

# **POLL REPORT: RACE TO SUCCEED REP. BYRON DONALDS IN FL-19 IS WIDE OPEN**

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June 23, 2026

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Poll conducted June 20-21, 2026, among 350 likely Republican primary voters throughout Florida's 19<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Responses were collected via Text-To-Web. Not commissioned by any candidate or political committee.





## Executive Summary

Florida's 19<sup>th</sup> Congressional District is a breeding ground for highly dynamic Republican primary elections. In the Tea Party-era 2012 election, Byron Donalds' first foray into electoral politics ended in a fifth-place finish as Trey Radel won with just 30% of the vote. Radel's tenure in Congress was short-lived, as a cocaine scandal resulted in his resignation and a speedy special election to replace him. Political outsider Curt Clawson won that special election with 38% of the vote, but spent only one full term in Congress. In 2016, businessman Francis Rooney beat Dan Bongino and local political staple Chauncey Goss with help from a deluge of campaign cash and some self-inflicted wounds by Bongino. Rooney served only two full terms, setting the stage for another contentious primary election in 2020. This time, Donalds emerged victorious from a nasty 10-candidate primary, in which the top four candidates all earned between 18 and 23 percent of the vote.

Six years later, and FL-19 is facing yet another contentious primary election as Donalds vacates his seat to run for Florida Governor. As is to be expected in the unusually wealthy district, self-funders like media executive Jim Schwartzel, former Illinois politician Jim Oberweis, and former New York Rep. Chris Collins have thrown their hats into the ring. They're met by a ragtag field of candidates including, but not limited to, former North Carolina Rep. Madison Cawthorn, former Trump appointee Catalina Lauf, and pardoned January 6<sup>th</sup> protester John Strand. Despite the crowded field filled with all sorts of characters, the race has been much quieter than the unpredictable spectacles Southwest Floridians have become accustomed to. This sense is reflected in our poll results.

No candidate has jumped out to a statistically or practically significant lead. Schwartzel and Oberweis currently lead the pack, just barely breaking into the double digits. No other candidates scored higher than the mid-single digits. 54% of voters are undecided. I'll spare you further details – this race is wide open.

In the gubernatorial race, there are no surprises: supercharged by an endorsement from President Trump, Donalds dominates the Republican primary field in his home district, earning more than 50% of the vote. Lt. Gov. Jay Collins is the clear second-place candidate, earning just over 10% and posting respectable favorability numbers. Provocateur James Fishback scores in the high single digits, while former Florida Speaker of the House Paul Renner is polling near zero. As polling has shown statewide for many months, Donalds is the overwhelming favorite to win the nomination.

In summary, the race for Florida Governor is headed towards a predictable finish, while the race for FL-19 is entirely unpredictable. But with less than two months until Florida's Primary Election Day, expect the FL-19 race to heat up. At this point, it's just local tradition.

- ✓ **Ben Galbraith**  
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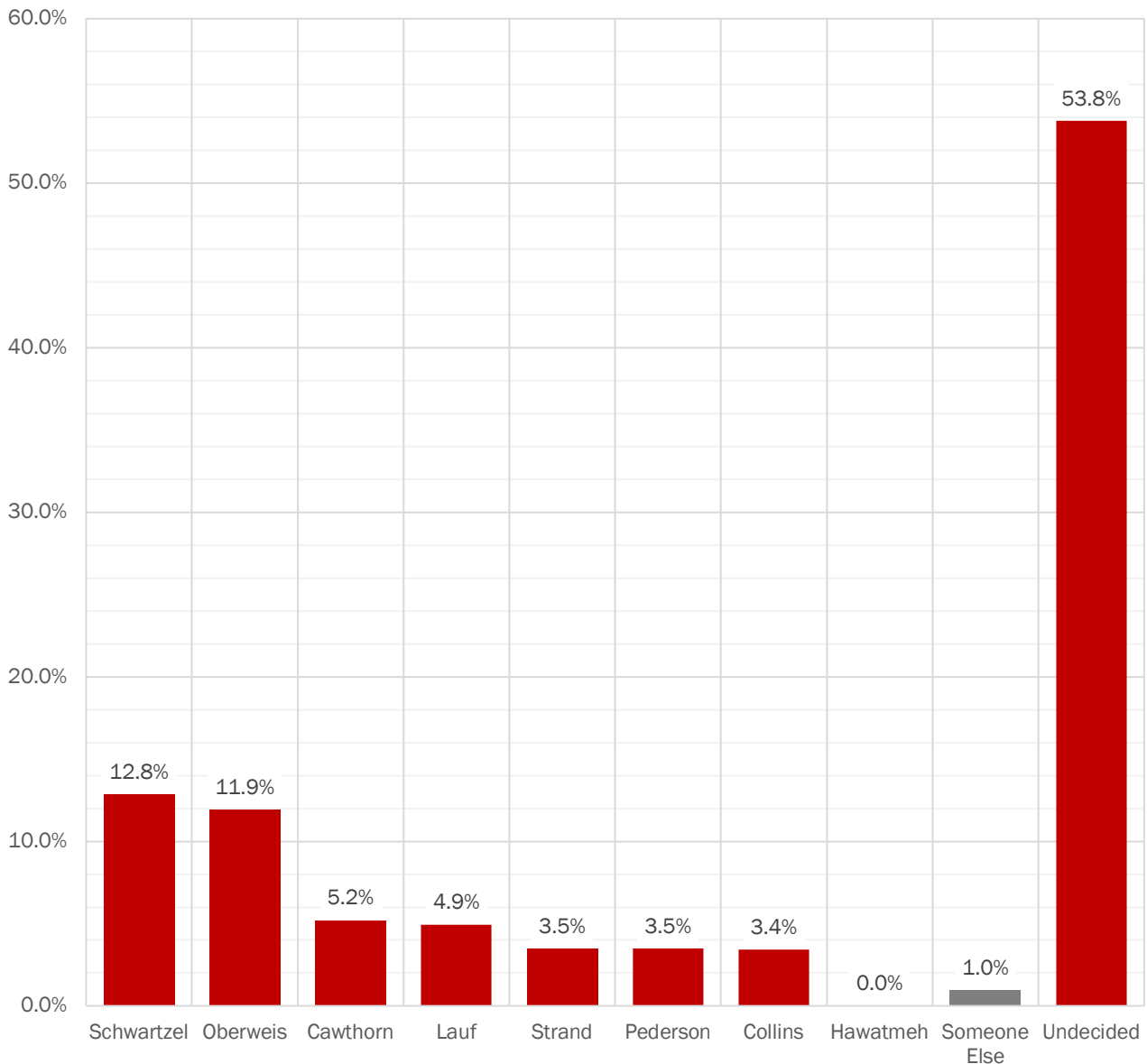


