

TallahasseeVoices
Survey on the 2006 Gubernatorial Race

Summary and Objectives: Leon County is Florida's Capitol County and the seat of state politics. Over 38% of workers in Leon County are employed by state and local government. Leon County is also considered the "most educated county in Florida" with approximately 42% of residents having four-year college degrees or more.¹ As political season heats up with campaigns for the 2006 gubernatorial election, the opinions of Tallahassee residents may in some ways represent the views of the most politically active and aware in Florida. Most of the candidates have been highly visible in the capitol community, which means that Tallahassee residents may have had more contact and experience with them than others in the state.

This survey was designed to gauge three main things: (1) Name recognition of the main gubernatorial candidates, (2) Candidate favorability among members of entire panel and among partisans, separately, and (3) feelings specifically regarding Democratic candidate Scott Maddox. Maddox, who most recently chaired the Florida Democratic Party, served previously as Mayor of Tallahassee and is thus of particular interest to our community. Republican candidates included in the survey are Florida's Attorney General Charlie Crist and Chief Financial Officer Tom Gallagher. Democratic candidates include US Congressman Jim Davis and State Senator Rod Smith.

Summary of Findings: Leon County residents have a keen political sense. In the name recognition portion of the survey, two fictitious candidates were included to gauge levels of political awareness and to serve as a baseline against which to judge the name recognition of legitimate candidates. Data reveal our panelists to be quite highly knowledgeable about the governor's race. Fictitious candidates Bob Strauss and Sharon Jackson were recognized by only 0.2% and 0.9% percents respectively. Approximately 12% of panelists were able to identify all five legitimate candidates without naming any of the fictitious ones. Among the legitimate candidates, name recognition was highest for Maddox (89%) and Crist (82%), followed by Gallagher (72%), Davis (37%) and Smith (24%). Leon County residents and our sample of respondents are both highly Democratic. 62% of our respondents identify themselves as Democrat and 27% as Republican (which closely mirrors Leon County demographics where 57% of residents are registered as Democrats and 27% as Republicans).

In the first question regarding who a person would vote for if the election were held tomorrow, Democratic candidates together tallied a total of 46% of the vote, Republicans a total of 35%, with the remaining portion undecided or uninterested in the options presented. The first analysis compared preferences for all of the candidates at one time, among all of the respondents. Here, between the Democratic candidates, Scott Maddox was wildly favored with 34% compared to Davis at 10% and Smith at 2%. Between the Republican candidates, Crist tallied 21% against Gallagher's 14%.

However, more interesting and relevant results are apparent when viewing the vote choices of identified partisan respondents separately. When analyzing just the preferences of Democratic survey respondents, results even more strongly favored Maddox with 45% against Davis (13%) and Smith (3%). Republican candidates did not fare too poorly here, either, with 11% of registered Democrats purporting to support Crist and 9% supporting Gallagher. Among registered Republican respondents, support for Crist (49%) more than doubled Gallagher (24%). In this same sample, Maddox received 8%, Davis 4%, and Smith less than 1%.

Despite Maddox's high name recognition and popularity in vote choice, respondents were largely divided about his candidacy. Only 36% felt Maddox has the "experience, integrity, skills, to be Governor of Florida; 42% did not, and 20% were unsure. He received more favorable ratings among registered Democrats (49%), blacks (58%), women (42%), and those who had previously voted for him for Mayor of Tallahassee (approximately 60%).

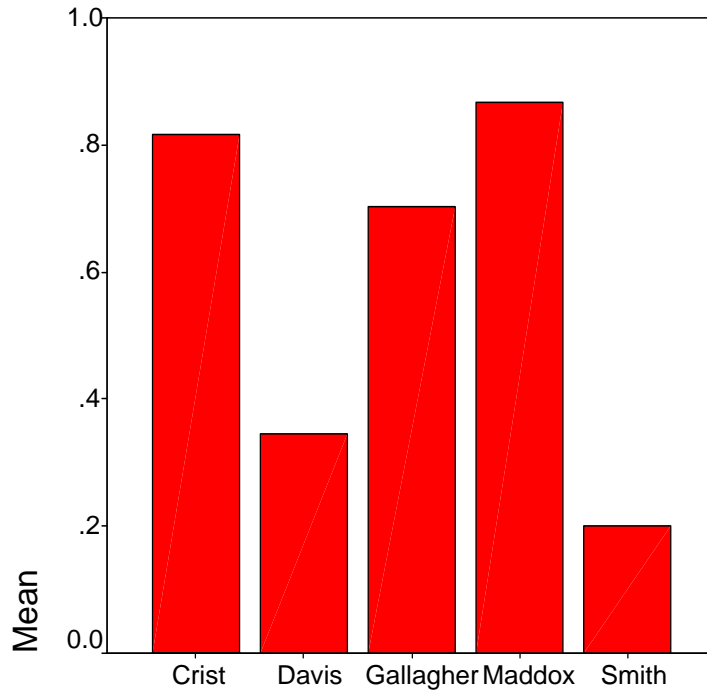
Data: Results are from a June 29-30, 2005 *TallahasseeVoices* Internet Survey Panel², a pro-bono project jointly sponsored by Kerr & Downs Research and the *Tallahassee Democrat*. The panel contains over 2,500 local residents. 639 responded to this survey. The panel is weighted to be representative of Leon County demographics. In this survey, the panel included 33% minority respondents (African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians), 40% residents under the age of 35, and 22% low-income households.

