

LGBTQ community could decide Florida governor's race, GLAAD poll says

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TAMP, Fla. (WFLA) — If you ask advocates for the state's LGBTQ community, Florida has an education and legislation problem. A recent poll by GLAAD, formally and formerly known as Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, said the LGBTQ community in Florida could be key to deciding November's governor's race.

According to [GLAAD's poll](#), more than half of the state's LGBTQ community, and allies, are concerned about Florida lawmakers "stripping away" civil rights through new legislation, such as 2022's House Bill 1557, Parental Rights in Education, or the "Don't Say Gay" bill that made national headlines for months.

[Florida tells schools to disregard federal Title IX gender identity rules](#)

GLAAD's poll said 77% of their survey respondents "strongly agree it's more important than ever to vote this year because 'basic human rights for women and LGBTQ Floridians are starting to be taken away by elected officials currently in charge of Florida's government.'"

The state of Florida has a reported 4.6% population of LGBTQ residents, according to the GLAAD data. While that may not seem like much in a state with more than 22 million residents, the survey analysis said that could be enough to change an election.

In the previous gubernatorial race in Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis won the race by just over 32,000 votes. In the 2018 race, just over 8.2 million people voted, according to numbers from the Florida Department of State. An archived version of the election results, [hosted by the Internet Archive](#), show a vote tally difference of just 0.44% between DeSantis and his Democratic opponent at the time, Andrew Gillum.

"In a midterm election where mobilizing turnout is critical (and challenging) for each side, Florida is poised to see a surge in voting participation by LGBTQ voters and LGBTQ allies who voted in the last Presidential election but not the last midterm," [the polling group, Pathfinder Opinion Research](#), said about the results. "Both groups say they are even more motivated to vote in this midterm election than they were in the last Presidential election. In a tight governor's race, like in 2018, turnout from these voters could be pivotal."

[Russian national accused of using St. Pete group to influence elections](#)

The number of [registered voters in Florida](#), according to DOS, now show a higher number of potential participants in the 2022 midterm elections, with more than 14 million registered voters in the state. The voter data from the DOS is also important, showing that the number

of registered Republican voters is higher than the number of registered Democrats. That was not the case in the 2018 election.

In the 2020 presidential election, there were more Democratic voters registered, and even then former President Donald Trump still won the state. Heading into the November governor's race, GLAAD's poll suggests that the LGBTQ community and its allies have an opportunity to flip the state's gubernatorial race, though nothing is certain.

How those voters feel about DeSantis is also a factor, according to the poll.

"The governor's race in Florida in 2018 was decided by only 32,463 votes out of 8+ million. The results of the poll suggest that LGBTQ and ally voters are positioned to be decisive in Florida this November if the governor's race is similarly close," GLAAD reported. "77% of LGBTQ and ally voters have an unfavorable opinion of Gov. DeSantis."

Culture war legislation has dominated media coverage in Florida as of late. With state leaders and lawmakers weighing in on everything from abortion to drag shows, GLAAD reported top issues for their survey respondents ranged from restoring abortion rights after the state's recently added restrictions, to protecting equality for LGBTQ residents. Housing, inflation, and gun rights also were top of mind for the voters surveyed.

"Florida's LGBTQ voters and ally voters have grave concerns about their basic human rights, including access to abortion, freedom of speech, and evidence-based healthcare for LGBTQ youth," GLAAD President and CEO, Sarah Kate Ellis, said. "They're motivated to make a difference in this crucial election."

[Gov. DeSantis announces state action against 'woke' businesses, corporations](#)

The majority of poll respondents said laws like HB 1557 are "designed to attack" the LGBTQ community. A similar portion of respondents said the bills will also be emotionally damaging to LGBTQ children and parents, influencing the level of motivation for the community and their supporters to vote.

GLAAD said 67% of Florida's LGBTQ and allies are "extremely motivated" to vote in this year's election.