

FLORIDA – 1NC SHELL

A. UNIQUENESS. OBAMA IS CURRENTLY BEHIND IN FLORIDA

Rasmussen Reports 11.20.11

[http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/elections/election_2012/election_2012_presidential_election/florida/election_2012_florida_president]

Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney posts a slight lead over President Obama in the first Rasmussen Reports telephone survey of the presidential race in the key swing state of Florida. Romney earns support from 46% of Likely Voters in the Sunshine State to Obama's 42%.

FLORIDA – 1NC SHELL

B. THE PLAN RESCUES OBAMA.

THE SPACE COMMUNITY IS THE SWING SEGMENT OF THE SWING STATE OF FLORIDA – AND THEY ARE UPSET WITH OBAMA NOW FOR DISRESPECTING NASA

Keith Lang, The Hill 4.29.11

[<http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/tsa/158425-obamas-visit-to-cape-canaveral-highlights-floridas-importance>]

Central Florida, where Cape Canaveral is located, is the swing part of one of the biggest swing states in the nation. In 2008, Obama became the first Democratic presidential candidate since Bill Clinton in 1996 to carry the state. Despite sweeping Republican victories in Florida last year, Democrats think he can turn it blue again in 2012. Obama carried Florida by 236,450 votes in 2008. Republicans hope that the end of the space shuttle foreshadows a reversal of those numbers for Obama next year. "The community there is not happy," former Republican Party of Florida chairman Al Cardenas told The Hill. "They believe the White House has not respected NASA's budget or the assets of that community," Cardenas said.

THE KEYS TO THE OVAL OFFICE ARE AT KENNEDY SPACE CENTER – A MAJOR NEW SPACE PROGRAM WILL SWING THOSE VOTERS

Orlando Sentinel January 22, 2008

[<http://www.techzone360.com/news/2008/01/22/3223633.htm>]

Another basic force is at work: politics. Florida is a vital swing state with 27 electoral votes, and the Interstate 4 corridor is the swing region. Kennedy Space Center and the entire Space Coast, which is largely dependent on NASA-related jobs, is the eastern anchor of that corridor. "This isn't rocket science. It is crude, but compelling, political arithmetic," wrote Dale Ketcham, director of the University of Central Florida's Space Research and Technology Institute, in a two-page presentation titled "The Keys to the Oval Office Are at Kennedy Space Center." Ketcham, 53, a Cocoa Beach native who coordinates university research programs at Kennedy Space Center for NASA, drafted the presentation in March to hand out to officials in Tallahassee during Florida's annual Space Day industry lobbying event. It says that with thousands of Kennedy Space Center jobs at risk when the shuttle retires, the first candidate "to speak boldly" about a comprehensive space vision that assuages these concerns will reap thousands of votes. "All NASA centers have some problems," he wrote. "But only Kennedy Space Center is in the I-4 Corridor!"

FLORIDA – 1NC SHELL

C. IMPACT

IF OBAMA WINS IN 2012, IT WILL END US HEGEMONY

Nile Gardiner, foreign affairs analyst for the London Telegraph, July 14, 2011

[<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/nilegardiner/100097071/barack-obama%E2%80%99s-future-looks-precarious-as-america-faces-its-most-important-presidential-election-since-1980/>]

And like the contest in 1980, 2012 will likely decide the future of the United States as the world's dominant superpower, with Americans faced with a stark choice between renewal and decline. As the latest Pew survey of global attitudes shows, the world is beginning to lose faith in the strength of America's leadership, with general publics in 15 of 22 nations surveyed believing that "China either will replace or already has replaced the United States as the world's leading superpower." Even in the US itself, 46 percent believe that China has already or will replace America as the world's leading power. America in the second decade of the 21st Century is a superpower on a precipice, facing towering mountains of public debt, declining domestic and international confidence, and growing threats to its international security from the likes of Iran and North Korea. There is nothing inevitable about American decline, but the policies of the current administration are making such a decline far more likely. As the United States grows weaker both economically and militarily, America's adversaries and strategic competitors are growing stronger and more aggressive. A world without powerful American leadership built upon strong economic foundations would have been unthinkable just a decade ago. But the damaging policies of the current presidency are beginning to make that nightmare scenario a reality.

FLORIDA – 1NC SHELL

U.S. DECLINIST POLICIES RISK WORLD WAR

Zalmay Khalilzad, former US Ambassador to Afghanistan and Iraq, Feb 8, 2011

[<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/259024/economy-and-national-security-zalmay-khalilzad?pg=2>]

If U.S. policymakers fail to act and other powers continue to grow, it is not a question of whether but when a new international order will emerge. The closing of the gap between the United States and its rivals could intensify geopolitical competition among major powers, increase incentives for local powers to play major powers against one another, and undercut our will to preclude or respond to international crises because of the higher risk of escalation. The stakes are high. In modern history, the longest period of peace among the great powers has been the era of U.S. leadership. By contrast, multi-polar systems have been unstable, with their competitive dynamics resulting in frequent crises and major wars among the great powers. Failures of multi-polar international systems produced both world wars. American retrenchment could have devastating consequences. Without an American security blanket, regional powers could rearm in an attempt to balance against emerging threats. Under this scenario, there would be a heightened possibility of arms races, miscalculation, or other crises spiraling into all-out conflict.

UNIQUENESS EXTENSIONS

FLORIDA IS A KEY BATTLEGROUND STATE IN 2012 AND THE GOP HAS BUILT IN ADVANTAGES

Reuters 10.28. 11

[<http://us.mobile.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSTRE79R5OM20111028?irpc=932>]

With more than 18 million people, Florida is the fourth most populous state in America, making it the largest swing state with 29 electoral votes. With Florida's unemployment rate at 10.6 percent, among the worst in the country, Obama faces a tough fight to win again in the state where he defeated Republican Senator John McCain in 2008. An October NBC News/Marist Poll showed Obama at 45 percent, with former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney trailing him by 2 points among potential Republican rivals. The Republican Party is holding its national convention in Tampa next August to try to win voters in Florida, home to large numbers of Hispanic and elderly voters.

FLORIDA IS THE BIGGEST, TOUGHEST SWING STATE FOR OBAMA

Miami Herald 11.10.11

[<http://miamiherald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/2011/11/swing-state-poll-redux-cain-romney-lead-gop-romney-more-trusted-better-v-obama.html>]

The voters' most-favored Republican: Mitt Romney, who is statistically tied in theoretical matchups with Obama. Only in Florida, though, does Romney show a lead against Obama by 45-42 percent split, according to the poll of registered voters. "Of these three swing states President Obama carried in 2008, Florida was the biggest surprise and had the closest margin," Pollster Peter A. Brown said in a written statement. "Florida is shaping up to be the closest swing state again in 2012 and it's a fair bet that a year from now, it will be the toughest of the Big Three for Obama to carry."

