



## Recent Media Inquiries & Response

Week of May 13, 2022

### **Homeowner's Insurance Rates**

The citizens of Florida are Governor DeSantis' priority, as insurance has become increasingly burdensome, he has taken action by issuing the call for a special session.

Governor DeSantis remains committed to the goal of stabilizing insurance rates and continuing to work for the consumer. The governor is monitoring the stability of the insurance market in real-time, and closely working with Commissioner Altmaier to find solutions to rising insurance costs.

In 2019, 8.6% of all property insurance claims in the U.S. were filed in Florida, yet 76.45% of all property insurance litigation in the U.S. occurred in Florida.

Recognizing this, during the 2021 legislative session the Legislature passed and Governor DeSantis signed SB 76 which significantly reformed the litigation environment in Florida by changing the way attorney fees are awarded in disputed insurance cases. At the time, it was stated that it would take potentially two years to feel the impact of that bill, because pending litigation does not fall under the changed law nor do insurance claims for a loss that preceded the bill's effective date. Many of the insurance companies in Florida are still saddled with the tailing litigation stemming from recent hurricanes, most notably Hurricane Irma. But as a result of the reforms we have implemented thus far, we are seeing some new companies coming into the market.

The Governor has consistently pressed the legislature to enact substantive insurance reform. In addition to pushing for the attorney fee reform in SB 76, in 2019, Governor DeSantis pushed for reform of assignment of benefit (AOB) claims and signed HB 7065 into law. He has also appointed over 100 judges and 5 Supreme Court justices who are having a meaningful impact to reduce frivolous litigation.

Finally, it should be noted that Biden-led inflation is hurting consumers everywhere and causing the prices of consumer goods like homebuilding materials to skyrocket. If it costs more to repair or replace a home, insurance prices will rise. The governor will continue to work to protect Floridians from the poor choices being made in Washington D.C.

We continue to work with the Office of Insurance Regulation to monitor the stability of the market.

### **Reedy Creek & Taxes**

The local residents of Orange and Osceola counties **will not have to bear the burden of Disney's debt**, as the governor has stated. And, there is **no scenario where the state would inherit Disney's debt** – this is misinformation.

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On a general note, the suggestions from those who are quarterbacking the possibilities of citizens inheriting the burden of debt, are projecting their own wishful forecasting. In other words, they are hoping – with no basis in reality – that this will end in some sort of taxpayer or state burden that partisan critics can use against the governor. In reality, this opportunity can and should be utilized to generate more taxes from Disney, as the governor has said.

### Accomplishments

Governor DeSantis laid out his top priorities in January during the State of the State Address: <https://flgov.com/2022/01/11/governor-ron-desantis-state-of-the-state-address-3/> This speech also summarizes some of the main accomplishments of his term thus far.

During the legislative session, legislative leaders delivered on many of these important priorities, including:

- **Helping Floridians keep more of their hard-earned money.** Governor DeSantis called for a tax holiday to help Floridians who are struggling with Bidenflation. Here's what he said at the end of the legislative session thanking lawmakers for delivering on this: "And then the tax relief package, I think was the biggest we've seen in a long time. It was \$1.3 billion, and it has relief targeted at the consumer staples, which are going up in record numbers, things like school supplies, gasoline, disaster preparedness, they even did."
- **Education:** Florida is #3 for K-12 achievement. Governor DeSantis is leading the way on protecting parental rights. Florida is also a leader in terms of our excellent state universities and career/technical education.
  - Gov. DeSantis just signed the elimination of the FSA to replace it with progress monitoring. This will lead to meaningful feedback for parents and teachers and will reduce the amount of time dedicated to testing, leaving more time for learning. This reform will be better for students, teachers and parents, and it will help Florida remain a leader in education reform.
  - Gov. DeSantis has also overseen historic pay raises for new and veteran teachers; this year he announced \$800 million for teacher pay raises. This is the second year in a row of teachers receiving \$1000 bonuses as well.
  - Gov. DeSantis has always been a fighter for Parental Rights. He supports the Parental Rights in Education legislation that will prevent inappropriate instruction on sexual and gender issues in Florida schools.
  - Gov. DeSantis is a champion of Curriculum Transparency, which the legislature passed this year, to ensure parents are able to know what their kids are being taught. Good teachers approach education as a partnership with their students' families, and we are grateful for our Florida teachers who work with parents to ensure that kids are learning and growing.
  - Gov. DeSantis proposed the "Stop WOKE Act", which protects students and employees from discrimination (including discriminatory CRT content) in the classroom and the workplace. This will empower parents with a private right of action so they would be able to sue if their child's rights were violated in this manner.





