NEW POLL:
TRUMP TAKES BACK FLORIDA, LEADS DESANTIS FOR 2024 REPUBLICAN NOMINATION

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Poll conducted April 6-8, 2023 among 1,000 likely GOP Presidential Primary voters throughout Florida. Responses were collected via IVR and text-to-web. Maximum margin of error of ±3.1%. Not commissioned by any candidate or committee.

VICTORY INSIGHTS

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Executive Summary

In reality, the 2024 race for the Republican nomination for President of the United States started the moment Joe Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 election, ousting former President Donald Trump. Republican governors, senators, and other hopefuls started gearing up for a race for the White House. The big question all along was, "Will Trump run again?"

Two years later, in November of 2022, Trump answered that question by officially announcing his candidacy. In the meantime, DeSantis had accumulated significant political capital, and many expected him to run for the presidency after winning re-election in a resounding red-wave victory. To see how the two candidates stacked up against one another, we conducted a statewide poll and found that DeSantis had a nearly 11-point lead on former President Trump.

Five months later, things have changed substantially. Several other candidates have announced their candidacies, and Trump has been indicted and arrested in a highly politicized move by the Manhattan DA. DeSantis still hasn't officially announced his candidacy, but his messaging, book tour, and PAC activity certainly point to a presidential run in the coming months.

However, it's beginning to look more like an uphill battle than previously believed. Our new poll, conducted over the course of three days in April, found that Florida voters have flipped back to Trump's side. In a head-to-head race, Trump has a 15% lead, and in a crowded field, Trump still leads by 8%. If DeSantis doesn't run, Trump is the frontrunner, and it's not remotely close. Trump's lead is bolstered by widespread belief that his indictment was politically motivated and is reinforced by a dominant lead among lower-class voters. DeSantis is still very popular (even more popular than Trump), but Trump's 25.7-point turnaround in only a five month span indicates that he has all the momentum.

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Trump is the frontrunner no matter which candidate(s) he faces.

We tested three different scenarios, and in all three, Trump's lead was outside of the margin of error. In the first scenario, we tested a full slate: Trump, DeSantis, and all of the other declared 2024 candidates. This was Trump's narrowest victory, leading DeSantis by 8%. All other candidates were distantly behind, in the low single digits. In the second scenario, we tested the current slate: all declared candidates. Once again, Trump won, this time in a dominant fashion. Haley was a (very) distant second, while no other candidates garnered more than 2% support. In the final scenario, we tested a head-to-head matchup between Trump and DeSantis. Interestingly, Trump's lead over DeSantis grew from 8% to 15%, while about 1 in every 5 voters remained undecided.





