

The Delray Democrat

Beating Rick Scott¹

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Beating Scott won't be easy. He has three advantages – he's White, he's male, and he's rich. In fact, he's the richest man in the U.S. Senate, and he's not shy about buying his elections.

In 2010, he spent \$75 million of his own money to become governor and he spent another \$63.6 million to be elected to the Senate in 2018, an amount equal to 75% of what he received in outside funding.

But he is also vulnerable. He may be the most odious and disliked member of the senate, despite the strong competition (Josh “Watch Him Run” Hawley and “Cancun Ted” Cruz come to mind). Even Mitch McConnell can't stand him. Moreover, all of his victories were exceedingly narrow and came in non-presidential-election years when turnout is low.

He's also the only member of Congress to have led a company that pled guilty to 14 felonies and agreed to pay the government \$1.7 billion in fines and damages for bilking Medicare. At the time, the Columbia/HCA Healthcare settlement was the largest healthcare fraud settlement in U.S. history. If he were an African American who passed a bad check, he would have lost his right to vote, much less the right to run for public office.

But Scott is an oily, slippery fellow. He was never charged in connection with the fraud. Instead he was forced to resign and given a golden parachute that he used to slither his way to two terms as Florida governor and one as Florida's junior senator.

Scott disclaims knowledge of the fraud, but John Schilling, the HCA accountant and whistleblower who alerted the government to the massive fraud, [disagreed strongly](#): “I am a witness and I was an FBI informant. Fraud was in the DNA of Rick Scott's company from the very beginning and he was the father.”

Scott will no doubt argue that this is old news – he resigned in 1997 and the massive fraud under his watch was an issue during the 2010 and 2014 races. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell can make it current again by focusing on Scott's “Rescue America” plan, which originally proposed sunseting (read “ending”) Medicare and Social Security.

Scott amended the plan after President Biden called him on it during his 2023 State of the Union address, and even Mitch McConnell distanced Republicans from it, referring to it as “not a Republican plan [but rather] a Rick Scott plan.” He now specifically exempts “Social Security, Medicare, national security, veterans benefits, and other essential services” and smarmily includes

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), February-March 2024, page 10.

a “Note to President Biden, Sen. Schumer, and Sen. McConnell” that he never intended to cut off services on which all Americans, including Floridians, depend. Right.