- From the SOTS speech: *“Florida has enacted a Parents’ Bill of Rights and we reject the notion that parents shouldn’t have a say in what their kids learn in school. Indeed, Florida law should provide parents with the right to review the curriculum used in their children’s schools. We should provide parents with recourse so that state standards are enforced, such as Florida’s prohibition on infusing subjects with critical race theory in our classrooms.”*
- Career-technical education: *“Over the past three years, Florida has added more than 50 new apprenticeship programs. The credentials earned through our workforce initiatives have paved the way for employment in a variety of fields like aviation, logistics and welding. These are as valuable and as honorable endeavors as attending august universities, and they deserve our support. Florida’s dedicated focus on the skilled trades will help expand the state’s manufacturing footprint. We have already seen businesses move here from other states and we should also be actively encouraging businesses to repatriate production back to America from foreign countries. Do we really want our supply chains to be captive to the whims of a country such as Communist China?”*
- **Environment:**
  - Since January 2019, 42 Everglades restoration projects have broken ground, hit a major milestone or finished construction.
  - Record funding has gone to conduct research and secure technologies to mitigate blue-green algae and red tide.
  - The state now has dedicated streams of revenue to promote coastal resiliency and water quality improvements.
  - “We resolved to leave our unique natural inheritance to God better than we found it, and we are fulfilling that pledge.”
- **Public safety:**
  - In 2021, Gov. DeSantis signed a law to prevent local governments (city councils, county commissions) from defunding the police.
  - “We have stood by the men and women of law enforcement. Not only do we reject defunding law enforcement — we enacted \$1,000 bonuses for all police, fire and EMTs in Florida.” These bonuses will be delivered for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row.
  - FIGHTING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION: Gov. DeSantis requested funding from the legislature in the state budget, so that when the feds dump illegal aliens in Florida, the state can re-route them to states that have sanctuary policies. We are glad the legislature delivered this in this year’s session.
  - 2021: Anti Riot Law
- **Election integrity:**
  - Gov. DeSantis is making ballot harvesting a felony this year
  - Builds on election reform of 2021
  - Banned zuckerbucks
  - Ensured same voter ID requirements for in person and mail voting



- Creating a new election integrity office with law enforcement officers who are specially trained and focused on securing elections and investigating allegations of voter fraud
- **Right to life:**
  - Gov. DeSantis has always been pro-life. Historically Florida has allowed later term abortions than other southern states. Unfortunately this incentivized people to travel to Florida to get late term abortions, when the unborn child can already feel pain. This year the legislature passed a new law that restricts abortions after 15 weeks, unless the mother's life is in danger.
  - From SOTS: "Protecting life does not end with the unborn. It must also include continued efforts to promote adoption and foster care so that all Floridians have a fair chance in life. Florida has 4,000 more licensed caregivers than in 2019 and I am proposing additional funds for foster parents in next year's budget."
- **COVID:** Besides keeping the state open and free by respecting Floridians' constitutional rights, which is his defining accomplishment so far, Governor DeSantis popularized monoclonal antibodies and opened 25 state treatment sites that saved thousands of lives starting during the delta COVID surge last summer. Florida schools have been open since Fall 2020, and every parent has the right to choose if their own child wears a mask or not. Gov. DeSantis appointed a new state surgeon general last year, Dr. Joseph Ladapo, who has been a trailblazer in evidence based medicine; he ended the quarantine of healthy kids and worked with Gov. DeSantis to ensure Floridians would not be fired from their jobs due to COVID vaccine mandates.

### **CRT**

"In Florida we are taking a stand against the state-sanctioned racism that is critical race theory," DeSantis said when he supported the bill in December. "We won't allow Florida tax dollars to be spent teaching kids to hate our country or to hate each other. We also have a responsibility to ensure that parents have the means to vindicate their rights when it comes to enforcing state standards. Finally, we must protect Florida workers against the hostile work environment that is created when large corporations force their employees to endure CRT-inspired 'training' and indoctrination."