UNIQUENESS EXTENSIONS

THE JOBS PICTURE IS SHIFTING FLORIDA TOWARD THE GOP

The Guardian 7.7.11

[<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/jul/07/florida-us-politics>]

The GOP, of course, wants Florida back – one of the reasons it decided to place its 2012 convention here. And thanks to the stalled economy, and public upset over "Obamacare", there was a shift last November. Tea Party favourite Marco Rubio, a Cuban American, won the open Senate seat, replacing moderate Cuban American Mel Martinez, while another Republican conservative, Rick Scott, captured the governorship. The state's legislature also went Republican, as many voters hurt by the recession, including independents drawn especially to the charismatic Rubio (who won an outright majority of the Latino vote), abandoned the Democrats.

OBAMA BEHIND ROMNEY IN FLORIDA

Quinnipiac Poll November 10, 2011

[<http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x2882.xml?ReleaseID=1671>]

Florida: Pitting President Obama against possible Republican challengers shows:
Romney at 45 percent to Obama's 42 percent

UNIQUENESS EXTENSIONS

THE 2012 ELECTION WILL BE VERY CLOSE

Teixeira and Halperin, Senior Fellows, Center for American Progress, 11.25.11

[<http://www.businessspectator.com.au/bs.nsf/Article/US-presidential-election-Obama-Democrat-Republican-pd20111125-NWUWT?OpenDocument&src=rot>]

Regardless of the outcome, it is likely that American politics will remain highly contested and polarised for years to come. The electoral volatility seen from 2006 to 2010 suggests that the biggest issues in American politics – the role of government, the balance of public and market forces, taxation, and social welfare policies – remain contested in partisan terms. The financial crisis and the Great Recession have severely clouded the electoral picture, making it clear that 2008 marked only the potential for a new progressive alignment in American elections, rather than its consolidation. Given the job approval ratings of the president and economic indicators in key states, the 2012 election will likely be tighter than the 2008 election, perhaps more like 2004 or even the highly contested 2000 election.

FLORIDA IS THE KEY TO THE 2012 ELECTION

IF OBAMA WINS FLORIDA HE'LL WIN THE ELECTION – HISTORY PROVES

Steve Schale, Florida-based political strategist, Political Director, Florida Justice Association, January 23, 2010

[<http://www.stevenschale.com/blog/2010/1/23/welcome-back-mr-president.html>]

In the nation's current political alignment, especially for the GOP, Florida is a real make or break state. There are very few scenarios where the GOP could win the White House without Florida's 27 (soon to be 28 or 29). As a result, Florida's electoral votes essentially assure a Democratic win. As I used to tell our young staff in 2008, it was win and you're in. History tends to prove this point. Since 1928, Florida has only landed on the wrong side of two Presidential elections: 1960 and 1992 (the other big battleground, Ohio, has also been wrong twice: 1944 and 1960). In both cases, Florida narrowly went for the GOP, while national Democrats won the ultimate prize. In fact, you have to go back to 1924 and the re-election of President Calvin Coolidge to find the last time that a Republican won the White House without an assist from the Sunshine State.

FLORIDA WILL BE A KEY SWING STATE IN 2012

Topanga Sena, Scholastic, 11.07.11

[<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3756698>]

Florida is typically a swing state. Swing states are ones that represent a large amount of electoral college votes and that can be won by either Democrats or Republicans — usually by a very narrow margin. In 2008, President Obama won the state with 51 percent of the vote. "We're a state that's not typically one way or the other," Smith said. "We are the largest swing state in terms of electoral votes." It will not be easy for President Obama to win Florida in 2012.

FLORIDA IS THE KEY TO THE 2012 ELECTION

FLORIDA IS KEY TO OBAMA RE-ELECTION

Niall Stanage, The Hill, June 20, 2011

[<http://thehill.com/homenews/news/167239-a-storm-brews-in-florida-ahead-of-2012-election>]

In the 17 months between now and Election Day 2012, innumerable theories, some esoteric, will be advanced about how President Obama can get reelected. Math provides a starker answer: Win Florida. Obama in 2008 carried nine states that former President George W. Bush won four years previously. If Obama loses eight of those battlegrounds and holds Florida — and the other states remain unchanged — he will secure another four years in the Oval Office.

IF OBAMA WINS FLORIDA, HE'LL WIN THE ELECTION

Eric Odom, Media Director, Patriot Action Network, June 13, 2011

[<http://campaigntrailreport.com/2011/06/13/florida-to-decide-next-president>]

The importance of Florida is not to be understated. In fact, I'm fairly confident that a Republican candidate won't be able to lose Florida and win the general election. In other elections this might have been possible, but 2012 is going to present a vastly different scenario.

FLORIDA IS THE KEY TO THE 2012 ELECTION

FLORIDA WILL DECIDE THE 2012 ELECTION

Matthew Falconer, Florida Political Press 8.21.11

[<http://www.floridapoliticalpress.com/2011/08/21/election-2012-and-the-swing-states/>]

Many Democrats feel Obama is a lock to win reelection. History has shown most incumbent presidents win reelection. The economy and the 2010 election suggest a Republican victory. But the presidential election of 2012 will come down to “swing states.” It is a numbers game. The winner of the United States presidency needs 270 “electoral votes.” The number of votes each state receives is based on population. Because of the large populations in coastal cities the Democrats have a “base” of approximately 215 electoral votes. In that group are Wisconsin and Minnesota that can go Republican. The Republicans have a “base” of 155 electoral votes. This means they need to win most of the swing states to take back the White House. These swing states include; Florida (29), Ohio (18), Pennsylvania (20), Iowa (6), Virginia (13), North Carolina (15), Georgia (16), Oregon (7), Nevada (6), Arizona (11), New Mexico (5) and Colorado (9). This group represents 155 electoral votes. Obama needs just 55 and the Republicans need 115. For the sake of this analysis let’s assume the parties split Pennsylvania and Ohio, and Virginia and North Carolina. Nevada and Colorado lean left so these four victories give the Democrats 50 electoral votes. We know anything can happen because Reagan won 49 states. With the economy on the brink and “hope” is becoming “despair” the Democrat base is in jeopardy. But given the electoral math it is difficult to see the Republicans winning back the White House without a victory in Florida. The biggest swing state is the biggest prize in 2012 and will decide the fate of our nation.

THE I-4 CORRIDOR IS THE KEY TO WINNING FLORIDA

CENTRAL FLORIDA IS THE KEY TO PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

William Gibson, Orlando Sun Sentinel, August 19, 2009

[http://weblogs.sun-sentinel.com/news/politics/dcblog/florida_democrats/]

Vice President Joe Biden talked up economic-recovery efforts in Central Florida today while helping raise money for a couple of congressional freshmen. According to a White House reporters' pool report, Biden touted Central Florida as the "fulcrum" of political power not only in Florida but in presidential politics. "How goes Central Florida, so goes the country," he said

THE I-4 CORRIDOR ACROSS CENTRAL FLORIDA IS THE KEY TO WINNING FLORIDA

Fox News Radio November 22, 2011

[<http://m.radio.foxnews.com/2011/11/22/aehq-florida-highway-of-voters/>]

It's in the largest swing state in Presidential elections, and it may be the most important road in U.S. politics. It's the I-4 highway across central Florida, from Tampa to Daytona Beach. 132 miles of all kinds of voters; old, young, rural, urban, but above all, independent voters who tend to vote for winners. And, the I-4 corridor helps determine which way Florida votes as a whole in those Presidential elections.

