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To: All Interested Parties

From: Jim Lee, Pollster & CEO

Re: **Rubio/DeSantis Lead Their Respective Opponents in US Senate/Governor Races**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS

SEPTEMBER 7, 2022

Pennsylvania-based Susquehanna Polling and Research, a firm profiled in two episodes of CBS's nationally televised *Inside Edition* Program for its accuracy in presidential battleground polling, today releases its latest Florida poll testing races for United States Senate and Governor. The poll was conducted Aug. 29 – September 3, 2022, with a sample size of 500 likely voters using live telephone agents; the poll's margin of error is +/-4.3% at the 95% confidence level.

Key highlights of the poll include:

### **US SENATE: Rubio Leads Demings by Three Points, But Independents Lean Democrat**

Marco Rubio leads his Democratic opponent Val Demings by a narrow 47:44 margin, a tightening of the race when compared with SP&R's last poll in this race in August '21 when Rubio lead Demings 50:39 in a hypothetical match up. Eight (8) percent of likely voters remain undecided. Rubio leads among Republicans 96:1, while Demings leads among Democrats 92:3. However, the biggest shift comes from Independents and NPA's, where Demings leads Rubio 41:32, a reversal from a 42:41 Rubio lead last year. Exit polling<sup>1</sup> shows Rubio won Independents/NPA's by a 52:42 margin over his last opponent in 2016 (P. Murphy), so Rubio's loss of support with this critical swing group could cost him the election if he doesn't shore up this vote. Among Independents Demings has a better image in hard name ID (31:28 favorable/unfavorable) while Rubio is inverted 47:24 (unfavorable/favorable).

### **GOVERNOR: DeSantis Expands Lead to 4 Points Over Crist; [Undecided] Independents Poised to Break for DeSantis**

Incumbent Gov. DeSantis leads C. Crist by a 47:43 margin with 10% undecided, a slight expansion of his lead from his 46:43 margin in our public poll one year ago. DeSantis leads among Republicans 95:1 while Crist leads by a similar margin among Democrats (93:4). Among Independents who have committed to a candidate, Crist leads 36:31, but nearly 1 in 3 (or 32%) are undecided. These undecided Independents could break for DeSantis because 45% of Independents view DeSantis favorably, while they view Crist more unfavorably [than favorably] by a 39:32 margin. According to exit polling in 2018, DeSantis lost Independents to his then-opponent (Gillum) by a 54:44 margin, so if DeSantis overperforms with Independents it could cement his margin of victory.

### **The Economy and Inflation Remain the Top Issue, But Social Issues/Abortion Ruling Has Energized Democrats**

From a list of 7, voters cite the economy/inflation (54%) and abortion (44%) as the top two issues that will most influence their vote this November. The rise of abortion as a top issue is significant because it far exceeds other issues, like crime and public safety (only 16%) or immigration (26%), both issues polling shows Republicans are more trusted on (than Democrats). Moreover, this is the second state polled by SP&R in less than a month where abortion has risen to a top spot, as was the case in recent SP&R's Pennsylvania poll which also showed abortion in the #2 spot (at 41%). As a result, on the issue of voter enthusiasm, Republicans hold only a 3-point lead over Democrats in the current poll (33:30).

<sup>1</sup> CBS News Exit Poll, 2016



**TOP LINE REPORT AND QUESTIONNAIRE**

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is (YOUR FIRST NAME). I am calling on behalf of Susquehanna Polling and Research, a public opinion research firm. May I speak to (name on list) or another registered voter in your household? (If name on list or another registered voter is not available, TERMINATE)

**INTRODUCTION:** We are conducting a survey of attitudes and opinions concerning some important issues facing Florida today. May we have just 4 to 5 minutes of your time to complete a brief survey?

Great, thank you...

F1: Thinking ahead to the general election on Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> for United States Senate and Governor, if the election were being held today how would you rate your chances of voting – would you say excellent, good, fair or poor?

1. IF excellent	425	85%	PROCEED
2. If good	75	15%	PROCEED
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3. If fair	--		THANK AND TERMINATE
4. If poor	--		THANK AND TERMINATE

Q1. From the following list of seven, which two issues will most influence your vote for a candidate in the November elections – (ROTATE ISSUES) ...immigration, inflation and the economy, social issues like abortion rights or gun control, crime and public safety, environment and climate change, taxes and federal spending, health care? (PROBE FOR TWO)

1. Immigration	129	26%
<b>2. Inflation/economy</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>3. Social issues like abortion rights or gun control</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>44%</b>
4. Crime/public safety	78	16%
5. Environment/climate change	103	21%
6. Taxes/federal spending	84	17%
7. Health care	65	13%
8. Other (Do Not Read)	4	01%
9. Not Sure	29	06%

Q2. When you think about the upcoming election in November, would you say you are more excited and enthusiastic about voting this November in comparison to past elections, less excited and enthusiastic or about the same amount?

			<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind/NPA</u>
1. More excited/enthusiastic	164	33%	33%	30%	36%
2. Less excited/enthusiastic	35	07%	05%	07%	09%
3. About the same amount	286	57%	59%	59%	52%
4. Not Sure	13	03%	02%	03%	03%

(Rotate Q3-Q6)

Q3. Is your opinion of Marco Rubio favorable, is it unfavorable or do you have no opinion of him?

