

DAILY KOS

Rightwing “Rick DeSantis” Agenda for America

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The sane portion of American society owes a big thank you to Florida Governor Rick DeSantis for clearly spelling out the rightwing Republican agenda for undermining public health and circumventing democracy in the United States. Right now DeSantis is feuding with Donald Trump because Trump blocks his path to the 2024 Republican nomination for President. DeSantis plans to run to the right of Trump and may be even more dangerous because unlike Trump, DeSantis appears to be competent.

In his State of Florida speech on January 12, DeSantis managed to touch on every rightwing buzzword and strategy he and his abettors will be pushing in the 2022 and 2024 elections. Be clear, DeSantis is speaking to white Floridians and mobilizing them to hold onto power invoking God as a rallying cry. These are excerpts from his speech with my translations. This is a scary future if these people are successful.

Note: DeSantis is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the hedge fund company Citadel Securities. Citadel is run by multi-billionaire Republican Party financial angel Kenneth C. Griffin who “donated” five million dollars to DeSantis campaign organizations in 2021. Griffin owns 80% of Citadel. DeSantis and Griffin were accused of a conflict of interest because Citadel owns \$16 million shares of Regeneron Pharmaceuticals. DeSantis promotes the companies COVID treatment. Other wealthy Republicans hoping to benefit from a DeSantis 2024 Presidential campaign include the founder of WeatherTech, the co-founder of Home Depot and New York Jets owner Woody Johnson. Word to Johnson, it is unlikely a DeSantis campaign can bail out miserable New York football.

Thus Spake DeSantis:

“While so many around the country have consigned the people’s rights to the graveyard, Florida has stood as freedom’s vanguard . . . Florida has become the escape hatch for those chafing under authoritarian, arbitrary and seemingly never-ending mandates and restrictions.” **Translation: The people who disagree with me, especially the Democrats, are “authoritarians” opposed to “freedom.”**

“Even today, across the nation we see students denied an education due to reckless, politically-motivated school closures, workers denied employment due to heavy-handed mandates and Americans denied freedoms due to a coercive biomedical apparatus. These unprecedented policies have been as ineffective as they have been destructive. They are grounded more in blind adherence to Faucian declarations than they are in the constitutional traditions that are the foundation of free nations.” **Translation: Anthony Fauci and the Center for Disease**

control are evil because they “denied freedoms” by pushing for masks, vaccination, and social distancing while trying to combat the COVID pandemic. DeSantis refuses to enforce any of the mandates, although he acknowledged he received the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

“Florida is a free state. We reject the biomedical security state that curtails liberty, ruins livelihoods and divides society. And we will protect the rights of individuals to live their lives free from the yoke of restrictions and mandates. Florida has stood strong as the rock of freedom. And upon this rock we must build Florida’s future.” **Translation: Freedom means your unrestricted right to spread disease and infect other people.**

“Our nation is, though, facing economic problems stemming from reckless federal policies, especially the most sustained Inflation our country has witnessed in decades.” **Translation: Oppose federal Build Back Better investment in infrastructure, social services, and a Greener America.**

“I’m happy to note that Florida is again ranked number three for K-12 achievement in the latest Education Week Quality Counts rankings. We have worked hard to keep schools open, increase teacher compensation, promote workforce education and protect the rights of parents . . . We faced opposition — from hysterical media, from unions and the politicians they control. We even faced lawsuits aiming to close the schools, but we wouldn’t allow fear or politics to harm our kids. **Translation: This is partly true. By some measures, Florida schools are ranked third among the states, however there have been COVID school closings. In September 2021, four Florida school districts were forced to close because of COVID infections. Florida, an anti-union state, ranks 46th in average teacher salaries, ahead of only Mississippi, West Virginia, New Mexico, and South Dakota.**

“Florida has enacted a Parents’ Bill of Rights . . . 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.” **Translation: Florida will deputize rightwing vigilante groups to police teachers to make sure students do not learn about the history of the United States and continuing racial inequities.**

“Florida’s public college and university system is ranked number one in the nation yet again.” **Translation: Florida colleges were ranked 3rd by the conservative Cato Institute and 40th by U.S. News and World Report. Its public college system was ranked 19th in the country by U.S. News.**

“We promised bold action to safeguard Florida’s natural resources, improve water quality and restore the Everglades . . . We resolved to leave our unique natural inheritance to God better than we found it, and we are fulfilling that pledge.” **Translation: To quote DeSantis, “We’re not doing any left-wing stuff,” so nothing bold.**

“Florida is a law and order state. We will not allow law enforcement to be defunded, bail to be eliminated, criminals to be prematurely released from prison or prosecutors to ignore the law.” **Translation: No police reform in Florida.**

“Law and order requires strong borders. The crisis at the US-Mexico border over the past year has witnessed staggering illegal migration and a massive influx of narcotics like

fentanyl.” **Translation: Undocumented immigrants are the cause of the country’s drug crisis. Reject any immigration reform.**

“To ensure that elections are conducted in accordance with the rule of law, I have proposed an election integrity unit whose sole focus will be the enforcement of Florida’s election laws.”

Translation: Florida will restrict voting rights whenever it can to ensure Republicans get elected. It will especially target potential Black and Latino voters. In 2018, two-thirds of Florida voters approved a constitutional amendment restoring voting rights to 1.4 million Floridians who had been convicted of a felony but had completed their sentences and were no longer under legal restrictions. The vast majority of these people were African American men, many of whom had been convicted of minor crimes as youths. In 2019, DeSantis and Republicans overrode voter intentions and passed a voting tax disenfranchising these voters unless they repaid Florida for all legal fees involved in their criminal procedures.

“I also recommend that the Legislature strengthen protections for Floridians’ 2nd Amendment rights. These important rights should not depend on the whims of politicians who reject the existence of those rights. Finally, we have an opportunity to strengthen protections for the right to life, without which the other rights mean little.” **Translation: You have a right to a gun but not to terminate an unwanted or unhealthy pregnancy.**

“Be thankful that God has blessed us to live and serve in America’s liberty outpost, the free state of Florida!” **Translation: God agrees with DeSantis.**