¹ <http://www.smartpolicy.org/urole/florida.pdf>

² Report produced by Karen Halperin – karen@tallahasseevoices.com

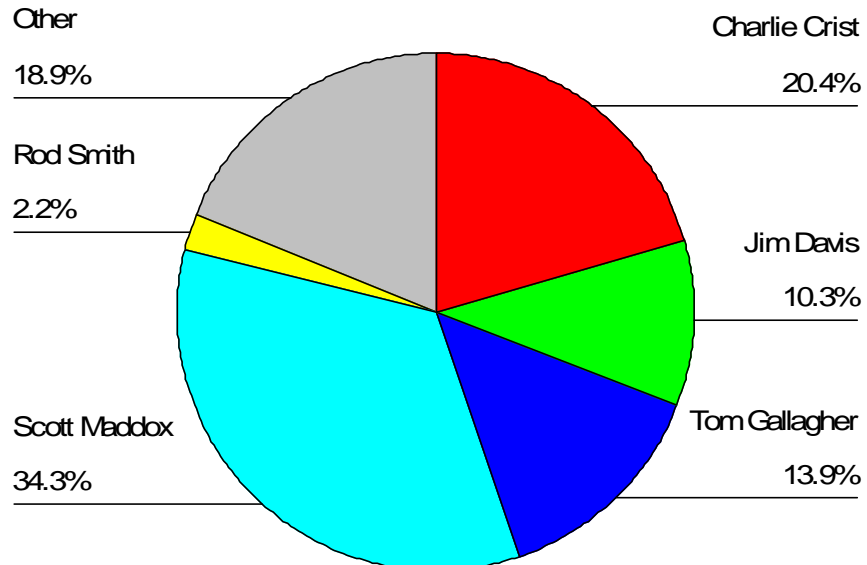
Name Recognition of Candidates

Please check all of the following candidates that you know are definitely running for Governor of Florida.

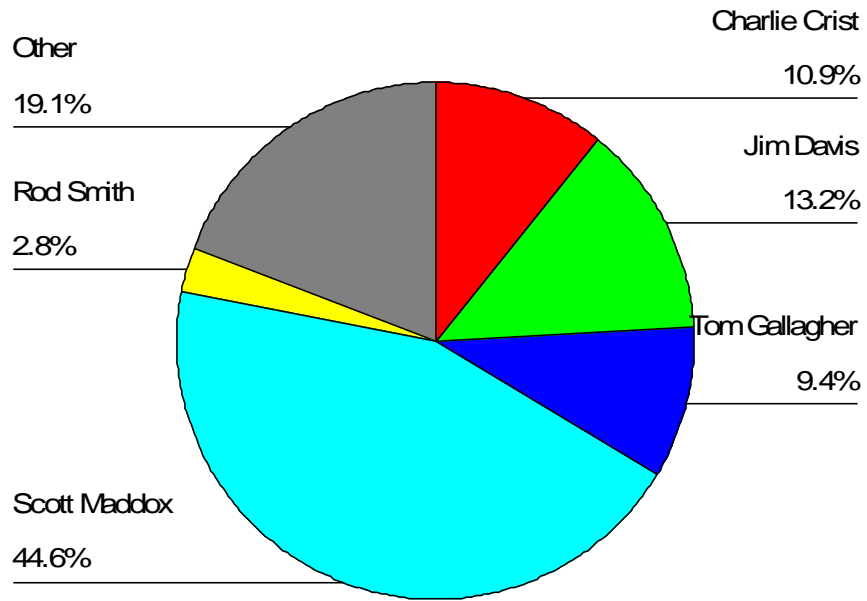


Vote Choice – Total Sample Included

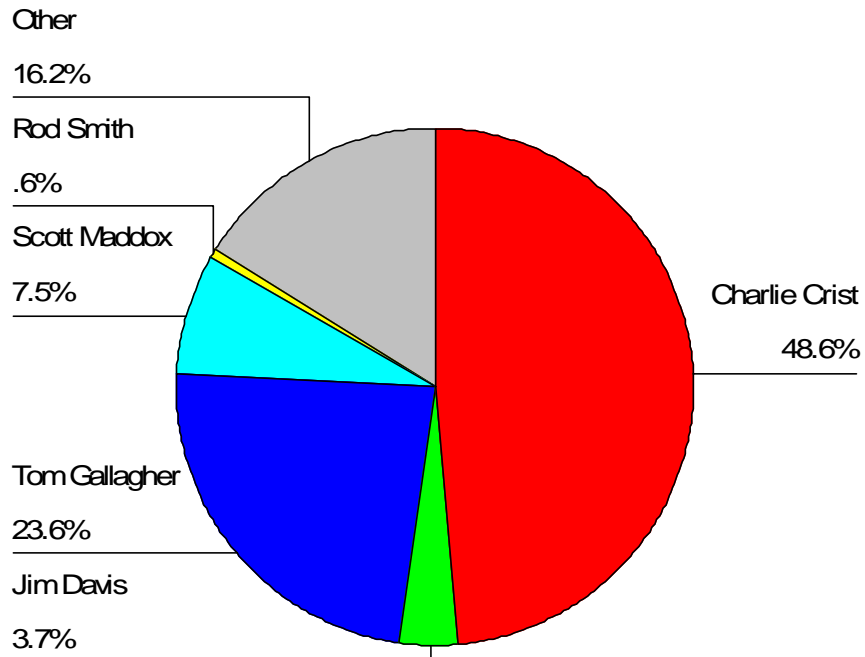
If the election were held tomorrow, for which of the following candidates would you vote?



Vote Choice – Among Registered Democrats Only



Vote Choice – Among Registered Republicans Only



Feelings About Scott Maddox

Based on what you know about Scott Maddox, do you feel he has the experience, integrity, and skills to be Governor of Florida?