THE I-4 CORRIDOR IS THE KEY TO WINNING FLORIDA

THE I-4 CORRIDOR IS THE CENTER OF FLORIDA – ABOUT HALF OF ALL VOTES IN THE STATE

Steve Schale, Florida-based political strategist, Political Director, Florida Justice Association, January 23, 2010

[<http://www.stevenschale.com/blog/2010/1/23/welcome-back-mr-president.html>]

So if Florida is the epicenter of Presidential politics, what is the epicenter of Florida? Simple: Tampa, the place where the President will pay a visit on Thursday. According to the Division of Elections, since 1948, the winner of Hillsborough County has won Florida all but one time (1960---that year, it voted for Kennedy, but Nixon won the state). And since 1992 (the point where POTUS elections in FL became reliably competitive), the Tampa media market as a whole has selected the winner. Certainly in 2008, the importance of the market wasn't lost on either the Obama or McCain campaigns. We stuck our campaign state headquarters right smack in the heart of the market and made St. Petersburg the first public Florida stop of then Senator Obama's general election effort. In fact, McCain and Obama both made four visits (and even more 'stops') to the market between August and Election Day, and sent their ticket-mate's there three times each. So what is it about this market? First, in terms of vote share, no market is bigger in Florida. Nearly a quarter of all votes cast in a Presidential election will come from the Tampa market. When you add the 20% that comes from the Orlando market, the importance of the I-4 corridor becomes obvious.

THE I-4 CORRIDOR IS THE HOLY GRAIL OF FLORIDA POLITICS

The Politikal Blog July 21, 2009

[<http://mypolitikal.com/2009/07/21/florida-part-3/>]

If there is a holy grail of Florida politics, it is winning the I-4 corridor. This refers to the Interstate 4 highway, which begins in Tampa Bay, travels through Orlando, and ends in Daytona Beach. Quite a lot of people live in the I-4 corridor. It's far more populated than northern Florida (and northern Florida itself is relatively dense compared to other parts of the South). While parts of south Florida are far more people-heavy, as an aggregate central Florida has a slightly greater population. The I-4 corridor can be compared to a gigantic suburb, with an unusually high number of retirees. Granted, there are cities, but they are more alike to Phoenix (which is really just a big suburb with skyscrapers) than New York. The I-4 corridor is often considered to be the "swing" region of Florida. The metropolitan areas that lie inside it are the heart of central Florida, and they have enormous importance. The percentage by which a politician wins the I-4 corridor often mirrors his overall performance in the state.

THE I-4 CORRIDOR IS THE KEY TO WINNING FLORIDA

THE I-4 CORRIDOR IS THE SWING REGION IN THE SWING STATE

Peter Bell, National Journal, September 13, 2011

[<http://www.nationaljournal.com/florida-s-i-4-corridor-20110912>]

The I-4 corridor is among this battleground state's most swing regions. A conservative stronghold in 1988, it shifted far enough to the left in 1996 that it supported President Clinton. By 2000, it split its vote between Al Gore and George W. Bush in 2000. Bush increased his margin there in 2004, winning 54 percent the vote in the region. Florida's importance to the presidential election hardly needs explaining: It is the most famous of all presidential battlegrounds after a contentious, protracted recount there decided the fate of the 2000 campaign. Bush won the state again in 2004, but Barack Obama captured it with relative ease four years later. As the president's approval ratings dip, the Sunshine State will re-emerge as a pivotal battleground in 2012. Dividing Florida's more conservative north from its Democratic-leaning south, the I-4 corridor has become a pivotal region in both general and primary elections. Republican voter registration growth there leads the state, making central Florida a magnet for GOP presidential hopefuls.

FLORIDA IS A SPLIT STATE, WITH THE I-4 CORRIDOR THE BATTLEGROUND

The Florida News Journal October 10, 2011

[<http://www.thefloridanewsjournal.com/2011/10/10/mel-martinez-endorses-mitt-romney-republican-nomination-presidential-elections-helps-flor>]

Only three other states have more electoral votes which makes Florida a must win for any candidate. As usual, the "I-4 Corridor" is a battle ground for democratic and republic candidates alike, because it is a swing vote area filled with a large amount of independent voters. Tampa and Orlando have already played a large role in the 2012 race, with most candidates having already made several appearances in Orlando, and the Republican National Convention being held in Tampa in 2012. Without the I-4 Corridor, Florida tends to vote roughly half Republican and half Democrat.

THE I-4 CORRIDOR IS THE KEY TO WINNING FLORIDA

THE I-4 CORRIDOR IS KEY TO WINNING FLORIDA

The Washington Times October 3, 2011

[<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/oct/3/interstate-4-corridor-drives-florida-politics/>]

“South Florida tends to trend more to the left, north Florida tends to trend more to the right and the battleground is in the I-4 corridor,” Mr. Cannon said. “It has sort of a great mixture of north and south, urban and rural, tourism, agriculture and high tech. It is sort of the core of winning Florida, and I think Florida is an indispensable part of winning the White House.”

NASA IS THE KEY ISSUE IN THE I-4 CORRIDOR

NASA JOBS LOSS KEY ISSUE IN SWING STATE FLORIDA

Sarah Tung, reporter, Hearst Newspapers, July 21, 2011

[<http://blog.chron.com/txpotomac/2011/07/rick-perry-blasts-obama-for-nasa-cuts-forcing-americans-to-hitchhike-in-space/>]

An era of human space exploration has come to its end — and a new frontier in presidential politics has dawned. As Americans waved goodbye to NASA's shuttle program on Thursday, Texas Gov. Rick Perry blasted President Barack Obama for shutting down the nation's "legacy of leadership" — a move he claims will leave "American astronauts with no alternative but to hitchhike in space." (and) The issue of NASA job cuts is resonant in the three hardest-hit states: Florida, Texas and Alabama. But while Texas and Alabama are all-but-certain to vote Republican in 2012, Florida is a key swing state. Perry's savage critique of Obama's vision for NASA could serve two political purposes: Reinforcing a popular position at home and creating problems for the president with Florida voters.

SPACE PROGRAM IS A KEY ISSUE IN CENTRAL FLORIDA WHICH IS KEY TO THE STATE

Washington Post 3.10.10

[<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/09/AR2010030902594.html?hpid=moreheadlines%29>]

"They made a mistake when they rolled out their space program, because they gave the perception that they had killed the manned space program," said Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), who disagrees with that perception but wants the Obama plan modified. Nelson said the president should declare during the Florida conference that NASA's goal is to send humans to Mars. Nelson noted that the Interstate 4 corridor through Central Florida is critical for national candidates. "I think it has a lot of repercussions for the president. If a national candidate does not carry the I-4 corridor, they don't win Florida," Nelson said.

NASA IS THE KEY ISSUE IN THE I-4 CORRIDOR

THE BIGGEST POLITICAL ISSUE IN THE I-4 CORRIDOR IS NASA JOBS

Shannon Butler, WOFL TV, Orlando, September 22, 2011

[<http://www.foxnews.com/on-air/special-report/2011/09/22/what-kind-presidential-candidate-do-floridians-want>]

I (think the economy drives the day here in Florida). I think jobs, at least when you talk about the I-4 corridor is really, really important here because of the Space Coast. We lost all those jobs out at NASA and I think there are a lot of people out of work here, they want to go back to work.

