Methodology

A political poll was conducted by the Haas Center from July 30 – August 13, 2018, using an online panel. The survey was offered only to registered voters in 18 panhandle counties. In total, 610 respondents completed the survey. These figures correspond to a 95% Confidence Level with a 4% Margin of Error. Responses were weighted to reflect the gender and age distributions of registered voters in the entire 18-county region. Weights are not calculated on the demographics of each county.

DeSantis, Putnam equally popular among NWFL Republicans

Figure 1. Registered Republican Support of Gubernatorial Candidates

Ron DeSantis and Adam Putnam are in a statistical tie among Northwest Florida’s registered Republicans. Thirty percent of Republican voters favored DeSantis, while 28% prefer Putnam. Eighteen percent of voters were still unsure about their choice, while 10% did not know any of the candidates presented.

The distribution of these responses remain nearly identical when only voters who were extremely likely or somewhat likely to vote in the August 28th election were included. Among that subset of voters, 31.5% prefer DeSantis, 30% prefer Putnam and 16% were unsure.
In our survey, some Independents and third-party voters were asked their preferences among the Republican candidates for Governor. DeSantis was favored 3 to 1 over Putnam by those voters, with 26% supporting DeSantis and 8% Putnam.

Graham leads Gillum, Greene in Panhandle

In our survey, some Independents and third-party voters were asked to weigh in on their preferences for the Democratic candidates for Governor. Support for Graham was roughly half with this group compared to registered Democrats - 22% of Independents or third-party voters prefer her over Levine (16%) or Gillum (9%).
Northwest Florida voters support Scott over Nelson

All respondents were asked how they would vote in the Florida Senate race if it was the same day of their survey and all candidates were on the ballot. Respondents preferred Governor Rick Scott (41%) over Senator Bill Nelson (34%). Another 6% would support Rocky De La Fuente as the Republican candidate for Senate. However, more than 16% of voters were still unsure about how they would cast their ballot.

Likely voters still supported Scott (44%) over Nelson (36%), while 7% would vote for De La Fuente. Fewer likely votes were undecided (13%), and only 1% of that group could not identify at least one of the candidates on the ballot.
Independents and Third-Party Preferences

A secondary purpose of our survey was to understand the preferences of Independent and third-party voters. Any survey respondent that indicated they were not registered as a Republican or Democrat was asked this question:

“If Florida was an open primary state and you could choose to vote in one of the major political party primary elections, which one would you choose?”

Approximately 39% of those respondents said they would vote in the Republican race, 34% in the Democratic race and 27% indicated that they would not participate in either of the elections. They were then asked to express their support for a candidate in the partisan election of their choosing. Those preferences were reported above.