## Congressional Ballot

We asked respondents who they would vote for in the Republican primary election for US House of Representatives in Florida's 19<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, if the election were held today. This section explores the results of this question.

### Overall Congressional Ballot

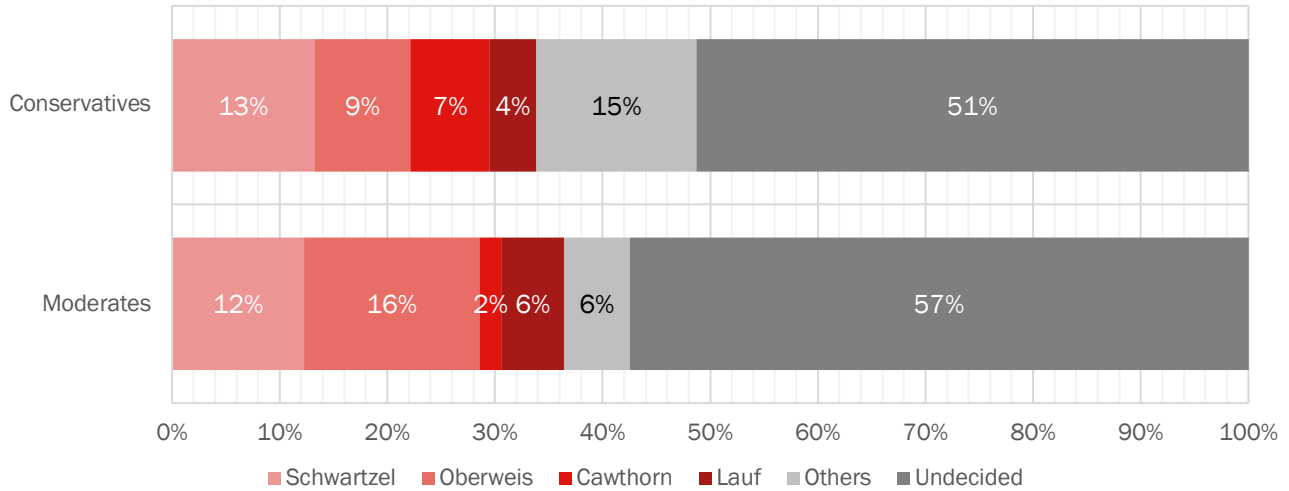
No candidate reaches the teens; seven candidates fall between 3% and 13%. Schwartzel and Oberweis make up the top tier of candidates, as the only two to reach the double digits. Cawthorn and Lauf make up the second tier, while Strand, Pederson, and Collins receive just over 3% of the vote. Hawatmeh was listed as an option but received no votes. The most important takeaway: 54% of voters remain undecided. This race is wide open.