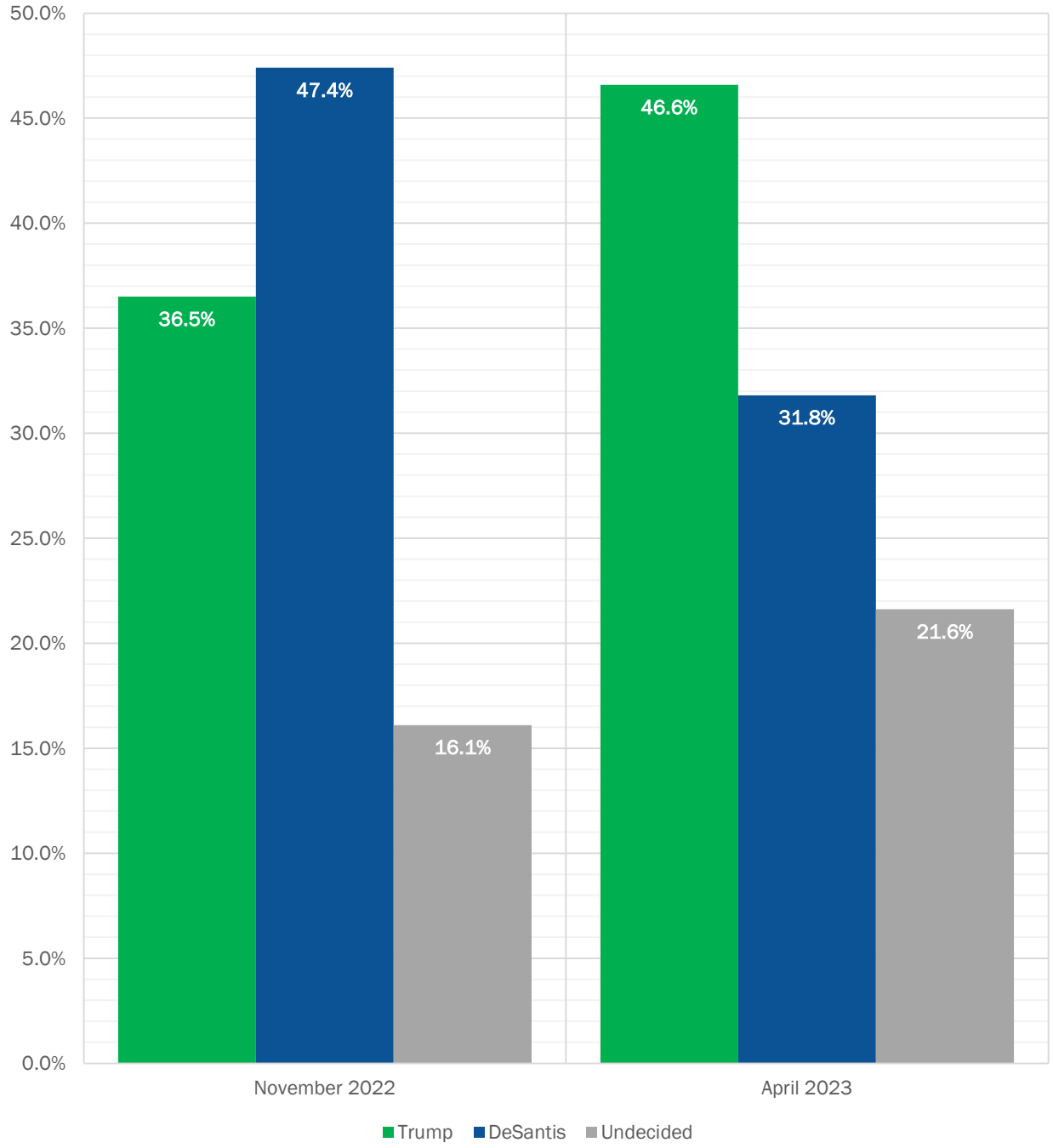



Scenario	Trump	DeSantis	Haley	Hutchinson	Ramaswamy	Johnson	Undecided
1	42.9	34.8	3.2	1.4	3.5	0.4	13.9
2	65.9		7.8	1.8	1.7	0.4	22.4
3	46.6	31.8					21.6

Hutchinson, Ramaswamy, and Johnson have virtually no support within the state of Florida so far. Even Haley was only able to garner 7.8% of the vote in her best showing, when DeSantis is not on the ballot. If any of these candidates hope to have an actual shot at winning Florida's primary, things will need to drastically change. As the race currently stands, it's Trump's race to lose, while DeSantis is the undisputed second place choice.

Since our November poll, there has been a 25.7-point swing in favor of Trump.

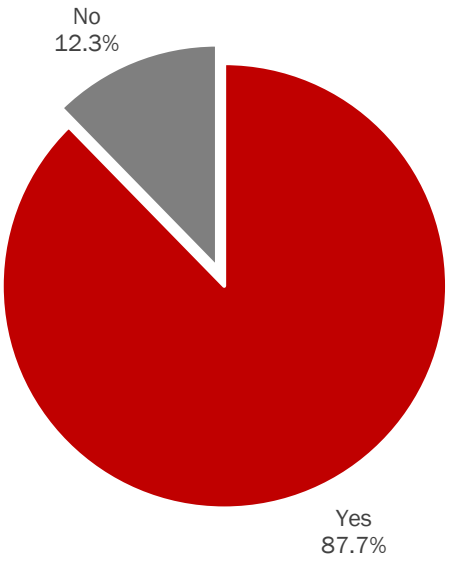
In November 2022, our polling showed DeSantis with a 10.9-point lead over Trump in the Sunshine State. Five months later, Trump has retaken the lead in astounding fashion, beating DeSantis by 14.8 points. The number of undecided voters has also inched upward, increasing by 5.5% over the past five months.



