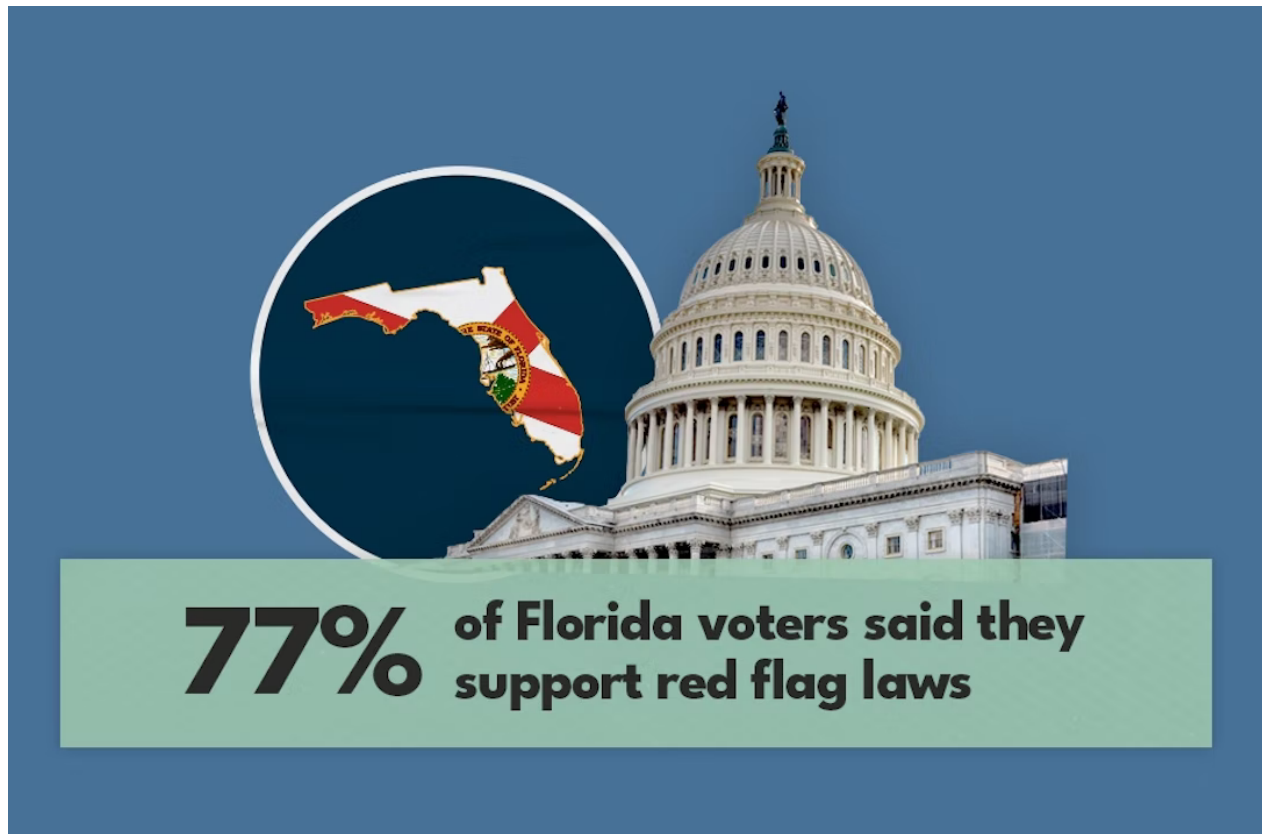


Florida Voters Support Gun Safety Reforms

**Third Way**

The recent horrific tragedies in Buffalo and Uvalde have once again catapulted the gun safety debate onto the front page. So far in 2022, there have been over 250 mass shootings in the United States. And even as a growing number of states have mobilized to enact common-sense gun regulations, progress on this issue has been stalled at the national level for decades. However, there may be light at the end of this dark tunnel in the form of a bipartisan deal that has brought lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to the table.

While the final text of the Senate compromise has yet to be released, the framework under discussion encompasses some of the most basic, sensible gun reforms, including enhancing background checks for individuals under 21, closing the “boyfriend” loophole to remove guns from domestic abusers, making investments in mental health services and school safety resources, and incentivizing states to implement extreme risk protection order policies, also known as “red flag” laws, that allow law enforcement to temporarily remove guns from the possession of those who might be a danger to themselves or others. Senator Marco Rubio previously introduced federal

legislation incentivizing states to pass “red flag” laws, but has withheld support for the bipartisan bill currently before the Senate. In a new poll conducted by Third Way and Republican polling firm GS Strategy Group, it is evident that, regardless of party affiliation, Florida voters support the measures currently under debate in Washington and want Congress to pass them into law. ¹

Florida voters see a need for action on gun safety.

