

# Republican wins special election in Florida

**Matthew MacEgan****13 March 2014**

In a special election held for the House of Representatives in Florida's 13th congressional district on Tuesday, Republican David Jolly narrowly defeated Democrat Alex Sink. Jolly's win, despite his extensive and unfavorable lobbying background, is an expression of widespread alienation and hostility to the Obama administration, particularly the Affordable Care Act.

Florida's 13th district was reassigned to Pinellas County in 2012, encompassing the peninsula to the west of Tampa Bay and including the cities of St. Petersburg and Clearwater. The county harbors several beach communities that attract large numbers of retirees and vacationers from the Northeastern United States, but the city of St. Petersburg also has a large younger population, especially in its downtown area.

The special election, which pitted two right-wing candidates against each other, was held to fill the seat of the late Bill Young, a Republican, who died last October. The district has traditionally been known as a "swing" district and has attracted particular attention in many statewide and national election campaigns.

The campaign waged by Jolly and the Republicans against Sink was almost entirely focused on her support for the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare. Jolly's supporters spent a total of \$4.9 million on television, mail, and web attacks on Sink, much of which sought to tie her to the health care law.

Obamacare, billed by the Democratic Party as a major social reform, is in fact aimed at shifting the cost of health care from corporations and the government onto the working class. Corporations are dropping coverage, while individuals are required to purchase substandard private insurance on new exchanges with inadequate subsidies.

Sink, who has political ties to House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, responded by pledging to modify, but not repeal, the law. Her supporters spent \$3.7 million on advertisements focusing on Jolly's history

as a lobbyist and his support for the privatization of Social Security. Jolly has championed tax cuts and austerity measures.

While Democrats are arguing that Sink came within two points of victory in a historically Republican district, Republicans are calling the election a "bellwether" for their chances in other competitive districts during the midterm elections in November. Republicans are seeking to strengthen their control of the House, capitalizing on the hostility to Obama.

Obama himself spent Tuesday evening hosting two different fundraisers for the most wealthy of his supporters in New York City. Hedge fund managers and other multimillionaires dropped more than \$32,000 each to attend the dinners, where Obama demagogically declared that his administration had successfully provided health care for millions of Americans.

Nowhere in Obama's praise of his own administration did he mention the collapse in his approval ratings over the past five years. A *Wall Street Journal/NBC* poll published Wednesday found that Obama's approval rating, at only 41 percent, has reached an all-time low.

Nearly 50 percent said they would be less inclined to support a midterm election candidate who was either endorsed by Obama or known as a "solid supporter" of his administration, versus only 26 percent who said they would be more inclined to support the candidate.

However, the same poll numbers were unfavorable to both parties in general. Only 34 percent of those polled said that their member of Congress deserved to stay in office, while 55 percent said they would rather see their member replaced. A total of 54 percent said they would like to replace every member of Congress, including their own representative. A further sign of the widespread disgust with both parties was the voter turnout in the special election, only 39 percent.

Sixty-five percent of those interviewed said that the

country is on the wrong track, and 57 percent believe that the United States is still experiencing a recession, despite the phrasemongering and lies of the ruling establishment and the Obama administration.



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