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AARP SURVEY: MOST FLORIDA VOTERS 50+ SAY INCOMES FALLING BEHIND INFLATION; HALF SAY THEY HAVE OR WILL POSTPONE RETIREMENT TO SAVE MORE

New survey shows non-retired Florida voters worried about financial future, strongly in favor of more help for family caregivers; most say they have or will be caregivers

St. PETERSBURG, Fla. – As Florida’s November elections approach, Florida voters age 50+ are worried about their finances, with nearly six in 10 saying their incomes are falling behind the cost of living, according to a new survey by AARP. The poll also shows about half of all voters 50+ have or will delay retirement because of financial concerns, with Hispanic voters 50+ in Florida more likely to delay retirement than voters 50+ in general.

Based on responses gathered in June, the survey showed Gov. Rick Scott with a 47-40 percent lead over a Democratic opponent, former Gov. Charlie Crist, among voters 50+. But one in five voters said they could still change their minds. Scott and Crist tied at 42 percent each among Hispanic/Latino Florida voters 50+, while whites leaned toward Scott and African-Americans strongly supported Crist.

The survey also showed 50+ voters were disappointed with Washington, with 53 percent disapproving and 36 percent approving President Obama’s job performance.

50+ Voters’ Outlook: Anxious about Finances, Seeking Help with Care of Loved Ones

The survey reflected pervasive concern among voters 50+ over their future finances. Some 52 percent of voters 50 and older surveyed said they have delayed or plan to delay retirement so they can add to their savings. Among Hispanic voters 50+, 59 percent said they delayed or plan to delay retirement to save more money.

“Florida voters 50+ are worried about their futures,” said Jeff Johnson, AARP’s Florida state director. “And voters 50+ overwhelmingly say candidates for governor haven’t done enough to explain their proposals for responding to these concerns.”

By a commanding 82 percent margin, Florida voters 50+ say a candidate’s position on jobs and the economy would be very important in deciding whom to support in the governor’s race. Only 7 percent said it would be less or not important.

(more)

The AARP poll also showed voters 50+ focus on family caregiving as an important issue. Some 76 percent of those polled said they have, are or expect to care for ill, frail or elderly loved ones at home. Asked where they would prefer to receive care themselves, 73 percent prefer to receive care in their own homes. Fifteen percent prefer an assisted-living community and 4 percent prefer a nursing home.

Seven in 10 voters 50+ say the next governor should make it an extremely or very important priority to support services that help older people live independently in their homes. Seventy-five percent say a candidate's position on increasing support for family care will be a very or somewhat important factor in making their vote for governor.

“One really notable finding is that people, particularly those 50+, are deeply concerned about how they'll help loved ones remain independent at home,” said Johnson. “Floridians expect the next governor to focus on policies that promote independence for older family members. As Florida seeks the economic benefits of attracting relocating Boomers, we need to ensure that this is a great state for all ages.”

The survey also found most Florida voters 50+ support a proposal to expand Medicaid health-care coverage to uninsured Floridians earning less than \$16,000, a plan that most state lawmakers oppose. Overall, voters favored Medicaid expansion 57 percent to 26 percent with 17 percent undecided. Hispanic voters 50+ favored Medicaid expansion 69 to 18 percent, white voters 50+ favored it 53 to 28 percent and African-American voters by 84 to 6 percent.

The survey also showed voters 50+ agree, by three to one, that candidates for governor should better explain their positions on voters' key concerns. Using an AARP "Anxiety Index," which measures older voters' worries, pollsters found voters 50+ worried about paying too much in taxes, losing ground to the rising cost of living, lacking financial security in retirement, being unable to afford home care or a nursing home, and facing unaffordable health costs.

A Confidence Gap between Non-Retired Voters 50+ and Those Already Retired

The poll repeatedly showed a confidence gap between non-retired Florida voters and retirees, Johnson noted. Some 53 percent of non-retired older Florida voters said they were worried about achieving their financial goals in the next five years, compared to 47 percent among those already retired. Asked if they were satisfied with what they had saved or were saving for retirement, some 41 percent of non-retirees and 30 percent of retirees were strongly or somewhat dissatisfied. Similarly, non-retirees had a cumulative score on the five “Anxiety Index” questions of 57, while current retirees scored a 40.

Also, 64 percent of the non-retired reported that their incomes were falling behind the cost of living, while 53 percent of the already retired reported the same. Sixty-four percent of Hispanic voters 50+ also reported falling behind inflation. Overall, 59 percent of those surveyed said they were falling financially behind the rising cost of living.

“The finding underscores the disconnect between the talk inside Washington on Social Security's future and the real lives of voters 50+,” noted Johnson. “Voters 50+ agree their incomes are falling behind the cost of living. But Washington's talking about ways to scale future cost-of-living increases, so retirees would get less.”

Methodology

About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.