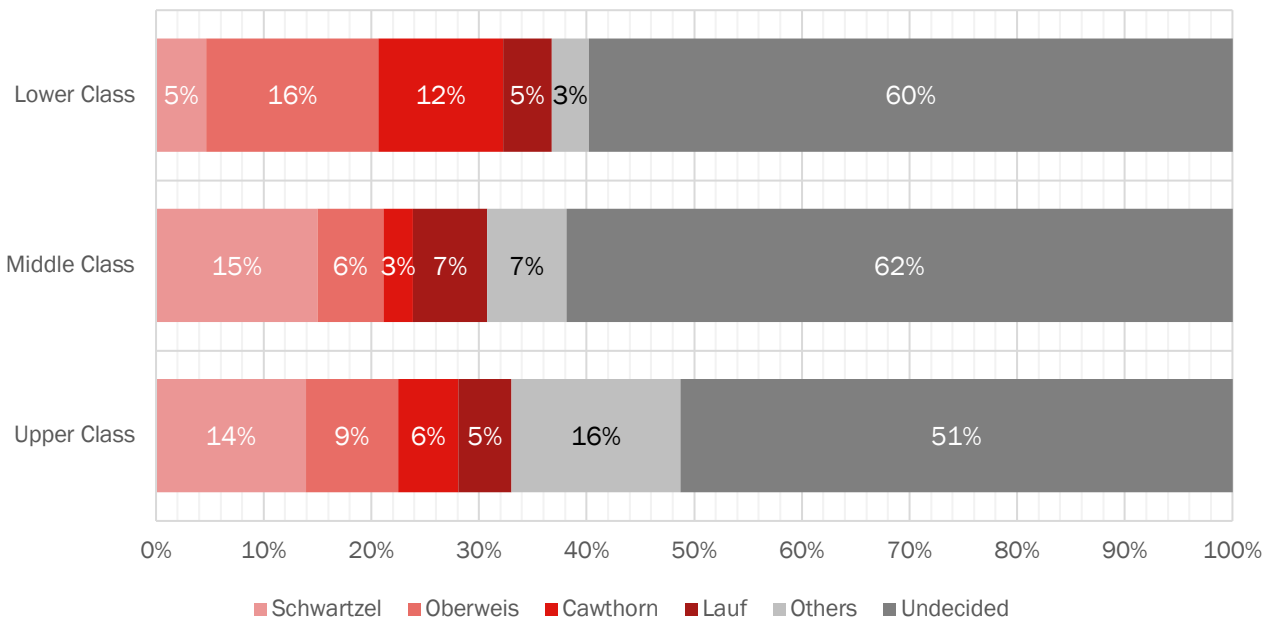
### Congressional Ballot by Party Wing

Conservative voters side with Schwartzel and Oberweis the most, but Cawthorn is a close third, followed by Lauf. Among moderates, Oberweis leads, followed by Schwartzel, Lauf, and Cawthorn, in that order.



### Congressional Ballot by Economic Class

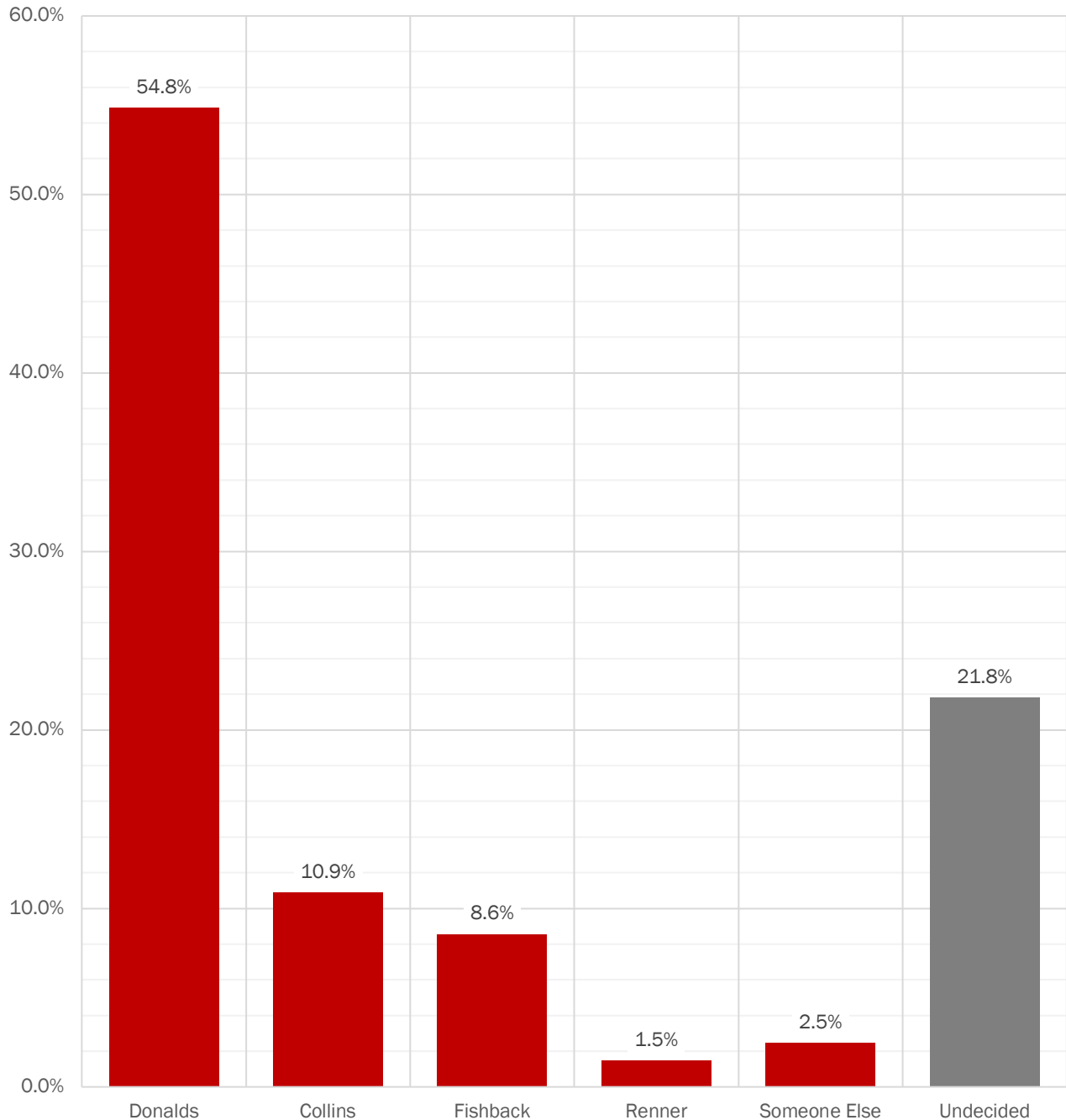
Schwartzel and Oberweis, the current “top-tier” candidates, have a clear class distinction: Oberweis is strong among the lower class yet weaker among the middle and upper classes, while the opposite is true for Schwartzel. Cawthorn is in a clear second place among lower class voters, eclipsing Schwartzel. Lauf benefits from consistency across all three groups, earning support in the mid-single digits among lower, middle, and upper class voters.