### **Home Affordability**

The Governor has consistently recommended full funding for the State of Florida's affordable housing programs since his first year in office, and he is appreciative of the Legislature's decision to appropriate a significant amount towards affordable housing in the 2022-2023 General Appropriations Act. This year, the state funding for affordable housing totals almost \$363 million, which includes \$25 million in the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity budget.

In total, over the last four years, Governor DeSantis has recommended over \$1.5 billion for affordable housing funding, and secured over \$1 billion for affordable housing funding. This is roughly the same amount of funds appropriated for affordable housing





over the preceding eight fiscal years combined, and nearly 40% higher than was appropriated in the four fiscal years preceding that.

Governor	Total Secured	Total Recommended
<b>Crist</b>	\$ 763,010,000	\$ 827,202,075
<b>Scott (First Term)</b>	\$ 297,660,000	\$ 206,450,000
<b>Scott (Second Term)</b>	\$ 787,555,000	\$ 506,521,000
<b>DeSantis</b>	\$ 1,060,525,000	\$ 1,518,171,510

In terms of utilizing federal aid: the federal Emergency Rental Assistance award to the State of Florida totaled \$1.6 billion. There is approximately \$59.8 million remaining to be obligated for this program. The federal Homeowner's Assistance Fund to the State of Florida totaled \$608 million. The Department of Economic Opportunity released a press release in early March about this phase of the fund – applications are open to those who need assistance and the awards have already been helping Florida citizens:

"I fell and broke my hip and was unable to pay for my homeowner's insurance. If I could not make that payment, I would have been in default with my mortgage," **said Linda T., a homeowner assisted by the Homeowner Assistance Fund pilot program through Citizens Property Insurance Corporation.** "Thankfully the HAF program helped me with my payment, so I did not lose my house. It came in at the right time for me, that's for sure!"

"It helped me a lot because I had gotten an extension on my electricity bill, but it had come due and I did not know how I was going to pay it," **said Leah B., a homeowner assisted by the Homeowner Assistance Fund pilot program through Duke Energy.** "Then the HAF funds came in just in time. The process was painless and very easy."

The press release from the Department of Economic Opportunity is available here: <https://floridajobs.org/news-center/DEO-Press/2022/03/02/florida-department-of-economic-opportunity-secretary-dane-eagle-announce-the-next-phase-of-the-state-s-homeowner-assistance-fund>

Democrat-run states' failed policies have driven out their residents, who are moving to Florida. [In 2020 and 2021, Florida was the #1 destination for net migration out of all 50](#)



states. These record numbers reflect Americans who are moving to Florida to seek stability and opportunity in our state. We wish all governors would follow the same policies as Governor DeSantis and stop pushing their own constituents out of their home states – but of course, we do not have control over that, and we can understand why so many people would choose to relocate to Florida.

As articles like this point out, many of those moving to Florida are retaining their jobs in their home states but choosing to live in Florida for our low tax rates and attractive state policies. Thus, the demand for rented living in Florida is skyrocketing, and as demand exceeds supply, prices rise. <https://therealdeal.com/miami/2021/08/24/south-florida-apartment-crunch-locals-squeezed-out-as-demand-from-newcomers-leads-to-record-rents/>

*“The rental increase and the absorption, meaning how quickly people are moving into new buildings, are unprecedented in what we have seen in South Florida,” said Charles Foschini of Berkadia in Miami. A record 11,000 multifamily units were absorbed over the past year in Miami-Dade, outpacing supply by 75 percent, according to Florida International University’s Jorge M. Pérez Metropolitan Center. While some out-of-staters are getting local jobs at income levels that have long lagged states like New York and California, it is likely not a majority, said Nika Zyryanova, research specialist at FIU’s Metropolitan Center. Many are continuing to work remotely for out-of-state employers — from their new homes in South Florida. “Why would they move to South Florida only for the view, and get paid less, and kind of overpay the rent?” Zyryanova said. “Assuming those people from New York and elsewhere are moving here with their jobs ... now they don’t have to pay the income tax, and they pay less for housing. So from their view it is a win, win, win.” For New Yorkers, viewed as one of the biggest set of newcomers, local rents are cheap compared with the roughly \$3,000 a month they are used to shelling out.*

**Those who are quick to insist on a state of emergency are those who believe that the government can and should solve every problem with the heaviest hand.**

Increasing government intervention into markets cannot solve complex problems like this – in fact, it tends to make those problems worse. This is apparent in all Democrat-run cities that have experimented with rent controls: NYC, Los Angeles, DC, and San Francisco to name a few. All of these cities have housing crises and rents / cost of living higher than those in Florida cities.