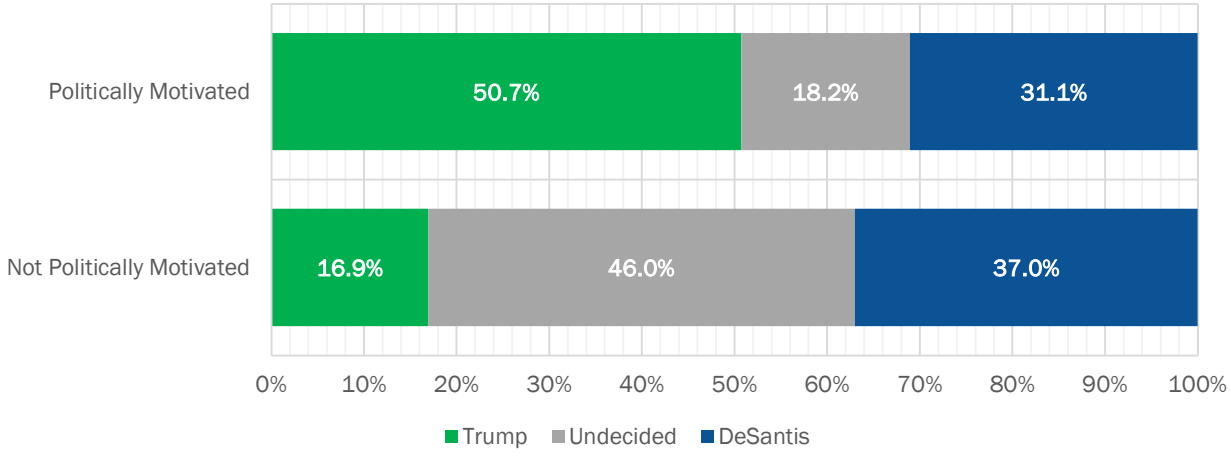
Most Florida Republicans believe that Trump's indictment was politically motivated.

Nearly 90% of those surveyed indicated that they believed that the indictment against Donald Trump was politically motivated.

"The Manhattan District Attorney recently announced that Donald Trump has been indicted. Do you believe that this indictment was politically motivated?"