## Gubernatorial Ballot

We also asked respondents who they would vote for in the Republican primary election for Governor of Florida, if the election were held today. Unsurprisingly, Donalds dwarfs the field in his home district. Donalds leads the field by 35 points among moderate Republicans and by 50 points among conservatives. Collins is the only other candidate to hit double-digit support, while Fishback sits in the upper single digits and Renner barely registers support. Only about a fifth of FL-19 Republicans remain undecided in the gubernatorial race.



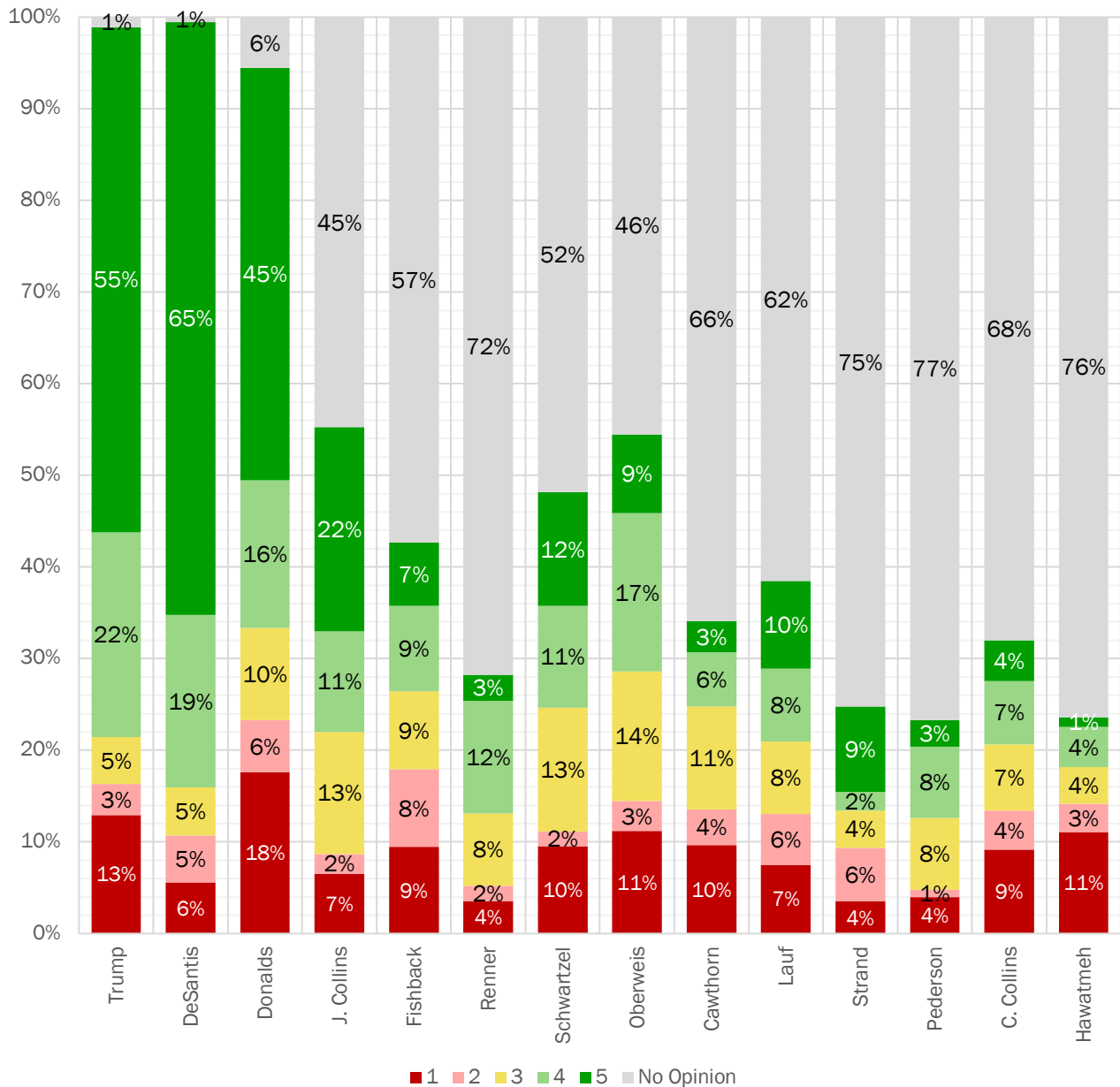


# Favorability

We asked voters to rate all candidates for Congress and Governor, as well as Governor DeSantis and President Trump, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely negative and 5 being extremely positive. Voters could also indicate that they have no opinion of each public figure.

