

New Democratic Poll Shows Florida Congressman in Peril – Roll Call

 rollcall.com/2014/08/14/new-democratic-poll-shows-florida-congressman-in-peril/

By Abby Livingston Posted August 14, 2014 at 2:43pm

August 14, 2014

By [Abby Livingston](#)

Posted August 14, 2014 at 2:43pm

A new Democratic poll shows Gwen Graham with a slight lead over Rep. Steve Southerland II, R-Fla., but still within the margin of error.

Graham, the likely Democratic nominee, had the support of 45 percent of survey participants, while Southerland trailed with 43 percent. Eleven percent of respondents were undecided.

Ocean Champions, an environmental group that endorses Democratic candidates, commissioned the poll.

The margin of error is 4.4 points, which means the survey reinforces the view of many national operations hold on Florida's 2nd District race: It's a dead heat. The race is rated [Tossup/Tilts Republican](#) by the Rothenberg Political Report/Roll Call, and Southerland is on Roll Call's most recent list of the [10 Most Vulnerable Members](#). As for the incumbent, 42 percent of respondents viewed his job performance favorably, while 47 percent viewed him negatively. Southerland is running for a third term and was the subject of negative advertising in previous campaigns.

Both candidates have aired positive campaign ads in recent days and weeks. But Graham, who had the financial advantage in the most recent reporting period, went up on the airwaves earlier than Southerland with ads featuring her father, former Sen. Bob Graham.

Graham scored positive marks from respondents: 39 percent of those surveyed viewed her positively, while 15 percent saw her in a negative light.

But her numbers will likely take a hit soon [because the National Republican Congressional Committee began airing attack ads](#) against her earlier this week.

Southerland is getting a little bit of heat on the airwaves as well. Ocean Champions went up with a small, \$35,000 two-week ad buy in the Panama City television market featuring this spot:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-LPO02Mz64&feature=youtu.be

The live-interview poll was conducted by Bryan Dooley of Pathfinder Opinion Research, a South Carolina-based Democratic firm. The survey polled 500 respondents over landlines and cellphones. It was conducted Aug. 11-12.

Dooley's polling memo noted a point that Southerland [underscored in a recent interview](#) with CQ Roll Call: President Barack Obama is an unpopular figure in the district. Thirty-seven percent of those polled approved of the president's job performance.