A strong majority of Floridians believe there is need for action on gun regulations in the wake of the tragedy in Uvalde. When asked whether it was too easy or too hard to get a gun in America, 72% of Florida voters said it was too easy, with 45% saying it was *much* too easy. This sentiment was shared among Floridians who are Republicans, self-described conservatives, and gun owners as well. Each group said it was too easy to get a gun (57%, 56%, and 68% respectively).

And asked directly, 56% of respondents said they were more likely to support passing stricter gun laws at the federal level after the Uvalde shooting.

Florida voters support the policies proposed by the bipartisan group in the Senate.

When asked about the specific policy items being considered in the Senate’s bipartisan framework, voters voiced overwhelmingly consistent support for each proposal. A full 77% of Florida voters said they support red flag laws that give family members or law enforcement authority to petition for a judge’s order to temporarily remove guns from someone who poses a violent threat to themselves or others. In fact, 60%, say they *strongly* support this proposal. And supermajorities of Republicans, conservatives, and gun owners expressed support for red flag laws. Additionally, 78% of voters support closing the “boyfriend” loophole by preventing domestic abusers from purchasing guns even if they are not married to their victim.

Floridians also strongly agreed with the idea of expanding scrutiny for young adults who want access to firearms: 78% said they support allowing law enforcement to access sealed juvenile records when conducting background checks, to ensure those with a violent criminal history are not able to purchase guns, including three-quarters of Republicans, conservatives, and gun owners in the sample. And 70% of voters say they support funding research around the effectiveness of gun safety policies.

Not only do Florida voters support the policy proposals in the current Senate framework, they actually want their representatives to go further. When asked whether they support requiring a background check before every gun purchase, including online and at gun shows, 90% of voters responded in the affirmative, including more than 80% of Republicans, conservatives, and gun owners, with 76% of all voters saying they *strongly* support that requirement. And 76% said they support increasing the minimum age to purchase a semi-automatic weapon from 18 to 21 years old, including 6 in 10 among each of those three groups.

Florida Voter Support for Various Policy Proposals

Policy		All Voters	Republicans	Conservatives	Gun Owners
Red flag laws	SUPPORT	77%	65%	64%	71%
	STRONGLY	60%	49%	46%	49%
Requiring background checks for all gun purchases	SUPPORT	90%	84%	82%	88%
	STRONGLY	76%	67%	65%	70%
Closing the “boyfriend” loophole	SUPPORT	78%	73%	71%	76%
	STRONGLY	59%	51%	48%	49%
Raising the purchase age for semi-automatic weapons	SUPPORT	76%	67%	66%	74%
	STRONGLY	66%	56%	54%	60%
Providing access to juvenile records for background checks	SUPPORT	78%	77%	77%	73%
	STRONGLY	66%	56%	54%	60%

	STRO	57%	58%	58%	51%
	SUPPORT	70%	62%	60%	69%
Funding research on gun safety policies	STRONGLY	44%	36%	32%	35%

Source: Poll via telephone of 800 Florida likely voters, conducted June 16–23, by GS Strategy Group for Third Way. Margin of error +/- 3.46%.



Even when pressed with arguments from opponents of red flag laws, support held strong, with 61% of voters saying they side with supporters of the policy change.

Florida voters would reward lawmakers who advance these proposals.

A majority of Florida voters (51%) said they would be more likely to vote for Senator Rubio if he voted in favor of reforms like red flag laws, raising the age requirement for semi-automatic weapons, and expanding background check requirements. Only 32% said they would be less likely to support him if he voted for these kinds of proposals.

Conclusion

The framework under discussion in the Senate contains a package of reforms that are overwhelmingly supported by Floridians. These legislative components, particularly red flag laws, have been proven to save lives by keeping deadly weapons out of the hands of dangerous people. Florida voters agree that now is the time for Congress to act and pass gun reforms that will make our communities safer.

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ENDNOTES

1. Poll via telephone of 800 Florida likely voters, conducted June 16-23, by GS Strategy Group for Third Way. Margin of error /- 3.46%.