## Overall Favorability

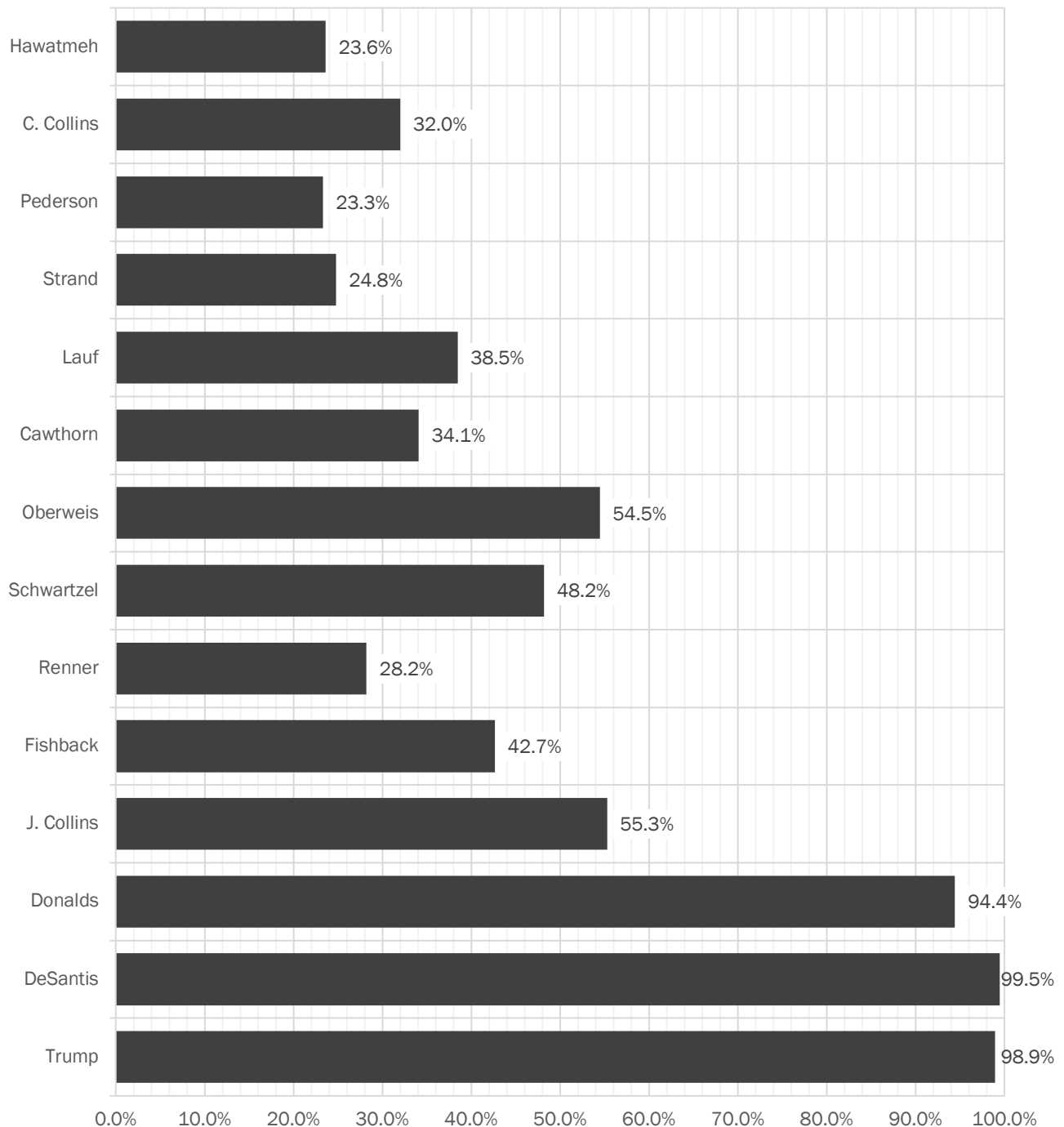
The chart below shows the overall results of these questions. We'll dive deeper into these numbers on the following pages.





### Total Name ID

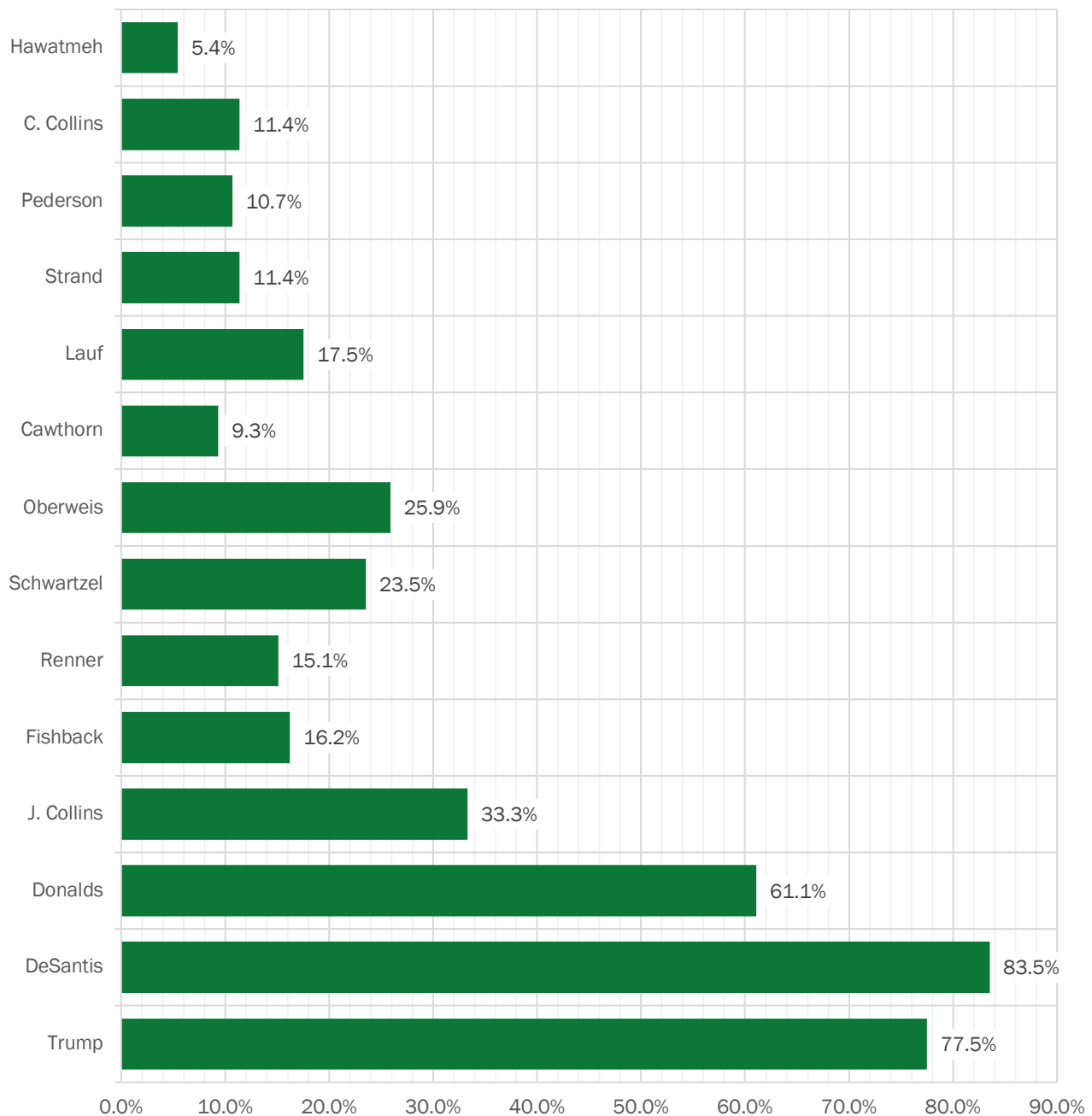
Donalds (94%) is by far the most well-known gubernatorial candidate, with nearly ubiquitous Name ID. Collins (55%) is in a distant second place, followed by Fishback (43%) and Renner (28%). In the congressional race, Oberweis (54%) has the highest Total Name ID, with Schwartzel (48%) trailing closely. Lauf (38%) narrowly outperforms Cawthorn (34%) and Collins (32%). The other surveyed candidates each score less than 25%.