JOBS ARE THE KEY ISSUE IN FLORIDA

NEW POLLING SHOWS THAT JOBS ARE THE KEY ISSUE IN FLORIDA

Quinnipiac Poll November 10, 2011

[<http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x2882.xml?ReleaseID=1671>]

Florida voters disapprove 52 - 41 percent of the job Obama is doing and say 51 - 43 percent that he does not deserve reelection. The economy is the most important issue in the 2012 presidential election, 55 percent of Florida voters say. Romney would do a better job on the economy, voters say 49 - 39 percent.

JOBS ARE THE KEY ISSUE AGAINST OBAMA IN FLORIDA

Niall Stanage, The Hill, June 20, 2011

[<http://thehill.com/homenews/news/167239-a-storm-brews-in-florida-ahead-of-2012-election>]

Florida's unemployment rate is 10.6 percent. This figure, significantly above the national average, forms the keystone of the GOP's argument to eject Obama. "President Obama has had over two years [in office] and the economy is continuing to shrink," said Trey Stapleton, the Florida Republican Party's communications director. "We've just had a lot of rhetoric on this issue."

OBAMA LOSING I-4 NOW BECAUSE OF SPACE POLICY

OBAMA'S POLICIES HAVE COST HIM HIS POLITICAL LEAD FROM 2008

Carol Lee, Politico.com, October 29, 2010

[<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1010/44406.html>]

The president is responsible for stoking some of the discontent himself. His proposal to open Florida's waters to offshore oil drilling was met with swift criticism from Democrats and Republicans in the state. The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico further corroded Obama's already-declining approval rating, leading statewide Democrats such as Sink and Nelson to criticize the White House for its handling of the spill. The president's proposed cuts to the NASA program at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral came at the worst time, prompting an outcry from Floridians who were already bleeding jobs along the Space Coast. The change in Democratic fortunes has much to do with how Obama won Florida. Independent voters, who have defected in droves, put him over the top, and he benefited from the energy of first-time voters who've yet to prove their political interest beyond 2008. "You had an artificially inflated Democratic surge in 2008 buoyed by Barack Obama's appeal and antipathy with the Bush administration," said Daniel Smith, a political science professor at the University of Florida, noting that many of the Democrats who supported Obama in Florida, like elsewhere, were first-time registrants. "They're not strong Democrats who are going to fight for the Democratic Party and its principles," Smith said. "And they've turned and soured on Barack Obama and so that's leveled the playing field."

OBAMA'S CURRENT SPACE POLICY WILL HURT HIM IN THE I-4 CORRIDOR

Christian Adams, The Free Republic, July 18, 2011

[<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2751125/posts>]

Obama's termination of NASA's manned space capabilities may carry political consequences. In 2012, thousands of unemployed aerospace workers along Florida's Space Coast and I-4 corridor are unlikely to forget who aborted the program.

OBAMA LOSING I-4 NOW BECAUSE OF SPACE POLICY

THE SPACE PROGRAM IS A KEY POLITICAL SYMBOL IN FLORIDA – AND OBAMA IS CURRENTLY IN TROUBLE THERE ON THAT ISSUE

Keith Lang, The Hill 4.29.11

[<http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/tsa/158425-obamas-visit-to-cape-canaveral-highlights-floridas-importance>]

President Obama's decision to visit Cape Canaveral on Friday even after NASA postponed the space shuttle launch highlights the need for the president to mend fences in a state stung by proposed cuts to the space program. Florida is a swing state with a high employment rate that strongly identifies with the soon-to-be ending space shuttle program, and Obama has come under attack from Florida Republicans on the issue. "Short of drinking orange juice while walking on our state's beautiful beaches wearing a Mickey Mouse hat, there are few things more associated with the state" than the space program, a Florida Democratic strategist told The Hill.

OBAMA'S SPACE PROGRAM DECISIONS COULD SWING THE ELECTION IN FLORIDA

Keith Lang, The Hill 4.29.11

[<http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/tsa/158425-obamas-visit-to-cape-canaveral-highlights-floridas-importance>]

Cardenas estimated that 7,500 NASA employees who make an average of \$75,000 per year would lose their jobs when the space shuttle program concludes after the final scheduled flight June 28. Those people might choose the Republican nominee next year over Obama, Cardenas said. "Most of us see this as a very close race," he said. "If it costs (Obama) 10, 15 or 20,000 votes, that's a lot of votes in a state that's going to have as close election as we're going to have." Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla) sharply criticized Obama this week, writing that Obama's visit would not bring back jobs that will be lost when the shuttle program ends. "While it is an opportunity to celebrate Endeavour's history and the brave people who have made it a proud one, it is also a bittersweet occasion," Rubio said in an op-ed in the Orlando Sentinel of Obama's planned visit. "The president's space policy is jeopardizing America's longstanding commitment to manned space exploration. This has serious consequences for Florida."

2008 ELECTION STRATEGIES PROVE THE DA

2008 ELECTION STRATEGIES PROVE THAT CANDIDATES THOUGHT SPACE POLICY CAN SWING THE I-4 CORRIDOR AND THE ELECTION

Jeff Foust, editor and publisher, The Space Review, November 10, 2008

[<http://www.thespacereview.com/article/1249/1>]

For much of the 2008 presidential campaign, space got an unusual degree of attention from the candidates. Normally a niche issue that gets virtually no attention from candidates, space policy warranted a number of statements from both Democrats and Republicans alike, culminating in August in the release of detailed statements by the campaigns of John McCain and Barack Obama on how they would deal with space if elected. While still overshadowed by foreign policy, the economy, and other major issues, space got far more attention in 2008 than in many previous presidential campaigns. Part of that attention, no doubt, was because of the transition NASA is facing as it completes the International Space Station, winds down the Space Shuttle program, and focuses on new vehicles and a planned return to the Moon. Electoral politics, though, also played a role: the “Space Coast” region of Florida that includes Cape Canaveral and NASA’s Kennedy Space Center lies on the eastern end of Florida’s “I-4 corridor”, named after the highway that runs across central Florida from Daytona Beach to Tampa. Political experts deemed winning that region of the state critical to carrying the entire state and its 27 electoral votes, one-tenth of the total needed to win the presidency. Paying attention to key issues affecting voters in that area—which meant, for those on the Space Coast, the future of NASA—was thus critical to the campaigns.

AT: RUBIO VICE PRESIDENCY

RUBIO WON'T HELP EVEN IN FLORIDA – TOO MUCH BAGGAGE

William March, Tampa Tribune October 22, 2011

[election2010.illumina.org/latest-news/appeal-of-rubio-on-ticket-not-clear]

But some political experts, and not just Democrats, raise questions about how much Rubio would help the GOP 2012 ticket. Most agree his charisma would energize a ticket that could be plagued by lack of fervor and that he would appeal to Hispanics. But Rubio's own electoral record and job approval ratings don't suggest he could single-handedly swing Florida and create a national GOP Hispanic win. And drawn rightward by the tea party, Rubio has taken stances on some immigration-related issues that don't please some of his own Hispanic constituents. His appeal may have taken a hit this week with revelations that Rubio has not been completely accurate in his frequent, dramatic descriptions of his family's history as exiles from Castro's Cuba. His parents left Cuba before Castro took power.