Moreover, irresponsibly heavy-handed federal policies have been exacerbating rent hikes nationally, including in Florida. One federal policy that has contributed to rent increases is the CDC’s 2020-2021 eviction moratorium, as Gov. DeSantis has mentioned. Landlords who did not receive rent payments from tenants for over a year might be more inclined to raise rents and deposits to recoup losses – or hedge against the risk of a similar policy suddenly being enacted the next time the federal bureaucracy deems it necessary for public health.





Another part of the federal government agenda that is one of the biggest factors in driving up the cost of living is ***inflationary fiscal policy***. Over the last two years, Congress has passed historic spending bills that have driven inflation up to the highest levels seen in the past 40 years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics released data showing that prices for U.S. consumers increased 7.9% in the last 12 months, and that trend is projected to continue, unfortunately.

People can argue about whether or not all the record-breaking federal spending was necessary due to COVID, but it's indisputable that massive federal government spending and a growing deficit devalues the U.S. dollar and thereby makes almost everything more expensive.

**Thus, Governor DeSantis continues to stand against the heavy-handed federal government policies that are causing housing affordability issues, and he will not be taking the same failed approach to address the issue in Florida.** Instead, Florida will continue to distribute federal assistance funds, fully fund affordable housing and housing assistance programs at the state level and encourage the construction and development of more housing throughout the state (both single-family homes and multi-family complexes).

As Governor DeSantis said at a recent press conference in Hialeah, there's only one sure way to bring down the rents in a sustainable manner without adverse consequences that outweigh benefits: **build more housing. He encouraged local governments to consider if housing construction and development in their jurisdictions is hindered by unnecessary red tape, and if so, to streamline the process.**

[About 17,500 new units are under construction in Miami – and that number is growing every day.](#) Other urban areas in Florida are also seeing a lot of new construction. It will take time for those buildings to be completed and ready for new residents, but the increased supply and competition will likely help bring rent increases under control.

### **Medal of Freedom Background Info**

Here's some background info on the Governor's Medal of Freedom, one of which was presented to Ben Ferencz:

The Governor's Medal of Freedom was established in 2020 by Section 14.35, Florida Statutes, which allows the Governor to recognize any person who has made an especially meritorious contribution to the interests and citizens of the state, its culture, or other significant public or private endeavor.

The late Coach Bobby Bowden (1929-2021) was the inaugural recipient of the Governor's Medal of Freedom on April 7, 2021.

At today's ceremony, the governor also signed SB 1360.



Senate Bill 1360, passed in this 2022 legislative session, reenacts statutory authority for the Governor's Medal of Freedom, which was previously scheduled to expire July 1, 2022.

### **Abortion**

Governor DeSantis signed a bill to limit abortions after **15 weeks** of pregnancy. By that point in development, the baby already has a heartbeat, organs, and can even feel pain.

At a press conference in Jacksonville, the governor made the following remarks on the bill:

*"These are protections for babies that have heartbeats, that can feel pain. And this (15 weeks) is very, very late... And so, you know, I think the protections are warranted. And I think that we'll be able to sign that in short order."*

<https://rumble.com/vwg34n-gov.-desantis-will-sign-pro-life-bill-in-short-order.html>

And here's what the governor said in his State of the State Address, when he laid out his priorities before the legislative session convened this past January:

*"We have an opportunity to strengthen protections for the right to life, without which the other rights mean little. Protecting life does not end with the unborn. It must also include continued efforts to promote adoption and foster care so that all Floridians have a fair chance in life. Florida has 4,000 more licensed caregivers than in 2019 and I am proposing additional funds for foster parents in next year's budget."*

<https://flgov.com/2022/01/11/governor-ron-desantis-state-of-the-state-address-3/>

This is from the highlights of the governor's budget recommendations for FY 22-23, the Freedom First Budget:

#### **Child Welfare**

*The Freedom First Budget includes \$133.9 million to provide services to those served by the child welfare system. This funding will provide operational support and community based services, foster parent support and modernization of the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) system.*

*Additionally, the budget includes \$11.2 million for maintenance adoption subsidies and adoption benefits for state employees to support adoptions of children from foster care. The Governor recognizes the important role of foster parents and the impact they have on the life of a child in need. The Freedom First Budget also includes \$8.9 million for an increase of up to \$300 per month to the childcare subsidy for foster parents by assisting them in covering the cost of early education and child care.*





### Florida's Business-Friendly Accomplishments

Specifically, it is worth noting that Florida:

- Has no state income tax;
- has surpassed pre-pandemic employment and labor force numbers;
- is the #1 state for business formations for three straight years;
- has the #1 ranked higher education system in the nation for five straight years;
- is the #4 state in The Tax Foundation's business climate index;
- and for two straight quarters, Florida's overall tourist visitation has surpassed 2019 pre-pandemic levels.

### Statement on Illegal Immigrants Destined for Florida

To those who have entered the country illegally, fair warning: do not come to Florida. Life will not be easy for you, because we are obligated to uphold the immigration laws of this country, even if our federal government and other states won't.

Florida is not a sanctuary state, and our social programs are designed to serve the citizens of our state. The governor will protect the sovereignty of the state of Florida.

If you have come here illegally, you have been done a great disservice by the Biden Administration. They have encouraged you to make dangerous treks, oftentimes at great physical distress to you and your family. Sometimes, this has even meant putting your fate into the hands of dangerous coyotes and human traffickers.

There is a legal process to obtain full American citizenship, which is an essential part of the promise of America. In Florida, we will uphold the law.

### Textbook Review Mechanics from FL DOE

I am sharing a statement from **Florida Department of Education Press Secretary, Cassie Paleis** to give you some background on how the state's review process for instructional materials works:

*The Department has a responsibility to ensure textbooks are aligned with the newly adopted Florida B.E.S.T. standards and do not include unsolicited strategies. This process is not new, in fact it is outlined in Florida Statutes and State Board of Education rule. This is also not the first time books have been rejected. However, it is the first time that 41% of books submitted failed to meet Florida's lofty standards for math instruction.*

*Complete information regarding Florida's instructional materials adoption process can be found on the [Instructional Materials](#) page of the Florida Department of Education website.*

*Prior to submitting materials for adoption, each publisher receives guidance through specifications provided by the Florida Department of Education. The specifications outline the standards the materials are expected to meet. The*



specifications provided during the K-12 Mathematics Adoption are available at the links below.

- [2021-2022 K-12 Mathematics Specifications](#)
- [Addendum to K-12 Mathematics Specifications](#)

As stated in the press release, Florida is initially not including 54 of the 132 submitted mathematics bids on the state's adopted list. The links below provide the current adopted list and the materials not recommended for adoption.

- [2021-2022 Mathematics Instructional Materials Adoption List](#)
- [2021-2022 Mathematics Instructional Materials Not Recommended List](#)

It is also important to remember that publishers may appeal any non-adoption decision and substitute or revise their submitted bids to be included on the state's adopted list, if the substitution or revision of submitted instructional materials meets the bid specifications and aligns with Florida's B.E.S.T. standards.

### Viewpoint Diversity Surveys

Given that there is plenty of evidence that free speech on campus may be in danger, we want a better understanding of the climate for free expression at Florida's colleges and universities. The survey is intended to help achieve this. Regardless of a student or faculty member's political views, they should all enjoy the same right to free speech.

- Higher education falls short in viewpoint diversity. Survey of a nationally representative sample of university administrators found that liberal staff members outnumber their conservative counterparts by the astonishing ratio of 12:1. Only 6% of campus administrators identified as conservative to some degree, while 71% classified themselves as liberal or very liberal. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/16/opinion/liberal-college-administrators.html>
- In 2018, Yale surveyed a national sample of 800 undergraduates and found that more than half (54%) reported they "often" felt intimidated by their peers on campus." Breaking this down further, 62% of those students who identified as conservative "often" felt silenced. Many moderate and liberal students also expressed that feeling. Governor DeSantis doesn't want anyone to feel like they are silenced because of their political views, whatever those views might be. Yale Study: [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b0cbbd\\_7fd2855afcff462baeb926d125af4ba1.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b0cbbd_7fd2855afcff462baeb926d125af4ba1.pdf)
- 2019 Heterodox Academy's Campus Expression Survey of over 1500 students asked how comfortable they were sharing their views on six topics: politics, race, religion, sexuality, gender, and noncontroversial issues. Republican students reported being more reluctant than Democrats and Independents and were markedly more hesitant to share their views on politics, race, sexuality and gender. <https://heterodoxacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CES-Fall-2019.pdf>
- 2019 Knight Foundation survey of over 4400 students found that 68% felt silenced because "their campus climate precludes students from expressing their true opinions because their classmates might find them offensive." <https://kf-site->