### Positive Name ID

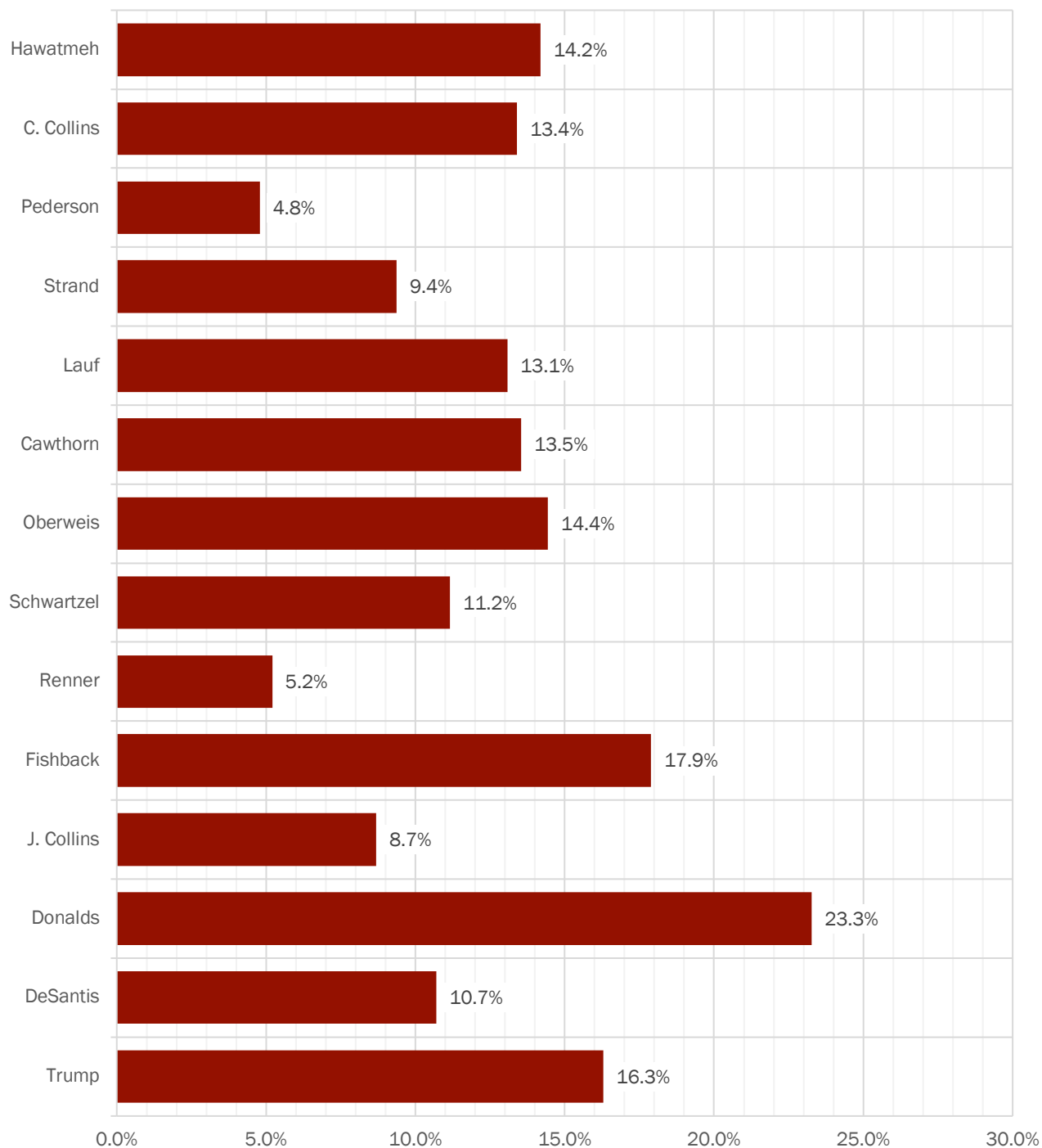
More FL-19 voters hold a positive opinion of DeSantis than of Trump, though both officials are widely liked. Donalds (61%) roughly doubles Collins (33%), who himself roughly doubles Fishback (16%) and Renner (15%). In the congressional race, Oberweis (26%) and Schwartzel (24%) again lead the pack, while Lauf (18%) again places third. Interestingly, despite coming in third place on the ballot, Cawthorn (9%) is in seventh place in terms of Positive Name ID, trailing Strand, Collins, and Pederson, all of whom hover around 11%. Cawthorn leads only Hawatmeh (5%).





