and left-wing extremists. 45% in Virginia are “very concerned” and 52% in Florida are “very concerned.”
 - 58% of voters in Florida and 61% of voters in Virginia are concerned about Republicans rigging the rules to pick their own voters and make it harder for People of Color and Democrats to vote.

- Voters were also asked whether they support or oppose the following proposals:
 - Creating a “democracy corps” (akin to AmeriCorps) that pays young people to set up civics programs in their community.
 - Florida: 62% Support, 21% Oppose
 - Virginia 58% Support, 23% Oppose
 - Teaching media literacy in schools so children are better informed on how to know whether something they see, hear, or read is true or not.
 - Florida: 86% Support, 10% Oppose
 - Virginia: 83% Support, 11% Oppose
 - Requiring high school students to serve as poll workers during elections or engage in other pro-democracy activities.
 - Florida: 56% Support, 33% Oppose
 - Virginia: 56% Support, 32% Oppose
 - Requiring each state to develop basic content and benchmarks of achievement for civic education, including teaching the fundamental principles of US democracy.
 - Florida: 90% Support, 6% Oppose
 - Virginia: 86% Support, 7% Oppose
 - Requiring social media companies to report foreign efforts to spread online disinformation and propaganda.
 - Florida: 89% Support, 6% Oppose
 - Virginia: 86% Support, 7% Oppose
 - Improving election technology to make it more secure from hacking and manipulation and provide a paper record of every vote.
 - Florida: 97% Support, 2% Oppose
 - Virginia: 93% Support, 4% Oppose
 - Preventing corrupt foreign officials from laundering stolen assets through democratic countries.
 - Florida: 90% Support, 3% Oppose
 - Virginia: 89% Support, 3% Oppose
 - Prohibiting state legislatures from passing bills that would restrict someone’s ability to easily vote.
 - Florida: 70% Support, 24% Oppose
 - Virginia: 70% Support, 23% Oppose
- 90% of voters in Florida and Virginia would support a proposal to end partisan gerrymandering, crackdown on corruption, and pass tough new ethics and conflicts of interest laws for Members of Congress.

Health of Our Democracy:

- 85% of voters in Florida and 84% of voters in Virginia rate the health of American democracy as poor or not so good. Among voters in Florida and Virginia, 76% of voters in both states say their rating bothers them “a lot.”
- 59% of voters in Florida and 61% of voters in Virginia agree more with the statement “Voting is a fundamental right for every adult U.S. citizen and should not be restricted in any way” compared to 38% in Florida and 37% in Virginia who agree more with “Voting is a privilege that comes with responsibilities that can be limited if adult U.S. citizens don’t meet some requirements.”
- 86% of Florida Republicans think Trump got more votes than Biden in the 2020 election. Trump’s statewide favorable rating is 45%. (1% Democrats, 37% Independents, 91% Republicans). Notably, Gov. DeSantis has a 7-point advantage in approval over former President Trump in Florida.

Freedom – The Core American Value:

Any reader of Future Majority’s materials knows that we have advocated for Democrats to take back the word “freedom” from the Republicans.

- Voters, especially Independent voters, consistently rate “freedom” as one of, or the, most important values for a candidate to hold.
 - 53% of Independent voters in Florida and in Virginia say “freedom” is most important for a candidate to value.
 - When asked to choose between the value of “freedom” and the value of “justice,” 53% of voters in Florida and 51% in Virginia chose freedom over 37% in Florida and 39% in Virginia who chose “justice.”
 - When asked to choose between the value of “freedom” and the value of “opportunity,” 67% of voters in Florida and 62% of voters in Virginia chose freedom over 27% in Florida and 31% in Virginia who chose “opportunity.”
- Interpretations of what freedom means vary. When voters think about freedom, 53% in Florida and 56% in Virginia agree more with the statement “Freedom is more about having the ability to do the things in my life that I want to do” compared to 41% in Florida and 40% in Virginia who agree more with “Freedom is more about not having other people tell me what to do with my life.”
- 58% of voters in Florida and 60% in Virginia agree that “Your freedom ends when it is endangering my health.”

- 79% of voters in Florida and 73% in Virginia agree that “True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence.”
- Democrats can persuade voters to their side when using the value of freedom to anchor their arguments. When asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being extremely important and 1 being not important at all, most voters rate issues of freedom as important.
 - 99% of voters in Florida and in Virginia rate the statement “Freedom to express your voice at the ballot box” as a 3 or above. In Florida and Virginia, 95% rate “extremely important.”
 - 98% of voters in Florida and 97% in Virginia rate the statement “Freedom to choose your elected representatives without threat of fraudulent votes and rigged elections” as a 3 or above. In Florida, 88% rate “extremely important” and in Virginia, 84% rate “extremely important.”
 - 98% of voters in Florida and 97% in Virginia rate the statement “Freedom to live in communities where you are treated fairly by law enforcement and where police provide a sense of security instead of a threat of unreasonable force” as a 3 or above. In Florida, 71% rate “extremely important” and in Virginia, 76% rate “extremely important.”
 - 95% of voters in Florida and 97% in Virginia rate the statement “Freedom to live your life without the fear of crippling health care costs” as a 3 or above. In Florida, 75% rate “extremely important” and in Virginia, 71% rate “extremely important.”
 - 92% of voters in Florida and in Virginia rate the statement “Freedom from fear of how and whether income is coming in” as a 3 or above. In Florida, 60% rate this freedom “extremely important” and in Virginia, 55% rate it “extremely important.”
 - 91% of voters in Florida and 92% in Virginia rate the statement “Freedom to pursue the American dream without being held back by a lack of resources like roads, bridges, and access to broad band internet” as a 3 or above. In Florida, 55% rate “extremely important.”
 - 89% of voters in Florida and 91% in Virginia rate the statement “Freedom to build your future with an education system that does not require massive personal debt” as a 3 or above. In Florida, 60% rate “extremely important” and in Virginia, 56% rate “extremely important.”