

SEPTEMBER 2010 FLORIDA POLL

PART III: SENATE 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 September 20 through September 22, 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 ± 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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**RUBIO OPENS WIDE LEAD
CRIST FADES AS DEMOCRATS MOVE TO MEEK**

Republican Marco Rubio has increased his lead over independent Charlie Crist in the race for Florida's U.S. Senate seat, as Democrat Kendrick Meek is increasing his support among Democratic voters.

Statewide, Rubio is now supported by 40% of likely voters (up from 38%), while Crist is backed by 28% (down from 33%) and 23% are for Meek (up from 18%).

<u>SENATE VOTE</u>	<u>CRIST</u>	<u>RUBIO</u>	<u>MEEK</u>	<u>UND</u>
May 2010	38%	32%	19%	11%
August 2010	33%	38%	18%	11%
September 2010	28%	40%	23%	9%

Since the primary, there have been some significant shifts in voter support, exclusively to the detriment of Crist. In August, Crist led Meek by 45%-36% among Democrats, but now Meek has moved ahead and holds a 44%-37% advantage with Democratic voters since becoming the party's official nominee.

Additionally, Crist's 44%-31% margin over Rubio among independents has now flipped to a 38%-27% lead for the Republican. Meek has also increased his strength with independents from 13% to 20%.

	<u>8/10</u>	<u>9/10</u>	<u>8/10</u>	<u>9/10</u>	<u>8/10</u>	<u>9/10</u>
	<u>DEMS</u>	<u>DEMS</u>	<u>REPS</u>	<u>REPS</u>	<u>INDS</u>	<u>INDS</u>
RUBIO	7%	10%	77%	75%	31%	38%
CRIST	45%	37%	14%	18%	44%	27%
MEEK	36%	44%	1%	1%	13%	20%

Crist's support has now dropped 10-points since May, while Rubio and Meek have each made gains. In essence, Crist is bleeding Democrats to Meek and independents to both Meek and Rubio. It is also noteworthy that Crist's statewide support has fallen below the 30% threshold, leaving him far short of the minimum required to win a three-way race under the most perfect circumstances (34%).

Rubio's support has essentially remained steady over the past month, increasing by just 2-points. Still, sitting on 40% in a three-way race is a very strong position to hold. Rubio, in fact, only needs to gain 2-3 points to wrap up the race. At 43%, the only way Rubio could lose is if the support for Crist or Meek dropped under 15%. That could happen, but it would require an almost total abandonment by Democrats from Crist to Meek, or vice-versa.

The past month has seen the two party nominees increase their favorable name recognition. Meek has even been able to drop his negative rating by 10-points (from 37% to 27%) since disposing of Jeff Greene in the Democratic primary.

<u>RUBIO NAME RECOGNITION</u>	<u>FAV</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>NEUT</u>	<u>DR</u>
May 2009	13%	5%	21%	61%
June 2009	18%	11%	24%	47%
March 2010	27%	17%	35%	21%
May 2010	35%	28%	27%	10%
August 2010	41%	35%	18%	6%
September 2010	44%	34%	17%	5%

<u>MEEK NAME RECOGNITION</u>	<u>FAV</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>NEUT</u>	<u>DR</u>
May 2009	11%	2%	20%	67%
June 2009	11%	5%	22%	62%
March 2010	15%	8%	25%	52%
May 2010	17%	11%	32%	40%
August 2010	26%	37%	30%	13%
September 2010	32%	27%	31%	10%

Conversely, Crist's popularity continues to fall. His favorable rating is now at 35% -- down from 39% in August and 41% in May. It is also at its lowest level in 8 years (since October 2002). Most importantly, Crist's negative rating is 36%, which is 1 point higher than his favorable rating. It is also the highest negative rating ever for Crist in the 13 years he has been polled as a statewide candidate.