### Negative Name ID

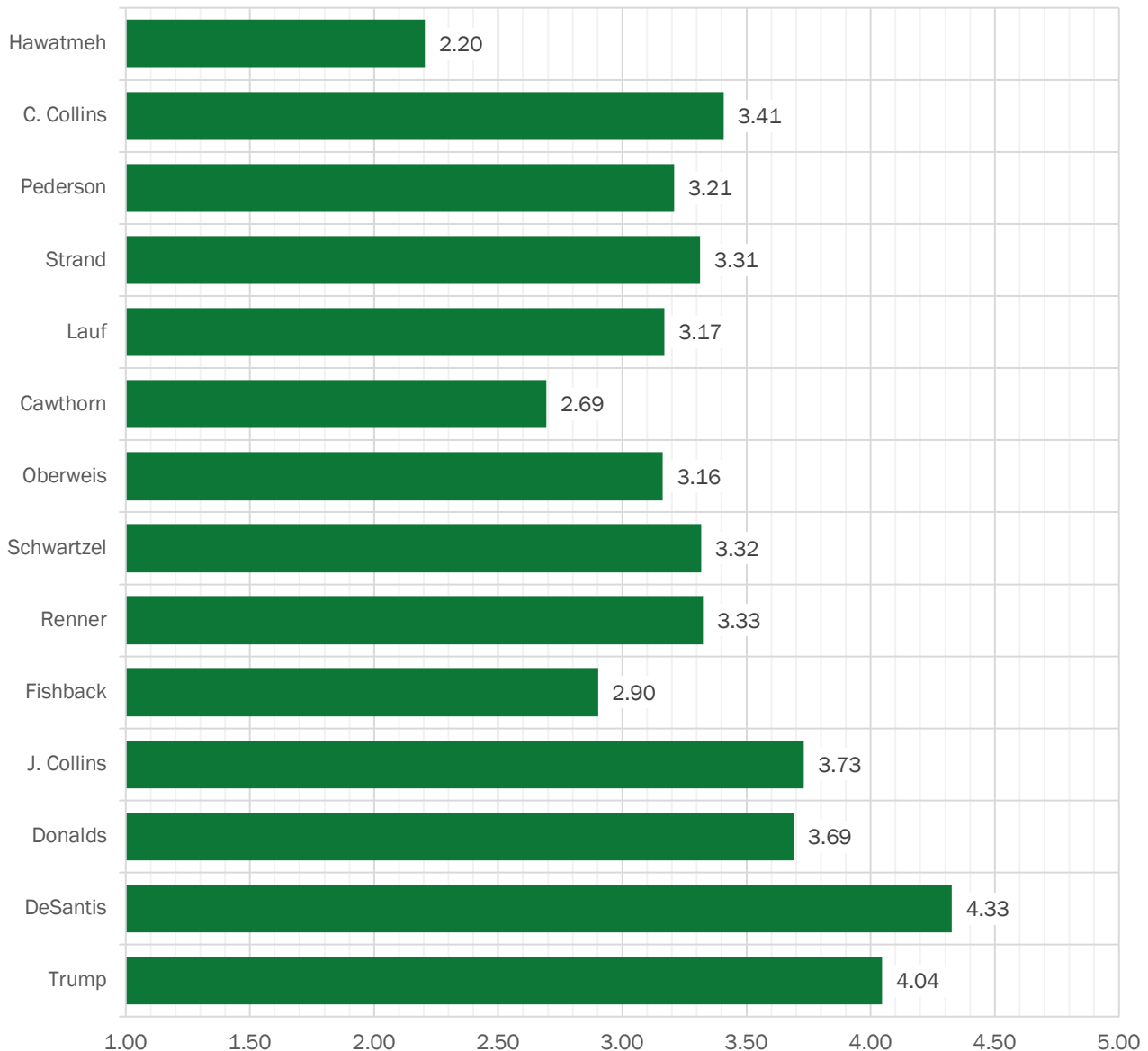
No candidates are particularly disliked by the broader electorate. That being said, Donalds notches the highest Negative Name ID, with 23%, followed by Fishback at 18%. Many FL-19 candidates (Oberweis, Hawatmeh, Cawthorn, Collins, and Lauf) score in the 13-15% range, while Schwartzel slightly outperforms the crowd with only 11% Negative Name ID.