[production.s3.amazonaws.com/media\\_elements/files/000/000/351/original/Knight-CP-Report-FINAL.pdf](https://production.s3.amazonaws.com/media_elements/files/000/000/351/original/Knight-CP-Report-FINAL.pdf)

- 2020 FIRE free speech survey of almost 20,000 college students confirmed that self-censorship on campuses is prevalent: Six out of ten college students say they have kept quiet due to fear of how others would respond. Breaking this down further, the largest group on campus which self-censors is “strong Republicans” (73%) and the lowest is “strong Democrats” (52%).  
<https://www.thefire.org/largest-ever-free-speech-survey-of-college-students-ranks-top-campuses-for-expression/>
- WSJ: Georgetown University’s law school violated its own speech policy last week when it placed Ilya Shapiro, a newly hired administrator, on leave over a tweet that offended some students. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/college-dont-care-free-speech-ilya-shapiro-treanor-georgetown-cancel-pc-culture-censorship-campus-11644167414>
- I have attached a comprehensive list of speakers (right and left politically) who have been disinvited/deplatformed from universities due to comments they made that some perceived as controversial:  
<https://www.thefire.org/research/disinvitation-database/> This list is from FIRE; their website has a lot of great resources to learn about the threats to free expression on campus – and it is a nonpartisan organization that protects speech of all political leanings.
- And here’s another recent poll of students, showing they are concerned about threats to free speech, with conservatives being the most concerned:  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/meet-the-press/students-value-free-speech-feel-theirs-threatened-n1288217>

### Common Legislative Action/Bill Signing Questions

Has a specific bill become a law?

- We keep a running list of bills that we have received from the legislature on our website, and we list the status of each. It can be found at [www.flgov.com](http://www.flgov.com) at the “2022 Bill Actions” icon.

A bill becomes law on July 1, 2022 without a veto according to the Bill Tracker, correct?

- July 1 is the date that the new fiscal year begins, so a budget must be in place by then. A bill passed by the legislature must be delivered to the governor’s office to become a law.

The governor has 14 days to sign a bill on his desk after the end of a regular session, correct?

- Once session has ended, a delivered bill starts a 15-day clock. It can be signed or vetoed within those 15 days, but if no action is taken it automatically becomes a law.

Does that also mean he also only has 14 days to veto a bill on his desk? Or can he veto a bill any time before its effective date?



- After the legislature ends session, a bill can only be vetoed in the 15-day window from delivery.

Does a special session “reset the clock” on bills sent to the governor at the end of the last regular session? In other words, can he take it up now that a special session happened?

Special sessions do not change the statutory bill deadlines and windows of time for legislation passed in regular session. That is:

- Bills passed in regular session and then delivered to the governor’s office while the legislature is still in session have 7 days for action before the bill becomes a law by default
- Bills passed in regular session and then delivered to the governor’s office after the legislature ends session have 15 days for action before the bill becomes a law by default
- Bills passed in special session and then delivered to the governor’s office while the legislature is still in special session have 7 days for action before the bill becomes a law by default
- Bills passed in special session and then delivered to the governor’s office after the legislature ends the special session have 15 days for action before the bill becomes a law by default

### **Election Integrity – Laurel Lee Op-Ed**

The Office of Election Crimes and Security will provide the necessary resources and specialization to ensure that our elections law in Florida are followed, voters remain secure in casting their ballot, our infrastructure remains secure, and that perpetrators of elections-related crimes are investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted.

To begin, it’s important to understand the significant ways in which law enforcement supports our elections process. Of course, we have isolated instances of voters who vote in two states or unlawfully vote someone else’s ballot, and it is important that when those types of crimes occur, they are identified and expeditiously prosecuted. But those examples are a only small part of what we do, and what we must address to keep our elections process in Florida secure.