<u>CRIST NAME RECOGNITION</u>	<u>FAV</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>NEUT</u>	<u>DR</u>
March 1997	7%	2%	20%	71%
October 1997	8%	2%	21%	69%
April 1998	9%	2%	25%	64%
July 1998	12%	3%	27%	58%
August 1998	15%	7%	24%	54%
September 1998	19%	11%	27%	43%
October 1998	19%	11%	39%	31%
November 1998	21%	16%	34%	29%
April 1999	19%	12%	29%	40%
June 2000	18%	9%	33%	40%
September 2000	21%	10%	30%	39%
October 2000	23%	11%	28%	38%
November 2000	29%	12%	34%	25%
September 2002	29%	11%	34%	26%
October 2002	32%	17%	29%	22%
November 2002	38%	17%	30%	15%
June 2005	41%	8%	32%	19%
March 2006	42%	10%	32%	16%
July 2006	48%	10%	31%	11%
September 2006	54%	13%	31%	2%
October 2006	51%	21%	26%	2%
November 2006	47%	32%	20%	1%
May 2009	49%	15%	34%	2%
June 2009	49%	21%	27%	3%
March 2010	37%	31%	31%	1%
May 2010	41%	31%	28%	-
August 2010	39%	35%	25%	1%
September 2010	35%	36%	28%	1%

Rubio and Meek have generally run positive television advertising to introduce themselves to general election voters. On the other hand, Crist, who is already universally known to these voters, has started his media campaign by going on the attack. That is a pretty clear sign that his campaign is aware that they are in trouble.

Rubio seems to be in a solid position to win, while Crist is fading. Meek is in a tight position. He has an outside chance to pull off a major comeback, but it is largely predicated on his ability to convince Crist's new-found Democratic friends that the former Republican's campaign is hopeless and it is time for them to come back to their party. That will be a tough challenge, but it is now the only apparent way for Rubio to lose.

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>
Marco Rubio	44%	34%	17%	5%
Charlie Crist	35%	36%	28%	1%
Kendrick Meek	32%	27%	31%	10%

QUESTION: If the 2010 election for Florida's U.S. Senate seat were held today, would you vote for:

Kendrick Meek - Democrat	23%
Marco Rubio - Republican	40%
Charlie Crist - No Party Affiliation	28%
Alexander Snitker - Libertarian Party	-
Bernie DeCastro - Constitution Party	-
Lewis Armstrong - No Party Affiliation	-
Sue Askeland - No Party Affiliation	-
Bobbie Bean - No Party Affiliation	-
Bruce Riggs - No Party Affiliation	-
Rick Tyler - No Party Affiliation	-
Undecided (NOT READ)	9%

	<u>MEEK</u>	<u>RUBIO</u>	<u>CRIST</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
STATE	23%	40%	28%	9%

<u>REGION</u>	<u>MEEK</u>	<u>RUBIO</u>	<u>CRIST</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
North Florida	18%	48%	24%	10%
Central Florida	23%	42%	29%	6%
Tampa Bay	20%	38%	34%	8%
Southwest Florida	13%	53%	24%	10%
Southeast Florida	31%	30%	28%	11%

<u>SEX</u>	<u>MEEK</u>	<u>RUBIO</u>	<u>CRIST</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
Men	20%	47%	25%	8%
Women	26%	33%	31%	10%

<u>RACE</u>	<u>MEEK</u>	<u>RUBIO</u>	<u>CRIST</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
White	17%	41%	33%	9%
Black	72%	3%	15%	10%
Hispanic	11%	72%	9%	8%

<u>PARTY</u>	<u>MEEK</u>	<u>RUBIO</u>	<u>CRIST</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>
Democrat	44%	10%	37%	9%
Republican	1%	75%	18%	6%
Independent	20%	38%	27%	15%

DEMOGRAPHICS :

PARTY REGISTRATION:

Democrat	275 (44%)
Republican	249 (40%)
Independent or Other	101 (16%)

AGE:	18-34	74 (12%)
	35-49	167 (27%)
	50-64	179 (29%)
	65+	202 (32%)
	Refused	3 -

RACE/ETHNICITY:

White/Caucasian	459 (73%)
Black/African American	77 (12%)
Hispanic or Cuban	77 (12%)
Other/Refused	12 (2%)

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%)