



# OCTOBER 2010 FLORIDA POLL

## PART II: GOVERNOR'S RACE

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## HOW THE POLL WAS CONDUCTED

This poll was conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. of Washington, D.C. from October 4 through October 6, 2010. A total of 625 registered voters were interviewed statewide by telephone. All stated they were likely to vote in the November general election.

Those interviewed were selected by the random variation of the last four digits of telephone numbers. A cross-section of exchanges was utilized and quotas were assigned to reflect voter turn-out by county.

The margin for error, according to standards customarily used by statisticians, is no more than  $\pm 4$  percentage points. This means that there is a 95 percent probability that the "true" figure would fall within that range if all voters were surveyed. The margin for error is higher for any subgroup, such as a gender or party grouping.

**ANALYSIS**

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**SINK HOLDS SLIGHT LEAD IN GOVERNOR'S RACE  
SCOTT'S NEGATIVES HAMPERING HIS ABILITY TO RIDE GOP WAVE**

Democrat Alex Sink continues to hold a narrow lead over Republican Rick Scott in the Florida governor's race. Statewide, Sink is supported by 44% of likely state voters, while 40% back Scott, 3% are for other candidates and 13% remain undecided.

<b><u>GOVERNOR VOTE</u></b>	<b><u>SINK</u></b>	<b><u>SCOTT</u></b>	<b><u>OTHER</u></b>	<b><u>UND</u></b>
<b>May 2010</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>August 2010</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>September 2010</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>October 2010</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>13%</b>

This shows a slight tightening of the race over the past two weeks, as Scott has started running negative ads against Sink. Scott's support, however, is flat and the only change in the race is a shifting of Sink voters into the undecided column.

Evidence of the effect of Scott's ads can be seen in the 10-point increase in Sink's unfavorable rating and a 6% drop in her favorable name recognition.

<b><u>SINK NAME REC</u></b>	<b><u>FAV</u></b>	<b><u>UNFAV</u></b>	<b><u>NEUT</u></b>	<b><u>DR</u></b>
<b>July 2006</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>September 2006</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>October 2006</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>November 2006</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>May 2009</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>June 2009</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>March 2010</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>May 2010</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>August 2010</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>September 2010</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>October 2010</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>9%</b>

But Sink's slippage has done little to change how Florida voters view Scott. While his negative rating did decrease by 2-points (from 47% to 45%), his favorable recognition dropped 6-points (from 30% to 24%). Still, Scott's only option is to keep hammering Sink on several fronts and hope to raise her negatives closer to his. This approach, however, is not without risks.

<u>SCOTT NAME REC</u>	<u>FAV</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>NEUT</u>	<u>DR</u>
<b>May 2010</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>August 2010</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>September 2010</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>October 2010</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>4%</b>

The race continues to follow Florida's geographic voting patterns, but with Scott still underperforming Republican norms in several regions of the state.

In Central Florida (which Charlie Crist carried in 2006 by 14-points), Scott holds only a 45%-43% lead over Sink (more reflective of the 50/50 split Barack Obama achieved when he carried Florida in 2008).

In Southwest Florida, Scott leads 48%-36%, but his 12-point margin is still smaller than the 16-point margin that McCain carried the region by in 2008 and nowhere close to the 24-point advantage by which Crist won it in 2006. Scott may ultimately do as well or better than McCain here, but seems unlikely to match Crist's showing.

In Tampa Bay, the region that has mirrored the statewide vote in every election for the past 10 years, Sink holds a significant 47%-36% lead - although some of that could be attributable to her home field advantage. Still, Crist carried Tampa Bay over a fellow Tampa Bay opponent by 10-points and Obama won the region by only 4-points.

Scott's lead in North Florida and Sink's lead in Southeast Florida both seem to be on par with the average party showings in recent elections.

Sink holds a 39%-37% lead among independents, essentially a statistical tie, but Republican candidates usually must carry the independent vote by about 15-points to win statewide. Scott's GOP support continues to run below the 80% threshold, and Sink draws more Republican cross-over votes (10%) than Scott gets from defecting Democrats (8%). Most successful Republican candidates get about a 20% cross-over vote.