The activities and individuals the Department of State is responsible for overseeing are a vastly larger group. For example:

Since 2019, We’ve had over 23,000 individuals register as petition gatherers in our state. They are delivering hundreds of thousands of petitions to SOE for review. Recent reports from some Supervisors of Elections are that less than 50% of those supposed petitions can be validated. There are registered petition gatherers right now, in our state, who have forged signatures of voters who did not consent to support an issue or sign a petition. By way of example, one of our Supervisors of Elections and his wife had their identity stolen and used on Petition forms they never signed.





Next, threats of violence. Our election officials and their staff have been subjected to harassment, threats of violence and intimidation which, in some instances, may constitute criminal conduct.

We also hear numerous claims of fraud around third party voter registration organizations – these complaints include allegations that third party voter registration canvassers, without consent, alter the political party affiliation or voter registration information of a Florida voters, submit voter registration applications for dead people, or fill out applications without consent of the resident.

We've received complaints of abuse of our elders in nursing homes, alleging that residents are victims of undue influence or have had unauthorized changes made to their voting records. And of course, we hear complaints of unsolicited vote-by-mail ballots or misdirected vote-by-mail ballots.

Each of these things, if the necessary elements are proven, would be a crime or irregularity under existing Florida law. And, though existing Florida law gives the Department of State legal authority to investigate matters crimes or irregularities related to our elections, we've not previously had law enforcement or investigative staff at our agency with which to do it. Governor DeSantis has recognized the need to support and fund these important statutory responsibilities of the Department of State.

Equally important to the ability to engage, where appropriate, in proactive investigations, is the vital role that law enforcement plays in training, prevention, deterrence, and community engagement.

We rely heavily on our state and federal law enforcement partners to fight against threats to our cyber and physical elections infrastructure. This office will work hand in hand with our local and federal law enforcement officials to ensure we are doing even more to be prepared to face evolving threats and to keep our elections, and our voters, secure. It would enable us to serve Supervisors of Elections in some of the same ways our federal partners support us – training, crime prevention, hardening of elections facilities, and reviewing threats against elections infrastructure or personnel.

Finally, trained investigators or analysts where appropriate could assist in reviewing inquiries and information submitted by groups and the public related to voter rolls and accuracy or alleged irregularities. The Department of State has received lists and information from these groups that purport to identify issues with voter rolls or elections practices in Florida. We work hard to review all of that now, but simply have not had adequate resources or personnel to meet the demand. Having trained personnel will allow us to quickly and efficiently review this information and promptly respond and either put allegations to rest or, if appropriate, investigate. This will support voter confidence and provide a unified place where the public and our elections officials can send information for review.



By creating the Office of Election Crimes and Security, Governor DeSantis has recognized that the Florida Department of State has statutory responsibility to fulfill this important role, and must be funded and staffed commensurately in order to do so.

The Governor has made elections integrity a priority, and has made significant investments to ensure we had the technology, infrastructure and resources to conduct efficient and secure elections. We will work hard to ensure we protect those investments and use these resources to continue to lead the way in elections integrity in our state.

More information about what we're doing to ensure elections integrity can be found on our website [here](#).

### **Responding Criticism of Parental Rights in Education or DOH Guidance on Adolescent Gender Dysphoria Treatments**

This is the most important point Gov. DeSantis made at the bill signing event for HB 1557, the Parental Rights in Education legislation:

*"Now, there's been a lot of discussions about this particular piece of legislation. You've seen a lot of sloganeering and fake narratives by leftist politicians, by activists, by corporate media. And you still see it even today after a lot of this stuff has been debunked. Now it's true. Many of the people who help, who whip this up have never actually read the bill. They haven't taken the time to do that. They would rather just further narratives.*

***But I must tell you, these leftist politicians, corporate media outlets, some of these activist groups, they actually have read the bill. And they're sloganeering because they don't want to admit that they support a lot of the things that we're providing protections against. For example, they support sexualizing kids in kindergarten. They support injecting woke gender ideology into second grade classrooms. They support enabling schools to "transition students to a different gender, without the knowledge of the parent, much less without the parent's consent."***

