



**SUNSHINE
STATE SURVEY**
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Quick Facts

Data Release No. 4 | Oct. 18, 2016

Education | Health | Transportation | Recreation

The USF-Nielsen Sunshine State Survey

Florida, the nation's third largest state, is also one of the most diverse in terms of the people who live here. The constant in- and out-migration of people from other states and countries, as well as within-state re-locations, give rise to new problems and differing opinions as to how to resolve them. The goal of the annual USF-Nielsen Sunshine State Survey is to provide the state's government, business, and not-for-profit leaders, as well as citizens, in-depth analyses of public opinion on a wide-range of issues so that they might better serve the people who choose Florida as their home.

EDUCATION

Support Study Abroad in Countries with Terrorist Activity

Over three-quarters of Floridians believe universities should not support study abroad in countries with terrorist activity.

- Over three-quarters of the state's adult population (76%) believe that Florida public colleges and universities should not support study abroad programs in countries with known terrorist activity. Just 20% is of the opposite opinion.
- Most likely to think that public colleges and universities should not support study abroad in countries with active terrorist activity are older Floridians, whites, and residents of the Naples, Orlando, and North Florida areas. More supportive of continued support are younger Floridians, Hispanics, African-Americans, and residents of the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale and Palm Beach areas. (See full data release for details.)

Allow Trained Staff to Carry Firearms at Local Public Schools

Over half of Floridians support letting trained staff carry firearms in local public schools.

- A majority of Floridians (56%) favors trained staff carrying firearms in local public schools (35% "strongly" favor" the proposal; 21% "favor" it). Four-in-ten Floridians oppose allowing trained staff to carry firearms at local public schools (29% "strongly oppose" the measure; 11% "oppose" it). Only 1% are "in the middle."
- The strongest supporters of allowing trained staff to carry firearms on local school grounds are males, working-age residents, whites, those living in affluent households, college graduates, and residents of the Orlando and North Florida areas. Opposition comes from females, older Floridians, African-Americans, lower-income households, those with less formal educational attainment, and residents of the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale area. (See full data release for details.)

Right or Wrong Direction? Order Elementary Schools to have 20 Minutes of Recess Daily

Over 80% of Floridians believe ordering elementary schools to have 20 minutes of recess daily is moving in the "right direction."

- Only 5% judge the proposal to be a move in the "wrong direction." Another 14% does not express an opinion.
- Those with a child in school support the measure at a higher rate than those without.
- Females, more affluent households, college graduates, and residents of the Tampa Bay, Orlando, and Naples areas are most likely to see mandatory daily recess as a move in the "right direction." (See full data release for details.)

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HEALTH

State Government Performance Ratings:

Ensuring Safe Drinking Water

Majority of Floridians rates the state's efforts to ensure safe drinking water as "good" or "excellent."

- A majority of the state's adult residents—52%—gives the state either "good" or "excellent" marks for ensuring safe drinking water. Only 17% rates the state's protections as "poor," while another 28% grades the state's performance as "fair."
- Responses vary most by age, with younger Floridians giving better ratings and older Floridians being more critical of state efforts. (See full data release for details.)

Right or Wrong Direction? Ban Use of Smokeless Tobacco/E-Cigarettes in Public Places

A majority of Floridians favors banning the use of smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes in smoke-free public places.

- Over half (54%) of the state's adult population sees banning the use of smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes in smoke-free public places as moving in the "right direction." Another 23% regards the proposal as a move in the "wrong direction", while 23% has no opinion.
- Those most likely to see the change as a move in the "right direction" are females, the oldest Floridians, and whites. The highest proportion of "wrong direction" ratings come from males, retirement-age Floridians, and Hispanics. (See full data release for details.)

Right or Wrong Direction? Increase Smoking Age from 18 to 21

Over 50% of Floridians want to increase the smoking age from 18 years old to 21 years old.