RUBIO IS NOT A SILVER BULLET IN FLORIDA – HIS POPULARITY IS LIMITED

William March, Tampa Tribune October 22, 2011

[election2010.illumina.org/latest-news/appeal-of-rubio-on-ticket-not-clear]

Rubio unquestionably is popular in Florida, particularly among Republicans, but his stature isn't incontestable. He won election to the U.S. Senate in 2010 with less than a majority of the vote — no-party candidate Charlie Crist and Democrat Kendrick Meek together got 50 percent to Rubio's 49 percent. A recent Sunshine State News poll showed him with 38 percent favorable and 34 percent unfavorable views among Florida voters. A Public Policy Polling survey showed him with 44 percent job approval and 39 percent disapproval, up from 31 percent in March. In that poll, 30 percent of respondents said they would be more likely to vote for a ticket with Rubio, but 34 percent said it would make no difference and 36 percent said they'd be less likely.

AT: RUBIO VICE PRESIDENCY

THE REPUBLICAN NOMINEE FOR PRESIDENT WILL MATTER MORE THAN RUBIO AS VICE PRESIDENT

William March, Tampa Tribune October 22, 2011

[election2010.illumina.org/latest-news/appeal-of-rubio-on-ticket-not-clear]

“What’s important to Hispanic voters is who the Republican Party nominates for president,” said Emilio Perez of Orlando, former president of the Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida. “Yes, Rubio will help with Latino outreach — but if the nominee is an extremist, somebody no one likes, at the end of the day it might hurt Rubio” rather than helping the presidential nominee, said Perez, who, like a growing number of Central Florida Puerto Ricans, describes himself as a no-party swing voter.

RUBIO WON’T AGREE TO BE VICE PRESIDENT

William March, Tampa Tribune October 22, 2011

[election2010.illumina.org/latest-news/appeal-of-rubio-on-ticket-not-clear]

The GOP obsession with Rubio as a vice presidential candidate persists despite his repeated insistence that he doesn’t want the job, using phrases like “under no circumstances.” “I’m not going to be the vice presidential nominee,” he said in an Oct. 5 interview. If he’s asked to be on the ticket, he said, “The answer is going to probably be no” — then quickly rephrased, “The answer is going to be no.”

2NC IMPACT: CASE TURN
OBAMA RE-ELECTION TURNS THE SOLVENCY OF THE PLAN

OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY MEANS REDUCED AMERICAN INFLUENCE OVER INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Chris Dueck, Assoc Professor, International Affairs, George Mason Univ, Oct 1, 2011

[<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/94006>]

The problem with Obama's strategy of accommodation therefore goes beyond specific case-by-case frustrations. The problem is more fundamental and inherent to his approach. As a general rule, foreign governments or transnational actors do not feel obliged to alter their basic policy preferences or to make unwanted concessions of their own simply because an American president is accommodating or charismatic. This is not how international politics works. If the interests, goals, and priorities of other national governments align with those of the United States on specific issues, then those governments will cooperate with Washington on those issues. If not, they won't. Either way, whether we like it or not, the goals and priorities of foreign governments are defined by those governments, and not by the president of the United States. Any American president can alter the costs and benefits for other countries to cooperate with the U.S. on specific matters, by offering specific incentives or disincentives, but he cannot literally redefine how other governments view their own vital interests, and it is delusional to think that he can. If Washington offers a particular policy concession to another government in exchange for some concrete, reciprocal concession of real interest to the U.S., then that is one thing. Such negotiations are at the heart of international diplomacy. But to make the concession beforehand — unilaterally, as it were — or to offer it up broadly to the entire planet as a whole in the hopes of unspecified reciprocity from particular countries, is to ignore the normal workings of international relations.

2NC IMPACT: CASE TURN
OBAMA RE-ELECTION TURNS THE SOLVENCY OF THE PLAN

OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY FAILS AT ACHIEVING HIS GOALS

Chris Dueck, Assoc Professor, International Affairs, George Mason Univ, Oct 1, 2011

[<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/94006>]

In one case after another, conciliatory or accommodating gestures and concessions by the Obama administration toward various international targets have not resulted in much concrete reciprocity. This is not because the strategy of accommodation needs more time. It is because the strategy is misconceived to begin with. Broad processes of international cooperation and accommodation on issues such as proliferation, climate change, and counterterrorism cannot be kick-started by American concession if other important international players do not see it as being in their own interest. Preliminary American concessions on economic sanctions do not impress the Cuban government. U.S. diplomatic overtures do not impress the Iranian government. American proposals on climate change do not impress the Chinese government. Calls for nuclear abolition do not impress the North Korean government. Proposed revision of U.S. detention and interrogation practices does not impress Islamist radicals.

OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY WEAKENS THE PURSUIT OF AMERICAN OBJECTIVES

Tony Blankley, Visiting Senior Fellow, Heritage Foundation, September 28, 2011

[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2011/09/28/presidents_foreign_policy_failures_increase_111498.html]

But the palpable, increasingly manifest weakening of the American position -- from Russia to China/Taiwan to Turkey to Saudi Arabia to the Middle East peace process to Pakistan and Afghanistan to Mexico and Latin America -- needs only a spark to reveal to the American public that in the last three years, we have experienced the most sustained weakening of our international interests, values and positions since the attack on Pearl Harbor.

2NC IMPACT: CASE TURN
OBAMA RE-ELECTION TURNS THE SOLVENCY OF THE PLAN

**OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY OF ACCOMMODATION HAS BEEN
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE**

Chris Dueck, Assoc Professor, International Affairs, George Mason Univ, Oct 1, 2011

[<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/94006>]

It has now been almost three years since Obama entered the White House — plenty of time to assess the effectiveness of his foreign policy strategy. And it must be said that in important respects his strategy of accommodation has failed. Obama's personal leadership has not really altered the basic dynamics of leading international or transnational conflicts and disputes. Nor have American outreach, accommodation, and diplomatic concessions triggered significantly greater international cooperation on issues such as nonproliferation. To some extent, of course, Obama has been constrained in the implementation of his strategy by domestic political criticism or pushback on many of these issues. Yet the failures appear to involve international pushback as well.

IMPACT: OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY IS WEAKNESS

OVERALL, OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY IS ONE OF WEAKNESS

Chris Dueck, Assoc Professor, International Affairs, George Mason Univ, Oct 1, 2011

[<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/94006>]

The domestic political arguments for international retrenchment are matched and supplemented, in Obama's mind, by a genuine philosophical case for a more accommodating American stance abroad. By all appearances Obama sincerely believes, and has certainly said repeatedly over the years, that the United States should be more accommodating toward potential adversaries and rivals overseas — accommodating of their interests, their perspectives, and their wishes. The reason is that through accommodation, these potential rivals can be turned, if not into friends, then at least into something other than adversaries. At least this is what Obama believes. He can certainly be cold-blooded when making short-term or tactical calculations in relation to clear, existing U.S. enemies. After all, this is a president who hunted down Osama Bin Laden, and has escalated the use of unmanned drone strikes — basically targeted killings — against suspected terrorists in Pakistan. So there are clearly certain international or transnational actors who in Obama's view are irreconcilable to core American values and interests. But this category is very small, and it never seems to rise to the level of state actors. The assumption appears to be that virtually any nation-state can be successfully engaged, regardless of regime type. Even the Taliban, we are told by numerous administration officials, is chock full of people who can be peeled off through diplomatic negotiation and accommodated to American designs if only we have the courage to try.