*And so, what they're doing with these slogans and these narratives is they are trying to camouflage their true intentions. They know in every single poll that's been done that actually reads the language in the bill will find overwhelmingly Americans oppose injecting this type of material into the classroom of young kids, Americans support the right of parents to be informed and to be able to withhold consent over certain types of medical treatments in, in school. So they know that. And so that's why they're resorting to some of the narratives, and it hasn't worked, but let's just be clear. It's not just all of them have not read the bill. Many have not, **many have, and many of them want to see this type of stuff in our school.**"*

Please see our press release here: <https://www.flgov.com/2022/03/28/governor-ron-desantis-signs-historic-bill-to-protect-parental-rights-in-education/>





Below, please find download links to video clips that you are free to use courtesy of the Office of Governor Ron DeSantis.

- Press Conference: <https://rumble.com/vyulv6-gov.-desantis-signs-parental-rights-in-education-bill.html>
- Erin Lovely – parent (Orange County)  
WT: <https://we.tl/t-xcU8idaHKx>  
Rumble: <https://rumble.com/vyung7-parental-rights-in-education-erin-lovely.html>
- January Littlejohn – parent (Leon County)  
WT: <https://we.tl/t-LLeKEdYfOc>  
Rumble: <https://rumble.com/vyumpq-parental-rights-in-education-january-littlejohn.html>
- Commissioner Corcoran  
Rumble: <https://rumble.com/vyuqeb-parental-rights-in-education-commissioner-corcoran.html>
- Gov. DeSantis: Here I Stand  
WT: <https://we.tl/t-h4Ces6Zwng>  
Rumble: <https://rumble.com/vyushm-gov.-desantis-here-i-stand.html>
- Gov. DeSantis: The Left’s Narrative Supports Sexualizing Children  
WT: <https://we.tl/t-ikoMXxuLgL>  
Rumble: <https://rumble.com/vyurt6-the-lefts-narrative-supports-sexualizing-children.html>

Finally, I want to make sure you’ve seen the Florida Department of Health’s recently released official guidance on the treatment of gender dysphoria in children and adolescents. I am including this because it cites copious research indicating that the push to “affirm” minors who think they might be trans or nonbinary can do more harm than good.

The idea that schools should indoctrinate kids with gender theory and “affirm” that a minor must be trans because he or she might feel dysphoric, or might not conform to stereotypes about his or her sex, is simply not grounded in the best available evidence. And the argument that government schools have the right to overrule parents in this matter is fundamentally wrong.

Here’s the guidance:

<https://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2022/04/20220420-gender-dysphoria-press-release.pr.html>

### **Reedy Creek Special District/Special Privilege**

No corporation or entity has a “right” to a special privilege – and the state legislature has the lawful power to eliminate such privileges through the legislative process. The assertion that the First Amendment somehow protects a corporation’s “right” to have its own autonomous self-government within a state is absurd.



The proclamation from the governor called on the legislature to examine the existence of all independent special districts established prior to November 5, 1968 (when the state Constitution was revised to prohibit special laws granting privileges to private corporations). Disney benefits from one of these special districts. For more information, please refer to the proclamation: <https://www.flgov.com/2022/04/19/memo-amending-the-call-for-a-special-session/>

Special districts could in some instances show favoritism. Should a corporation be serving as a regulator and a business at the same time? Should a corporation get to avoid standard environmental permitting processes? Should a corporation engage in eminent domain? Other businesses don't get these privileges.

Governor DeSantis has consistently supported a more level playing field for all businesses in Florida. The legislation he signed last week gets rid of carve-outs and promotes a fairer environment for all companies to do business.

### **Support of the Jewish Community**

Governor DeSantis is a strong and steadfast friend of the Jewish people and a defender of the State of Israel. He has stood with Florida's Jewish community not only in his words, but also in his actions, including:

- Allocating state funding for security for Jewish day schools, including funding for professional security
- Signing legislation supported by leading rabbis to set aside time in public schools for a daily moment of silence
- Enacting legislation to ensure Hatzalah ambulances are now allowed to operate in Florida
- And under Gov. DeSantis' leadership, Florida created a statewide required Holocaust curriculum that teaches students about that horrific tragedy at every grade level in an age-appropriate manner. In fact, a Florida law – that he signed – requires that schools must teach about the Holocaust factually.