- Most Floridians (57%) see increasing the smoking age from 18 to 21 years as a move in the "right direction." Less than a quarter (22%) believes it moves the state in the "wrong direction," while 21% have no opinion.
- Females, mid-income households, and Floridians with some college education are the most likely to an increase in the smoking age as moving in the "right direction." "Wrong direction" responses come from males, low-income households, and those with less formal educational attainment. (See full data release for details.)

TRANSPORTATION

Right or Wrong Direction? Impose Heavier Fines for Texting While Driving

Almost 90% of Floridians want to impose heavier fines for texting while driving.

- The vast majority (87%) of Floridian adults views imposing heavier fines for texting while driving as moving the state in the "right direction." Only 7% sees the change as going in the "wrong direction." This is also a highly salient issue, as only 6% fail to articulate an opinion—much lower than for similar questions.
- Females and older Floridians are more likely to see imposing heavier fines as moving in the "right direction." Males and younger Floridians are most likely to see imposing heavier fines as moving in the "wrong direction." (See full data release for details.)

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Right or Wrong Direction? Create More Urban Highway Toll Lanes

Half of Floridians see creating more urban highway toll lanes as moving state in the “wrong direction.”

- The change is seen as the “right direction” by 30% of Floridians, while 20% have no opinion.
- The most support for creating more urban toll lanes comes from younger Floridians, African-Americans, lower-income households, and residents of the Palm Beach and Tampa Bay areas. The most opposition for creating more urban toll lanes comes from older Floridians, Hispanics, mid-income households, and residents of the Orlando, Miami/Ft. Lauderdale and Naples areas. (See full data release for details.)

How to Improve Traffic Flow in Community? Better synchronizing traffic lights is the most popular way to improve traffic flow.

- A plurality (40%) identifies improving the synchronization of traffic lights as their top priority in improving traffic flow, while building more lanes was chosen by 23%. Public transit options—improving the bus system and building light rail—are preferred by 14% and 13%, respectively.
- Better synchronizing traffic lights is preferred by higher-than-average proportions of whites. Building more lanes is mentioned most by residents of North Florida areas. Hispanics are the most likely to identify improvements to the bus system as the best way to improve traffic flow. Light rail is the favored method of residents of the Tampa Bay, Orlando, and Miami/Ft. Lauderdale areas. (See full data release for details.)

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RECREATION

Right or Wrong Direction? Regulate Fantasy Sports as Gambling

Four-in-ten Floridians do not have an opinion on whether regulating fantasy sports as a form of gambling is a step in the right direction.

- The large proportion of “no opinion” responses (40%) indicates a high level of unfamiliarity with the issue.
- Over one-third (36%) regards increasing regulation on the fantasy sport industry as moving the state in the “wrong direction,” while less than a quarter (24%) think it would be a move in the “right direction.”
- Regulating fantasy sports as a form of gambling gets the most support from males, working-age Floridians, more affluent households, and those with higher formal educational attainment. Increasing the regulation of fantasy sports faces the highest opposition from African-Americans, affluent households, and those with less formal educational attainment.
- The highest levels of “no opinion” are found among females and the oldest Floridians. (See full data release for details.)

Using Government Money to Build/Renovate Private Sports Facilities

Over 80% of Floridians is opposed to using government money to renovate sports facilities used by privately-owned teams.

- Only 13% favors the use of public monies for such projects.
- The strongest opposition comes from females, the oldest Floridians, mid-income households, and college graduates. The strongest support comes from males, younger Floridians, low-income households, and those with less formal educational attainment.

2016 USF-Nielsen Sunshine State Survey

Data Release 4

Detailed Analysis of Hot Topics and Additional Questions on Education, Health, Transportation, and Recreation

Detailed Contents

Hot Topics: Education, Health, Transportation, and Recreation

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-  Right or Wrong Direction? – Take Federal Funding for Medicaid Expansion
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- NEW** State Government Performance Ratings – Addressing Wrong-Way Driving Deaths
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Recreation

-  Right or Wrong Direction? – Allow More Casino Gambling