Despite all of Scott's problems, the race remains competitive and there are enough undecided voters left to flip the race. A look at those voters shows that Scott's negatives (36%) are not much higher than Sink's (32%) among that undecided pool.

<u>UNDECIDED VOTERS</u>	<u>SINK</u>	<u>SCOTT</u>
<b>FAVORABLE</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>UNFAVORABLE</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>DON'T RECOGNIZE</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>7%</b>

It also shows that there is no major party gap amongst those still on the fence.

**UNDECIDED VOTERS BY PARTY**

<b>DEMOCRATS</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>(5% of state vote)</b>
<b>REPUBLICANS</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>(6% of state vote)</b>
<b>INDEPENDENTS</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>(3% of state vote)</b>

If voters decide primarily on issues, the advantage goes to Scott as the national Republican tide would likely carry him over the finish line. While Sink is hardly a long-time Tallahassee insider (a one term elected official who is the only Democrat in the Cabinet), Scott is still more of an "outsider", which is a big plus in the current political environment.

If voters decide primarily on character, Sink has the upper hand. Scott's baggage is far beyond what a normal candidate could survive in a typical election. Given his abysmal favorable to unfavorable ratio, this race should not even be close.

Given the overall voter frustration with and anger toward the Democrats in Washington coupled with Florida's slightly Republican leaning tendencies, Sink is still sailing into the wind despite her current lead. She likely needs to land one more big punch raising concerns about Scott's integrity to weather the storm.

STATEWIDE NAME RECOGNITION

QUESTION: I am going to read a list of names.

Do you recognize the name \_\_\_\_\_?

(IF YES) Do you have a favorable, unfavorable or neutral opinion of \_\_\_\_\_?

	<u>RECOGNIZE FAVORABLE</u>	<u>RECOGNIZE UNFAVORABLE</u>	<u>RECOGNIZE NEUTRAL</u>	<u>DON'T RECOGNIZE</u>
Alex Sink	38%	33%	22%	7%
Rick Scott	24%	45%	27%	4%

**QUESTION: If the 2010 election for Governor were held today, would you vote for:**

Alex Sink - Democrat	44%
Rick Scott - Republican	40%
Peter Allen - Independence Party	2%
Michael Arth - No Party Affiliation	1%
Daniel Imperato - No Party Affiliation	-
Farid Khavari - No Party Affiliation	-
C.C. Reed - No Party Affiliation	-
Undecided (NOT READ)	13%

	<u>SINK</u>	<u>SCOTT</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
<b>STATE</b>	44%	40%	3%	13%

<u>REGION</u>	<u>SINK</u>	<u>SCOTT</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
North Florida	35%	50%	3%	12%
Central Florida	43%	45%	1%	11%
Tampa Bay	47%	36%	4%	13%
Southwest Florida	36%	48%	2%	14%
Southeast Florida	52%	29%	4%	15%

<u>SEX</u>	<u>SINK</u>	<u>SCOTT</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
Men	37%	45%	3%	15%
Women	51%	35%	3%	11%

<u>RACE</u>	<u>SINK</u>	<u>SCOTT</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
White	38%	45%	3%	14%
Black	85%	7%	2%	6%
Hispanic	38%	45%	2%	15%

<u>PARTY</u>	<u>SINK</u>	<u>SCOTT</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
Democrat	78%	8%	3%	11%
Republican	10%	74%	2%	14%
Independent	39%	37%	5%	19%

**DEMOGRAPHICS :**

PARTY REGISTRATION:

Democrat	267	(43%)
Republican	250	(40%)
Independent or Other	108	(17%)

AGE:	18-34	85	(14%)
	35-49	160	(26%)
	50-64	182	(29%)
	65+	195	(31%)
	Refused	3	-

RACE/ETHNICITY:

White/Caucasian	454	(73%)
Black/African American	81	(13%)
Hispanic or Cuban	82	(13%)
Other/Refused	8	(1%)

SEX:	Male	301	(48%)
	Female	324	(52%)

REGION:	North Florida	120	(19%)
	Central Florida	130	(21%)
	Tampa Bay	115	(18%)
	Southwest Florida	70	(11%)
	Southeast Florida	190	(30%)