1. Favorable	203	41%
2. Unfavorable	226	45%
3. No Opinion	69	14%

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Q4. Is your opinion of Charlie Crist favorable, is it unfavorable or do you have no opinion of him?

1. Favorable	173	35%
2. Unfavorable	239	48%
3. No Opinion	87	17%

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Q5. Is your opinion of Ron DeSantis favorable, is it unfavorable or do you have no opinion of him?

1. Favorable	248	50%
2. Unfavorable	217	43%
3. No Opinion	34	07%

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Q6. Is your opinion of Val Demings favorable, is it unfavorable or do you have no opinion of her?

1. Favorable	183	37%
2. Unfavorable	156	31%
3. No Opinion	161	32%

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(Rotate Q7-Q8)

Q7. If the election for United States Senate were being held today, would you vote for Val Demings, the Democrat candidate, or Marco Rubio, the Republican candidate?

1. Demings/Democrat	221	44%
2. Rubio/Republican	235	47%
3. Other	1	00%
4. Not Sure	41	08%
5. Refuse	2	01%

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Q8. If the election for Governor were being held today, would you vote for Charlie Crist, the Democrat candidate, or Ron DeSantis, the Republican candidate?

1. Crist/Democrat	218	43%
2. DeSantis/Republican	233	47%
3. Other	0	00%
4. Not Sure	48	10%
5. Refuse	1	00%

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Q9. Are you registered to vote as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent or a voter with No Party Affiliation?

1. Republican	203	41%
2. Democrat	187	37%
3. Independent/NPA	107	21%
4. Other	1	00%
5. Refuse	2	01%

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Q10. Regardless of how you are registered to vote, do you consider yourself to be more of a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent or unaffiliated voter?

1. Republican	183	37%
2. Democrat	157	31%
3. Independent/Unaffiliated	154	31%
4. Other	5	01%
5. Refuse	1	00%

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Q11. What was your age on your last birthday? (Use brackets below)

1. 18-29	49	10%
2. 30-44	70	14%
3. 45-54	96	19%
4. 55-64	110	22%
5. 65 and older	173	35%
6. Refuse	2	00%

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Q12. What is your main racial or ethnic background?

1. African American/African/Black	68	14%
2. Asian American/Asian	7	01%
3. Hispanic/Latino (general)	50	10%
4. Hispanic (Cuban/Puerto Rican/Dominican Republic)	24	05%
5. Multiracial/Multiethnic	9	02%
6. Native American/Alaska Native	2	00%
7. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	00%
8. White (Not Latino/Hispanic)	315	63%
9. Race/ethnicity not represented by above categories	10	02%
10. Refuse (Do Not Read)	14	03%

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE SURVEY. HAVE A GOOD DAY.**

Gender (by observation):

1. Male	246	49%
2. Female	254	51%

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Media market (coded from list):

22	04%	1. Pensacola/Panhandle
10	02%	2. Panama City
11	02%	3. Tallahassee
11	02%	4. Gainesville
39	08%	5. Jacksonville
100	20%	6. Orlando/Daytona Beach/Melbourne
130	26%	7. Tampa/St. Pete/Sarasota
30	06%	8. W. Palm Beach/Ft. Pierce
51	10%	9. Ft. Myers/Naples
96	19%	10. Miami/Ft. Lauderdale

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Vote History Universe (G20, G18, G16 and/or G14 plus new registrants since G20):

0X	25	05%
1X	82	16%
2X	137	27%
3X	201	40%
4X	53	11%

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**METHODOLOGY, SAMPLE FRAME CONSTRUCTION AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

This poll is conducted by Susquehanna Polling and Research, Inc<sup>2</sup> purely for public consumption. Interviews were conducted August 29-September 3, 2022, with 500 registered voters in the state of Florida. Survey respondents are randomly contacted using random selection procedures, and all telephone interviews are conducted using live telephone agents. Respondents were pre-selected for the sample frame based exclusively on households showing prior vote history in at least 1 of 4 (or better) general elections, using G20, G18, G16 and/or G14 as the base universe, plus new registrants since G20. The sample frame was compiled using random telephone sequence methods, and includes both landline and cellular households, purchased from a certified list vendor; all households are pre-screened to eliminate household telephone numbers on the federal Do Not Call registry in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws.

Interviews are closely monitored to ensure a representative sample of registered/likely voters in Florida is achieved based on party registration, geography, racial background, gender, age and other demographics; results are sometimes statistically weighted to account for non-response and/or coverage bias.

The margin of error for a sample size of 500 likely voters is +/-4.3% at the 95% confidence level.

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<sup>2</sup>Susquehanna Polling and Research, Inc. is a nationally recognized polling and focus group company and conducts polling for political, media and corporate clients in numerous states. SP&R's polling has been featured on many national platforms, including the Rush Limbaugh Radio Show, FOX News Channel, The O'Reilly Factor, the Bill Maher Show and MSNBC. The former internet news service *Sunshine State News* of Florida referred to SP&R as "one of the most prominent pollsters in the country" for its accurate polling in the 2010 Florida Gubernatorial GOP Primary Election. The website [www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com) lists SP&R's Presidential Battleground Polling in PA, WI, NC, FL and AZ as some of the most accurate polling by any survey firm in the 2020 POTUS elections. CBS's nationally televised *Inside Edition* program chose SP&R to profile on two separate segments due to its unmatched accuracy in 5 key battleground states in the lead up to the 2020 General Election.