



Florida Governor Ron DeSantis Introduces State Legislation Banning CBDCs

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Florida Governor Ron DeSantis proposed legislation on Monday that would ban central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) from the Sunshine State, portraying it as a measure to safeguard Floridians' financial privacy.

The legislation would prohibit in Florida any CBDC that the U.S. Federal Reserve could introduce and any created by a foreign government, outlawing the technology entirely from being used as a form of money within the state.

DeSantis introduced the legislation from behind a podium with the phrase “Big Brother’s Digital Dollar” plastered across it. He skewered the technology as a vehicle that could lead to government overreach and pave the way for financial surveillance.

“What [a] central bank digital currency is all about is surveilling Americans and controlling Americans,” he said. “You're opening up a major can of worms, and you're handing a central bank huge, huge amounts of power, and they will use that power.”

In interviews with Decrypt, ShapeShift founder Erik Voorhees has also called CBDCs “Orwellian,” and whistleblower Edward Snowden has called them “cryptofascist currencies.”

CBDCs are similar to stablecoins in that they are pegged to the price of a sovereign currency like the U.S. dollar. But CBDCs are issued and maintained by a nation state or central bank instead of minted by private companies on decentralized networks like Tether’s USDT or Circle’s USDC, the two largest stablecoins by market cap.

The Fed has explored the idea of a CBDC since 2016, and the U.S. central bank has repeatedly said it would need approval from congress before launching one. Analysts have said the technology could foster more financial inclusion—banking the unbanked—but critics oppose it due to the possibility of financial surveillance and an expansion of government control.

Though the Fed has said it's still in the early stages of researching a CBDC and hasn't determined whether launching one would be worth it, the idea that a digital dollar is a threat to civil liberties has gained traction in Republican circles. China launched its own CBDC, the Digital Yuan, last year, which supporters of a U.S. CBDC have referenced to suggest the U.S. risks falling behind on the technology, while critics have said it simply illustrates China's continued capital controls.

During his remarks, DeSantis called out the crypto executive order from President Biden last year that directed government agencies to get aligned on a crypto roadmap. It included a section titled "Exploring a U.S. Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)."

Without explicitly naming names, DeSantis said that CBDCs would be used to "exercise their agenda" if introduced, including, he argued, limiting the amount of gasoline a person could purchase or preventing them from buying a firearm.

The Florida governor called on other states to enact similar legislation prohibiting CBDCs. He said that Texas seemed likely to follow, given conversations he's had with Dan Patrick, the state's lieutenant governor.

DeSantis hasn't yet declared whether he'll run to become the GOP's next presidential nominee. Still, he's considered one of the leading candidates based on recent surveys, according to Morning Consult's 2024 GOP Primary Tracker.

And DeSantis isn't the only conservative voice that's recently taken aim against a CBDC in the U.S.

Republican House Majority Whip Tom Emmer (R-MN) reintroduced legislation last month limiting the Fed's ability to issue a CBDC directly to American consumers. And earlier this month, Emmer spoke before the Cato Institute about CBDCs, where he said the technology would erode Americans' financial privacy.

Fox News host Tucker Carlson recently connected the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank to the potential rollout of a CBDC on his show "Tucker Carlson Tonight." While he cautioned, "we're not alleging a conspiracy here," he also alleged that bank consolidation will lead to more government control and a CBDC being launched.

"If people don't start making a lot of noise and exerting a lot of pressure, it'll mean... a currency that politicians control," Carlson said. "Sign up for the CBDC app today to get your food stamps."