IMPACT: OBAMA’S FOREIGN POLICY IS WEAKNESS

OBAMA HAS AN ACCOMODATIONIST FOREIGN POLICY

Chris Dueck, Assoc Professor, International Affairs, George Mason Univ, Oct 1, 2011

[<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/94006>]

What this means is that in the case of partially adversarial or even hostile relationships with other countries, the United States under Obama reaches out and makes some initial concession or accommodation, in the expectation of reciprocal concession. In such cases, “American leadership” or “leading by example” means essentially taking the lead in making concessions. Similarly, in the case of friendly or allied relationships, the United States under Obama frequently proposes multiple new regimens or collective concessions — sometimes on the part of democratic allies, sometimes on the part of the U.S. — in order to catalyze broad processes of international accommodation on specific issue areas such as arms control, counterterrorism, or climate change. Either way, the expectation is one of progressive agreement, reduced conflict, and increased cooperation internationally, based upon mutual accommodation, and sparked by American example. And insofar as the president views America’s world power as being in relative and perhaps inevitable decline, that only reinforces the argument for an accommodationist approach overseas.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S WON'T CHANGE FOREIGN POLICY IN SECOND TERM

PRESIDENTS ARE STUBBORN ABOUT THEIR FOREIGN POLICIES

Chris Dueck, Assoc Professor, International Affairs, George Mason Univ, Oct 1, 2011

[<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/94006>]

Admittedly, there is little chance that Obama will concede any of this. One of the things we know from historical example is that presidents tend to keep operating on their own inbuilt foreign policy assumptions, even as contrary evidence piles up. It usually takes either a dramatic external shock, or a new administration altogether, to bring about a major reevaluation of existing assumptions. Curiously, this resistance to contrary evidence in foreign policy appears to be even truer of highly educated, self-confident, and intelligent people with core ideological convictions — a description that certainly fits President Obama. Obama is malleable on tactics, and he takes great care to project an aura of sensible calm, but in truth he is a conviction president powered by certain core ideological beliefs and vaulting policy ambitions. His characteristic response when these core beliefs and ambitions are truly tested by opponents or events is not to bend, but to bristle. He is therefore particularly unlikely to admit or even perceive that a foreign policy strategy based upon faulty assumptions of international accommodation is failing or has failed.

GENERAL AFF. ANSWERS

OBAMA'S SECOND TERM AGENDA WOULD BE BLOCKED BY CONSERVATIVES

Daniel Larison, The American Conservative November 15, 2011

[<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/2011/11/15/skewed-foreign-policy/>]

There isn't much reason to expect that Obama's second term would be substantively better on foreign policy than his first term was. If he was "checkmated" in the first term, he will continue to be stymied in the second.

OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM ROMNEY'S

Daniel Larison, The American Conservative November 15, 2011

[<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/2011/11/15/skewed-foreign-policy/>]

Even if neoconservative critics cannot or will not acknowledge it, administration policy towards Iran has become increasingly confrontational, and almost everything that distinguished Obama on foreign policy has disappeared. Unfortunately, as I have been saying for some time now, the substantive differences between Romney and Obama on many foreign policy issues are few, and their respective Iran policies are virtually indistinguishable.

GENERAL AFF. ANSWERS

ITS TOO EARLY TO FOLLOW CURRENT POLLS AND CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ABOUT 2012

Mark Blumenthal, Huffington Post September 30, 2011

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/30/obama-approval-rating-polls-prediction-2012_n_989244.html]

President Barack Obama's job approval ratings have hit new lows over the past month, yet he continues to hold slight leads over Republican candidates in head-to-head polling. Of the two, the approval ratings are a slightly better measure of Obama's re-election prospects, signaling a very tough contest ahead. But history tells us to be wary of both as predictors of the 2012 outcome. It is still very early.

PREDICTIVE POWER OF POLLS THIS FAR FROM THE ELECTION IS ZERO

Mark Blumenthal, Huffington Post September 30, 2011

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/30/obama-approval-rating-polls-prediction-2012_n_989244.html]

Political scientists Chris Wlezien and Bob Erikson have examined the issue for "The Timeline of Presidential Election Campaigns," their forthcoming book on election forecasting, which is a subject they've studied for decades. A chart from their book (reproduced below with permission) shows that the predictive power of head-to-head "horse-race" polls increases gradually over the last 300 days of the campaign. These kinds of polls are highly predictive of the outcome in the final month before the election, but at 300 days out their predictive power is virtually zero.

GENERAL AFF. ANSWERS

HEAD-TO-HEAD POLLING THIS FAR BEFORE THE ELECTION IS EXTREMELY UNRELIABLE

Nate Silver, New York Times Political Blog, November 6, 2011

[<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/06/magazine/nate-silver-handicaps-2012-election.html?pagewanted=all>]

At some point early next summer, head-to-head polls like these will become the most important predictors of the November result. But this far out they can be misleading and inaccurate. In a survey conducted in late September 1983, Ronald Reagan actually trailed Walter Mondale by 2 points, and in October 1991, George H. W. Bush led Bill Clinton 55 to 20.

GENERAL FLORIDA ANSWERS

PREDICTIONS ABOUT FLORIDA ARE VOLATILE

Niall Stanage, The Hill, June 20, 2011

[<http://thehill.com/homenews/news/167239-a-storm-brews-in-florida-ahead-of-2012-election>]

And, in any case, every prediction about Florida is liable to be undermined by the peculiar volatility of the current political moment. Susan MacManus, a political science professor at the University of South Florida, argued that the nebulous voter discontent seen across the nation is especially pronounced there. It is being buttressed by several different factors, she said, from the shock engendered by Florida's economic malaise to Rick Scott's performance to "a distrust of government generally." How this sense of ennui shakes out, she predicted, will be central to the 2012 result. Some groups could go to the polls in greater numbers than usual. Others may collectively shrug their shoulders and stay home.

GENERAL AFF. ANSWERS

OBAMA LOOKING STRONGER AGAINST SPECIFIC REPUBLICANS

Newsmax 11.24.11

[<http://www.newsmax.com/InsideCover/obama-romney-poll-gingrich/2011/11/24/id/419068>]

President Obama has opened up a six-point lead over former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney in a hypothetical Election 2012 matchup. This is the widest gap between the two men since mid-August. The latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey finds Obama earning 44 percent support from Likely Voters, while Romney receives 38 percent of the vote. Ten percent (10 percent) prefers some other candidate, and another eight percent (8 percent) are not sure. Romney and the president have been neck-and-neck for nearly two months, separated by two points or less in a series of surveys. Two-weeks ago, Obama earned 43 percent of the vote to Romney's 42 percent. In regular surveys since February, support for Romney has remained in the narrow range of 38 percent to 44 percent. In that same period, the president has earned 40 percent to 46 percent of the vote. The president trails Romney by a slight margin among voters in Florida and Missouri. A generic Republican candidate runs slightly ahead of President Obama nationally but the president leads all named opponents.