### Average Opinionated Rating

A candidate's Average Opinionated Rating (AOR) is calculated by taking the average of all 1-through-5 ratings a candidate received, excluding those who have no opinion of the candidate. This metric approximates general likability. DeSantis (4.33) has historically dominated this metric among Florida Republicans, and this poll is no different. President Trump (4.04) trails DeSantis but leads all candidates, both gubernatorial and congressional. Interestingly, Collins (3.73) scores the highest AOR, very narrowly beating Donalds (3.69). Renner scores a 3.33 for this metric, which is far behind the two leaders yet far ahead of Fishback (2.90). In the congressional race, Collins (3.41) is the surprise leader, with Schwartzel (3.32) in second place. Lauf (3.17) and Oberweis (3.16) land in the middle of the pack, while Cawthorn (2.69) again underperforms given his third-place status.

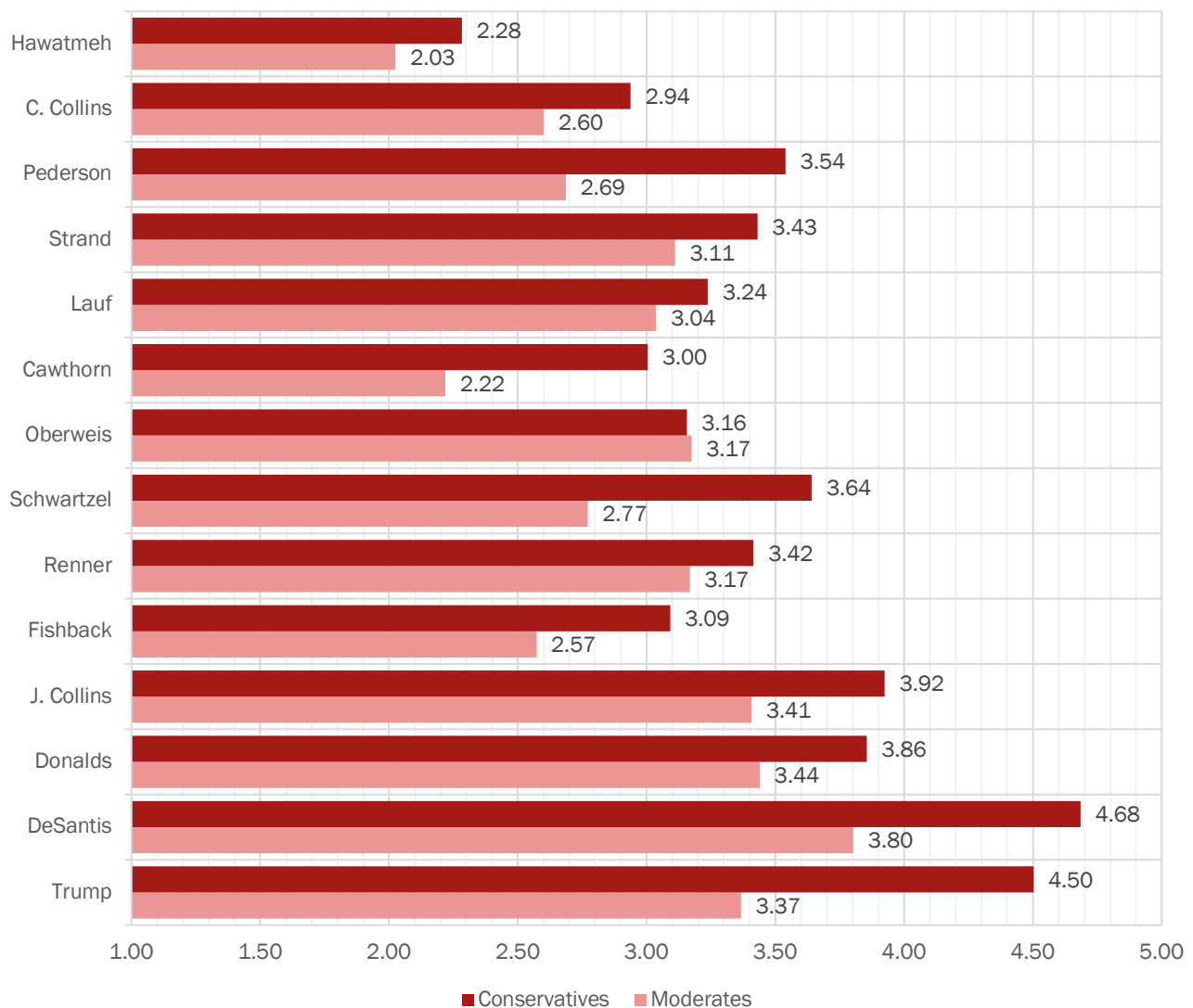




### Average Opinionated Rating by Party Wing

This final chart is the most comprehensive breakdown you'll see of all candidates' standings among the GOP voters of FL-19. Both DeSantis and Trump are beloved among conservative voters, and still solidly above neutral among moderates. Donalds and Collins are again neck-and-neck, with Collins holding the edge among conservatives and Donalds holding the edge among moderates. Among both moderates *and* conservatives, Fishback scores lower than any other gubernatorial candidate by a sizable margin, but the drop-off is most significant among moderates.

In the congressional race, we again see a divergence in strategy between the Schwartzel and Oberweis campaigns: Schwartzel is far more admired among conservatives than he is among moderates, while Oberweis scores nearly equally among both groups. In fact, Oberweis is the only public figure on the chart who scores *better* among moderates than among conservatives. Cawthorn experiences the biggest gap between conservatives and moderates (3.00-2.22), while his rival Lauf's differential is far narrower (3.24-3.04).





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