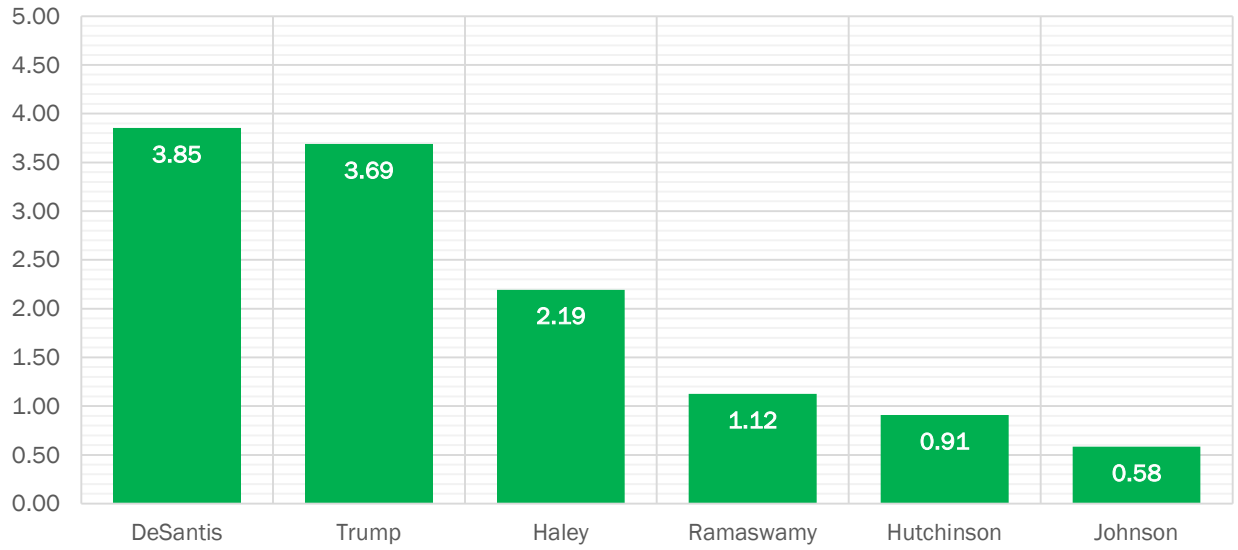


Many have speculated that Trump's indictment would increase his chances of winning the nomination in 2024. The logic is that Trump's indictment and subsequent arrest would energize his base, put him back in the spotlight, and force Republican lawmakers to speak out in support of him. So far, that does seem to be the case. Additionally, a clear line in the sand is forming over the perception of his indictment. As shown in the chart below, those who believe the indictment was politically motivated side with Trump over DeSantis by a 20% margin, and conversely, those who don't believe the indictment was politically motivated side with DeSantis over Trump by a 20% margin. Luckily for Trump, however, the vast majority of voters believe the indictment had political motivations.



DeSantis is still more widely liked than Trump.

We asked voters to rate each of the candidates on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very negative and 5 being very positive. Voters could also indicate that they have no opinion of the candidate. The chart below shows the average rating each candidate received (not including responses from those with no opinion).



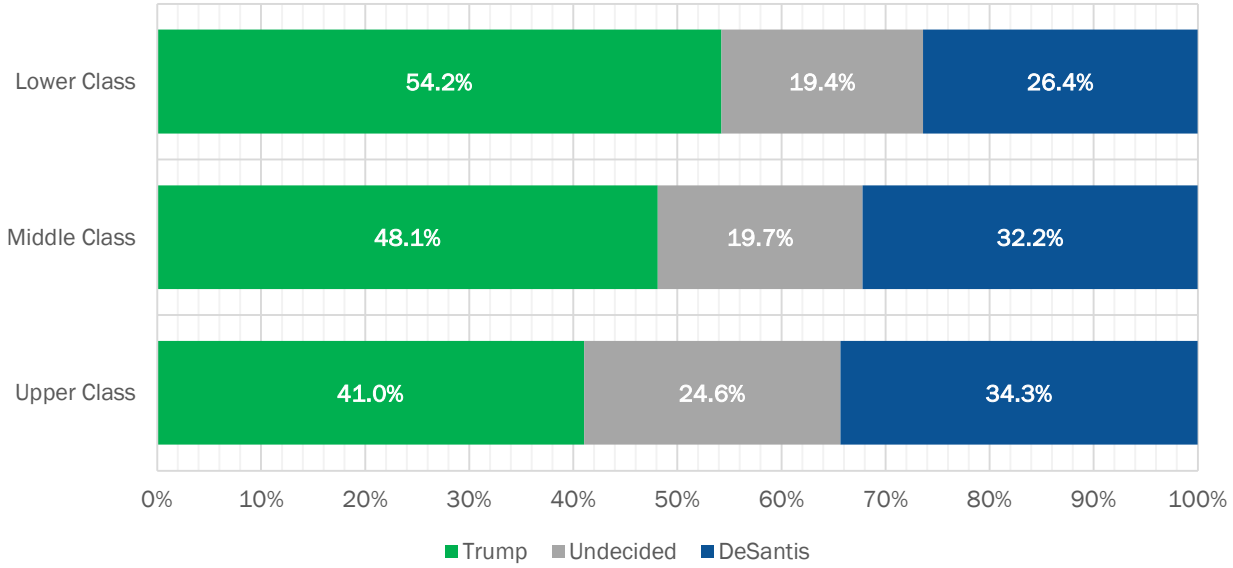
DeSantis received the highest average rating (3.85), followed closely by Trump (3.69), distantly by Haley (2.19), and very distantly by the other three candidates. In addition to just their average ratings, the table below compares Trump and DeSantis's numbers across several other metrics. In each one, DeSantis receives better marks than Trump.

