

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Hart Research Associates

DATE: August 18, 2026

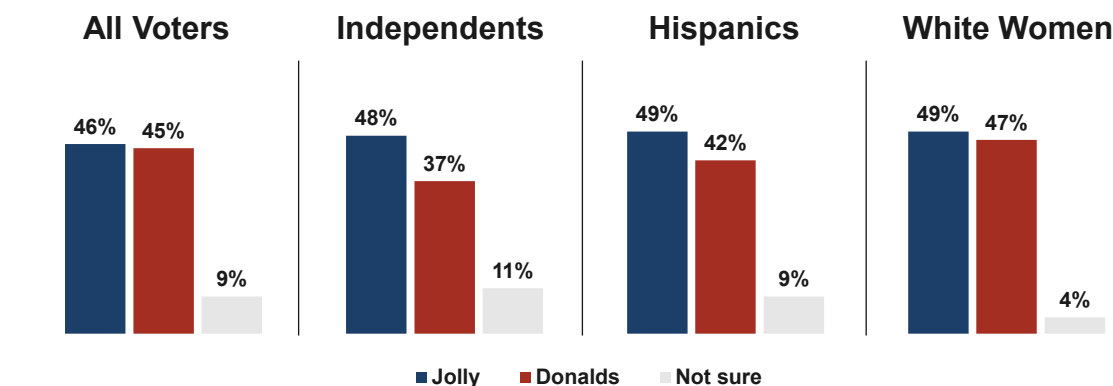
RE: Recent statewide poll shows David Jolly in strong position for general election; Byron Donalds will be a polarizing opponent

Hart Research Associates conducted a statewide survey between August 10 and 13, 2026, among 600 likely voters via landline, cell phone, and text-to-web. The survey was representative of a Florida electorate by key demographic and geographic factors, (including Spanish-language interviews when requested), and has a margin of error of $\pm 4.0\%$.

Despite spending more than \$50 million in his campaign so far, Republican Congressman Donalds begins the sprint to the November election in a weak position, with a profile that has higher negative ratings (43%) than positive (40%) ones. By contrast, David Jolly has a net favorable statewide profile of 30% positive and 20% negative. One NOTABLE difference between the two gubernatorial candidates is their ratings among the key bloc of registered Independents; Jolly has a comfortable positive ratio among independents, while Donalds garners negative ratings by a 48% to 34% margin.

Congressman Donald's polarizing image, including his underwater ratings with Independents, is a large factor in David Jolly holding a narrow lead in the gubernatorial trial heat. We note that the partisan sample of the survey is solidly Republican (31% registered Democrat, 43% registered Republican), and Donald Trump "wins" the recalled presidential vote by 56% to 43%.

Yet, David Jolly currently leads 46% to 45%, with important cross-over votes from constituencies such as Independents, Hispanics, and white women:



[Interestingly, Jolly is receiving 18% of registered Republicans, more than two times Donalds' 7% among Democrats.]

Finally, besides Congressman Donald's weak standing despite his expenditure of millions AND being the anointed GOP frontrunner, our survey shows Donalds has significant vulnerabilities that

once communicated to the broader public would make it more challenging to repair his image for the general election.

For example, there are numerous Donalds criticisms that draw “very or fairly major doubts” about supporting him by nearly two-thirds of Floridians. Here are two examples:

- Donalds and his wife profiting from a network of charter schools they founded while student achievement lagged (64% major doubts; 76% major doubts among Independents).
- Donalds supporting the construction of massive data centers AND giving the industry tax breaks (63% major doubts; 75% major doubts among Independents).

In summary, David Jolly begins the general election in great position to be elected Florida's next governor, already holding a narrow lead against his much better-known opponent. Byron Donalds enters the fall campaign with a weakened profile (despite his vast campaign expenditures) AND a record that generates significant concerns and will be a significant problem for him in trying to expand his support.