GENERAL AFF. ANSWERS

THE 2010 MIDTERMS SHOW STRONG MOMENTUM FOR REPUBLICANS

Teixeira and Halperin, Senior Fellows, Center for American Progress, 11.25.11

[<http://www.businessspectator.com.au/bs.nsf/Article/US-presidential-election-Obama-Democrat-Republican-pd20111125-NWUWT?OpenDocument&src=rot>]

As the 2010 election highlights, Republicans continue to hold strong advantages when the voting electorate is older, more conservative, and less diverse than the overall population. Democrats suffered one of the largest electoral defeats on record last year, ceding control of the House of Representatives to the Republican Party after regaining the majority just four years earlier. Republicans gained 63 House seats in the 2010 election, overperforming by about 10 seats what would have been expected on the basis of the popular vote split – approximately 52 per cent Republican to 45 per cent Democratic. The Republican vote was efficiently distributed to produce Republican victories, especially in the Rust Belt states and in contested southern states such as Virginia and Florida. The Republican gain of 63 seats was the best post-World War II seat gain by either party in a midterm election, and only the third time a party gained more than 50 seats since then.

GENERAL AFF. ANSWERS - UNIQUENESS

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS FAVOR OBAMA

Teixeira and Halperin, Senior Fellows, Center for American Progress, 11.25.11

[<http://www.businessspectator.com.au/bs.nsf/Article/US-presidential-election-Obama-Democrat-Republican-pd20111125-NWUWT?OpenDocument&src=rot>]

The shifting demographic composition of the electorate – rising percentages of communities of colour, single and highly educated women, Millennial generation voters, secular voters, and educated whites living in more urbanised states or more urbanised parts of states – clearly favours Democrats and has increased the relative strength of the party in national elections in recent years. In contrast, the Republican Party’s coalition of older, whiter, more rural, and evangelical voters is shrinking and becoming more geographically concentrated and less important to the overall political landscape of the country.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS CONTINUE TO FAVOR OBAMA

Benjy Sarlin, Talking Points Memo November 25, 2011

[<http://2012.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/11/the-road-to-270-team-obama-maps-out-their-victory-plan.php?ref=fpnewsfeed>]

But the demographic trends that buoyed Obama in 2008 — namely, a growing base of Hispanic voters, and an influx of educated professionals into the South — have only gotten stronger. At the liberal Center for American Progress, Ruy Teixeira and John Halperin recently put out a detailed study analyzing Obama’s strengths among the three most distinct major voting groups: minorities, college-educated whites, and whites with lower levels of education. Obama’s strength in the last presidential election was his ability to rack up huge margins and turnout with the first group, split the vote with the second, and keep the third from becoming a total wipeout. And because the share of the electorate in 2012 is likely to include more minority voters and more college educated voters, he has more leeway to underperform with white voters and still win re-election.

GENERAL AFF. ANSWERS - UNIQUENESS

OBAMA HAD A SUBSTANTIAL MARGIN IN 2008

Teixeira and Halperin, Senior Fellows, Center for American Progress, 11.25.11

[<http://www.businessspectator.com.au/bs.nsf/Article/US-presidential-election-Obama-Democrat-Republican-pd20111125-NWUWT?OpenDocument&src=rot>]

These Democratic advantages emerged clearly in the 2008 presidential election. Barack Obama's 53 per cent popular vote represented the largest share any presidential candidate received in 20 years. Obama won 365 electoral votes and he carried all 18 states, plus the District of Columbia, that John Kerry won in 2004 (as did Al Gore in 2000 and Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996), plus nine states that Kerry lost: Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia.

POLLS UNDERESTIMATE OBAMA STRENGTH

OBAMA CHANCES ARE BETTER THAN HIS APPROVAL RATINGS SHOW

Benjy Sarlin, Talking Points Memo November 25, 2011

[<http://2012.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/11/the-road-to-270-team-obama-maps-out-their-victory-plan.php?ref=fpnewsfeed>]

It's also possible that Obama's polling strength is slightly depressed right now. With the election a year out, he's been largely judged in a vacuum against either an ideal version of himself or against a "generic" Republican in voters' minds up to this point. But as Romney looks more and more like a general election nominee, voters seem to be warming to Obama a bit. His approval ratings are slowly ticking back up from their summer lows and there are signs his more populist message is gaining traction. A recent poll of swing states by Purple Strategies showed Obama improving his position into a tie with Romney, even as he still faces dangerously low approval ratings.

OTHER ISSUES IN I-4 CORRIDOR BESIDES NASA

ECONOMIC ISSUES BEYOND SPACE POLICY ARE IMPORTANT TO KEY VOTING GROUPS IN THE I-4 CORRIDOR

Miami Herald October 16, 2011

[<http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/10/16/2457508/many-hispanics-on-fence-about.html>]

Manuel Santiago was out of work when Barack Obama ran for president in 2008 and the promise of a better future lured him to the polls. Today, Santiago delivers part time for Pizza Hut. “It’s not enough. I’m just getting by,” the brawny 40-year-old said on a recent afternoon. This Orlando suburb has rapidly grown in the past decade, mostly due to an influx of Puerto Ricans like Santiago, and it will be one of the most contested areas of Florida in the 2012 election. Some here say the president needs more time. “I’m already at the point where I don’t know if I can give him more time,” Santiago said. Across Florida — indeed, the country — stories like Santiago’s are common. Collectively, they represent a major challenge to Obama, who won two-thirds of the Hispanic vote in 2008 but has seen his standing drop precipitously among this increasingly powerful voter bloc. Obama’s approval rating is 49 percent among Hispanics, down from 60 percent in January and far from its 82 percent peak in May 2009. Nationally, frustration over the president’s failure to enact immigration reform (he blames Republican opposition) has gotten a lot of attention. But the concern that hits all Americans is rocking Hispanics even harder: jobs. The unemployment rate among Latinos is 11.3 percent, more than 2 points higher than the general population. Hispanics have felt the home foreclosure more than non-Hispanic whites, and 2010 census figures revealed that more Latino children are living in poverty — 6.1 million — than children of any other racial or ethnic group.

OTHER ISSUES IN I-4 CORRIDOR BESIDES NASA

HISPANIC VOTERS IN THE I-4 CORRIDOR CARE ABOUT THE ECONOMY & JOBS

Miami Herald October 16, 2011

[<http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/10/16/2457508/many-hispanics-on-fence-about.html>]

Kissimmee and the surrounding area, part of the coveted I-4 corridor of swing voters, is an ideal litmus test. It has exploded since home builders started marketing in Puerto Rico in the 1980s. Immigrants followed from Colombia, Honduras and Venezuela, drawn to plentiful tourism jobs. Today storefronts bear Spanish names, church services are delivered in Spanish and bars are packed for baseball games. Obama worked the area hard in 2008, and support among Puerto Ricans countered traditional backing that Cuban Americans in South Florida have given to Republicans. Obama took 57 percent of Florida's Hispanic vote, a key part of his victory. Like African-Americans eager to elect the first black president, many Hispanics in 2008 said they felt compelled to vote for a fellow minority. Support swung back to Republicans in the 2010 midterm elections, however, and the economy has not gotten better. Finding the enthusiasm gap is as easy as walking into the parking lot of the local Publix Sabor.

