


NONPARTISAN CANDIDATE GUIDE: 2018 FLORIDA SENATE RACE

	Bill Nelson (D – Incumbent)	Rick Scott (R)
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Abortion: Highly restrict abortion?	No. Supports a women’s right to choose.	Yes. “Abortion is wrong & Roe versus Wade should be overturned.”
Campaign Finance: Require political ads to disclose their largest funders?	Yes. Backed 2017 DISCLOSE ACT requiring ads to disclose funders & major funders to reveal donations.	No position found.
Campaign Finance: Support <i>Citizens United</i> decision, allowing unlimited political donations from corporations & unions?	No. Decision “opened the floodgates to dark money in campaigns.”	Probable yes. Considers political donations part of exercising the right to free speech.
Climate Change: Consider climate change a serious threat?	Yes. “Climate change is real, & we must take action.” Denial “is simply not an option, especially in Florida,” where sea level rise is a real threat.	No. “I’ve not been convinced that there’s any manmade climate change.” State environmental employees allegedly told to avoid the phrase “climate change.”
Climate Change: Limit or tax production of greenhouse gases? Support US participation in Paris Climate Accord despite President Trump’s withdrawal?	Yes. Supports federal regulation & Paris Accord. “If the US isn’t going to do its part to combat climate change, then the rest of the world won’t do theirs.”	No. Opposes federal regulation of greenhouse gases. Repealed Florida cap & trade program. Says Paris Accord risked US jobs.
Contraception: Allow employers to withhold contraceptive coverage from employees if disagree with it morally?	No. Co-sponsored bill safeguarding contraceptive coverage. Would exempt religious organizations.	Yes. Sees as a matter of employer rights & freedom of religion.
Courts: Support Judge Kavanaugh nomination? (Position before allegations)	Will meet, then decide. Won’t vote for someone who’d overturn Roe v Wade.	“I am glad President Trump nominated Judge Brett Kavanaugh.”
Criminal Justice: Support Amendment #4 – restoring voting rights to 1.6 million former felons, excluding murderers & sex offenders?	Yes. “If you’ve done your time, you should be able to vote. It’s only fair.”	Has historically made rights restoration difficult. Opposes Amendment 4— prefers existing restoration process.
Economy: Support federal spending as a means of promoting economic growth?	Yes. For instance, supported stimulus bill at height of 2008 recession.	Mostly no. Has focused primarily on tax cuts & associated spending cuts.
Economy: Support Trump’s imposition of tariffs on Chinese steel & other products?	No. Says that these tariffs “may start an international trade war.”	Mixed. Backs “free & open trade,” but other countries have to reciprocate.
Education: Public support for sending children to private schools?	No. Must never take money from public schools for private schools.	Yes. Consistent supporter of vouchers & other private options.
Elections: Support nonpartisan redistricting to address possible partisan gerrymandering?	Yes. Avoid drawing districts for your own self-interest.	Unknown. Delayed implementing 2011 nonpartisan initiative.
Environment: Support cutbacks in Environmental Protection Administration (EPA)	No. Publicly opposed EPA cutbacks.	Unknown. Supported Florida environmental regulation cutbacks, but funded Everglades restoration.

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Environment: Position on “red tide” algae crisis? Support reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee to prevent runoff feeding algal blooms?	Supports reservoir. Criticizes Scott’s easing state environmental regulations & cutting \$700 million from water management districts . “When you dismantle the environmental agencies,” this is what happens.	Declared state of emergency . Supports reservoir. Says Nelson has had years to address the crisis & should have gotten Federal support or Army Corps to address problem. “Nelson didn’t care to make Lake Okeechobee a priority.”
Financial Regulation: Support cutbacks in Consumer Financial Protection Bureau?	No. Publicly opposed cutbacks.	Unknown. But signed legislation to blunt CFPB crackdown on payday loans.
Gay Marriage: Support gay marriage?	Supports. “If the Lord made homosexuals as well as heterosexuals, why should I discriminate?”	Opposed in 2014, now says law of the land.
Gun Control: Support more restrictive gun control legislation? Restrict semi-automatic weapons?	Yes. Long-time supporter of banning semi-automatic weapons & expanding background checks.	Mixed. Historically opposed. After Parkland, raised purchase age to 21, added 3-day wait & armed some school employees. Didn’t ban assault weapons.
Healthcare: Support or Repeal Affordable Care Act (ACA), known as Obamacare? Support Medicaid expansion?	Support. Will work to ensure those with pre-existing conditions keep health coverage eligibility.	“A terrible notion.” “Repeal as quickly as we can get it done.” Rejected Medicaid expansion.
Healthcare: Let Planned Parenthood receive public funds for non-abortion health care?	Yes. Voted against efforts to defund.	No. Supported ban that was overturned by courts.
Immigration: Support DREAM Act (DACA), allowing “Dreamers” who arrived illegally as children, then grew up in the US, to achieve legal status if meet certain conditions?	Yes. Co-sponsored 2017 DREAM Act, including legal status & path to citizenship.	In 2010 opposed: “I don’t believe in amnesty.” Vetoed DACA drivers licenses. Now supports: Don’t punish children for actions of their parents.
Iran: Support withdrawal from treaty limiting Iran nuclear capability & lifting sanctions?	No.	Yes.
Marijuana: Legalize or decriminalize marijuana?	Mixed. Supports legal medical use, including letting VA doctors prescribe. Opposes recreational legalization.	Mixed. Signed law broadening medical, but fought to ban smokable medical marijuana & opposes recreational use.
Minimum Wage: Raise federal minimum wage from \$7.25/hr?	Yes. Co-sponsored 2017 bill to raise to \$15 by 2024.	Likely no. Says California minimum wage caused loss of 700,000 jobs.
Net Neutrality: Require internet providers to provide equal access to all users?	Yes. Supported legislation to restore Obama-era FCC net neutrality rules.	No. Sees these rules as “burdensome regulations for job creators.”
President Trump: Support President Trump?	Voted with Trump 43% of time.	Early Trump supporter. Trump encouraged him to run for Senate.
Privatization: Support partial or full Social Security privatization?	No. Historically opposed.	Unclear. Old positions supporting privatization, but no recent ones.
Renewable Energy: Support government subsidies for renewable energy?	Yes. Voted to cut fossil fuel subsidies to instead support renewables.	No position found. Signed bill for FL renewable credits that had passed unanimously.
Student debt: Lower student loan rates, paid by increasing taxes on high earners (Elizabeth Warren proposal)? Increase student financial aid, like Pell Grants?	Yes. Voted for Warren’s student loan proposal. Also called on Trump to expand Pell Grant program.	No position found on federal aid. Cut higher-ed funding in first term. Recently expanded FL Bright Futures Scholarships & froze student tuition & fees.
Taxes: Support President Trump’s tax cuts?	No. “Terrible bill”	Unknown. Enacted major FL tax cuts.
Voting Rights: Support tighter voting rules even if prevent some people from voting?	No. Says we should be making it easier to vote, not harder. Let students vote on campuses.	Yes. Necessary to prevent fraud. Courts overturned his 2011 regulations on registration drives & 2012 voter purges. Opposed on-campus voting.

Created by the [Campus Election Engagement Project](#), a nonpartisan effort to help college & university administrators, faculty, & student leaders engage their schools in the election. Key sites consulted included [Votesmart.org](#), [OntheIssues.org](#), [FactCheck.org](#), [Politifact.com](#), & public candidate statements. For guides to local races, see [Vote411.org](#) from the League of Women Voters & [Ballotready.org](#).