	Trump	DeSantis	
Average Rating	3.69	3.85	✓
Rated Positively	67.4%	72.0%	✓
Rated Very Positive	53.5%	60.0%	✓
Rated Negatively	16.7%	11.2%	✓
Rated Very Negative	12.5%	8.3%	✓

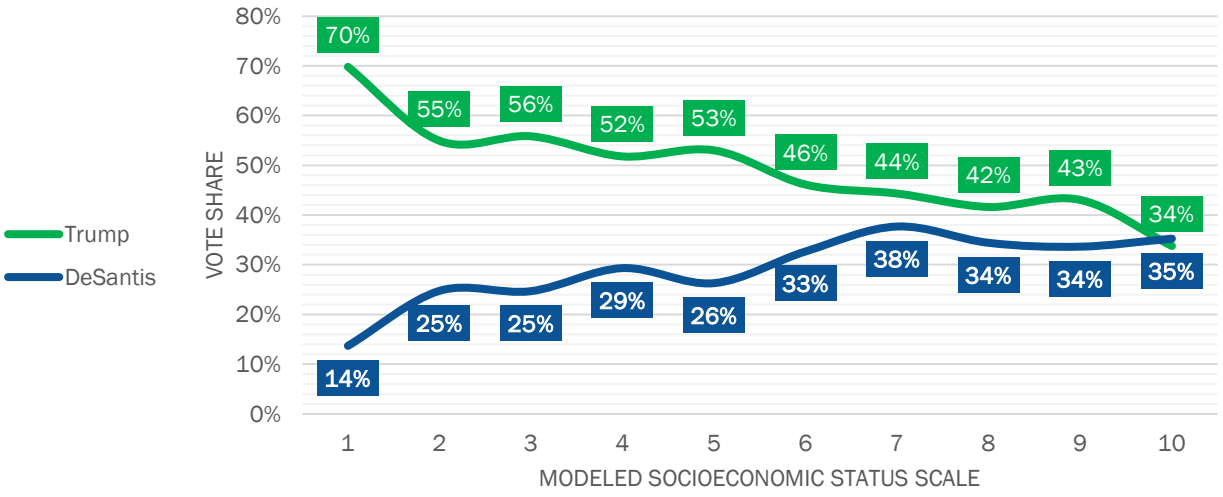
On its face, this may look like good news for DeSantis. To a certain extent, it is. However, the DeSantis camp should be worried by the fact that the Florida Governor can be more "popular" than Trump in every measure, yet still register far behind him in the polls. It reflects a core truth that will heavily influence this race: Donald Trump has a base of die-hard supporters who will vote for him no matter what. Even if these voters give both Trump and DeSantis a "5 out of 5" rating, they'll still vote for Trump every single time. Trump's strength is not in his broad appeal, but rather in the tight grip he has on a sizeable portion of the electorate.

The Trump-DeSantis divide is largely socioeconomic.

After combing through the data, we determined that the strongest predictor of whether someone will vote for Trump or DeSantis is their socioeconomic status. The chart below shows how respondents from the lower, middle, and upper classes voted. As you can see, lower-class voters sided overwhelming with Trump over DeSantis (Trump +27.8%), while upper-class voters were almost evenly split between the two, though still siding with Trump (Trump +6.7%). Unsurprisingly, middle-class voters were somewhere in between the two extremes (Trump +15.9%).



Taking a more granular look at the data, it becomes even more clear that socioeconomic status has a significant influence on respondents' ballot choice. The chart below shows Trump and DeSantis's respective vote shares at each socioeconomic step on a 10-point scale. Clearly, the divide shrinks and shrinks as you go up the socioeconomic ladder, shifting from Trump +56% at the bottom of the ladder to DeSantis +1% at the top.





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