PUERTO RICAN VOTERS ARE CONCENTRATED IN THE I-4 CORRIDOR

Niall Stange, The Hill, June 20, 2011

[<http://thehill.com/homenews/news/167239-a-storm-brews-in-florida-ahead-of-2012-election>]

Aside from the traditionally Republican-leaning Cuban-American population, there is also a large and growing Puerto Rican community, which is especially concentrated along the politically vital "I-4 corridor" that stretches across the state's midsection. Obama's visit to Puerto Rico last week was a clear play for that vote. His speech in the capital, San Juan, was the first such presidential address there since John F. Kennedy visited in 1961. "Puerto Ricans are swing voters," said Steve Schale, a Florida Democratic strategist who served as the Obama campaign's state director in 2008. "They are not as Democratic as Mexican voters in Arizona, for example. But they tend to skew our way. And, from what I'm hearing, people are pretty pleased about the trip."

FLORIDA NOT KEY

FLORIDA NOT KEY – OBAMA CAN WIN WITHOUT FLORIDA

Adam C. Smith, Tampa Times Political Editor, October 11, 2011

[<http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/national/the-tricky-2012-math-for-president-barack-obama/1196157>]

There's good news for President Barack Obama as he sweeps into Florida today to raise money in a state where barely four in 10 voters approve of his performance: He can lose Florida's 29 electoral votes and still comfortably win re-election in 2012. Thanks to the expanded political playing field he helped create three years ago, even a long-standing presidential election axiom — whoever wins two out of three between Florida, Pennsylvania and Ohio wins the White House — is out the window. Obama could lose all three of those mega battleground states, 67 electoral votes combined, and still have more than enough to win the required 270. That's because in 2008, Obama overwhelmingly won the electoral vote, 365 to John McCain's 173.

OTHER ISSUES BESIDES JOBS SINK OBAMA

FLORIDA TILTING AGAINST OBAMA ON ISSUES LIKE FORECLOSURES

The Blaze (Tallahassee AP) June 11, 2011

[www.theblaze.com/stories/2012-troubles-ahead-for-obama-in-prized-florida/]

President Barack Obama has problems in Florida that he didn't have when he won the prized state in 2008. The state's economy is worse than elsewhere. Foreclosures are high. Property values are low. As president, Obama could be blamed. Voters' shifting attitudes show the degree to which the atmosphere has changed since his first campaign. Florida Democrats made gains in 2008 with Obama on the top of the ticket, but the GOP won big two years later.

SENIORS WILL SOUNDLY REJECT THE GOP – KEY VOTING GROUP

SENIORS IN FLORIDA WILL REJECT THE GOP OVER MEDICARE

Niall Stange, The Hill, June 20, 2011

[<http://thehill.com/homenews/news/167239-a-storm-brews-in-florida-ahead-of-2012-election>]

Florida's population has a higher proportion of those over the age of 65 than any other state, so the debate over Medicare will be intense. Concern that Obama's healthcare reform law would negatively affect Medicare is widely believed to have fueled Republican gains in the midterm elections. But now Democrats argue with undisguised glee that Rep. Paul Ryan's (R-Wis.) plan to replace the current system with what has been called a voucher program might be a boon to the president's chances — even though only people under the age of 55 would be affected. "By ending Medicare as we know it, Republicans are trying to impose their extreme agenda," said Jotkoff. "Floridians are literally up in arms over the Ryan plan. They flatly reject it."

OBAMA AHEAD IN FLORIDA, REPUBLICAN POSITIONS ON SOCIAL SECURITY IS NOT POPULAR

America Speaks Ink, October 29, 2011

[<http://americaspeaksink.com/2011/10/battleground-states-in-the-2012-presidential-election/>]

An October NBC News/Marist Poll showed Obama at 45 percent, with former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney trailing him by 2 points among potential Republican rivals. The Republican Party is holding its national convention in Tampa next August to try to win voters in Florida, home to large numbers of Hispanic and elderly voters. Florida has a large number of Social Security recipients, with a third of its registered voters 60 or older. The federal retirement program has become a hot topic in recent Republican debates. Some Republican candidates like Texas Governor Rick Perry have come under fire in the state for saying the Social Security program is not financially sustainable in its current form.

RUBIO VICE PRESIDENCY PICK WINS FLORIDA FOR THE GOP

REPUBLICANS WILL PICK SENATOR RUBIO FOR VICE PRESIDENT AND HE WILL DELIVER FLORIDA TO REPUBLICANS

William March, Tampa Tribune October 22, 2011

[election2010.illumina.org/latest-news/appeal-of-rubio-on-ticket-not-clear]

To many Republicans, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio looks like a ticket to a sure win in the 2012 presidential race — as a running mate. Republicans believe Rubio would deliver Florida, reassure tea party activists unsatisfied with the GOP nominee — possibly Mitt Romney — and cut into Democratic dominance of the growing Hispanic vote. “His presence on the ticket would be a nearly unsolvable problem for the Democrats in the 2012 election,” said Florida-based political consultant Rick Wilson. The GOP’s obsession with Rubio may be unprecedented. “I have never before seen a politician be such a consensus candidate for VP so early in the game,” said veteran University of Virginia political analyst Larry Sabato.

POLLS SHOW RUBIO WINS FLORIDA FOR THE GOP

Newsmax November 1, 2011

[<http://www.newsmax.com/InsideCover/rubio-hillary-2012-poll/2011/11/01/id/416507>]

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio changes the landscape in Florida when added to the Republican ticket, according to a Suffolk University/7NEWS (WSVN-Miami) poll of registered voters in Florida. Assuming the selection of Rubio in the vice president spot, the Republican presidential nominee would secure 46 percent to President Barack Obama’s 41 percent, with 2 percent voting for an independent candidate and 12 percent undecided. The poll also showed Mitt Romney (25 percent) running neck-and-neck with Herman Cain (24 percent) among registered Republicans in Florida. “Marco Rubio secures Florida which, along with Ohio, is one of the two most important swing states to win, said David Paleologos, director of the Political Research Center at Boston’s Suffolk University. “He also adds potential strength in states like New Mexico, Texas, California, Arizona, and Nevada, which have high Hispanic populations.”

RUBIO VICE PRESIDENCY PICK WINS FLORIDA FOR THE GOP

STRONG PRESSURES WOULD EXIST TO CHOOSE RUBIO

Brian O'Connor, Red Dog Report, November 2, 2011

[reddogreport.com/2011/11/marco-rubio-on-the-ticket-gives-the-gop-florida/]

Given the high stakes of the next election and his positive effects on Sunshine State polling, there will be considerable pressure on the GOP presidential nominee to choose Marco Rubio as the vice presidential candidate. Especially if that presidential nominee is somebody like Mitt Romney, an establishment Republican candidate looking to shore up his conservative credentials.