

Republican governor battles the Democratic president over vaccines

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TALLAHASSEE – Gov. Ron DeSantis said Thursday that Florida is suing to block the newly released Biden administration rule that larger employers assure their workers are vaccinated or undergoing frequent testing for COVID-19.

The Republican governor called the White House approach unconstitutional and a certain drag on the economy.

“Individuals should make informed choices about their own health care. They shouldn’t be coerced into getting a jab,” DeSantis said. “In this situation, you’re going to have people that are going to have to make that decision, do you get fired from your job or do you do this that’s something you may not want to do.”

Florida is asking the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals to halt the new rule, issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The rule requires companies with 100 or more employees to ensure by Jan. 4 that workers are fully vaccinated or test negative for COVID-19 at least once a week.

A number of Republican-led states are expected to file similar lawsuits challenging the OSHA rule, which had been promised by Biden but which took weeks to fully develop before being rolled out Thursday.

DeSantis has already called Florida lawmakers into a special session beginning Nov. 15 to block the vaccine mandate on businesses, along with enacting steps to strengthen the state’s Parents Bill of Rights law that he’s used to combat mask mandates in schools.

DeSantis said the lawsuit doesn’t disrupt plans for the special session, although he held out hope that judges could already block enforcement of the rule by then. The governor cited as a problem with the rule its lack of making any accommodation for workers who already contracted COVID-19 and built up some level of immunity.

DeSantis has relied on advisors, including controversial new Florida Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo, who have advocated that herd immunity is a way of combatting the virus, while downplaying the importance of vaccines and mitigation efforts.

About 60,000 Floridians have died from COVID-19, while 3.6 million have been sickened. Just under 60% of the population has been fully vaccinated, ranking the state 21st in the nation.

“I just think people are so sick of constantly being bossed around, restricted, mandated all these different things. We’ve had enough of it,” DeSantis said of the new OSHA rule. “We want people to be able to make their own decisions.”

The lawsuit is the third that Florida under DeSantis has filed in recent weeks against the Biden administration. DeSantis, who faces a re-election campaign next year but is already eyed as a possible Republican presidential contender in 2024, has sued over federal immigration policy and vaccine requirements for federal contractors.

Critics see the governor intent on enacting state policies that amplify his standing with the conservative voting base stirred by former President Donald Trump.

For months, DeSantis has been emailing campaign fund-raising pitches to supporters almost immediately after putting in play proposals involving immigration, social media sites and his support for law enforcement.

One of three Democrats challenging him for governor next year, Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried, condemned DeSantis’ effort to block measures aimed at reducing the threat of COVID-19.

“The governor himself is now trying to enact his own mandates to block businesses, local governments, and school boards from protecting their own constituents,” Fried said. “Once again, Gov. DeSantis is putting his personal ambitions ahead of the well-being of Floridians.”

DeSantis said the state is also preparing to challenge other Biden emergency regulations unveiled Thursday for health care workers, including those at nursing homes caring for elderly and sick residents at high risk for COVID-19.

The new regulations require workers at health care facilities receiving either Medicare or Medicaid funding to be vaccinated by Jan. 4, with no option of being tested instead.

DeSantis said the White House was making an “attempt to shoehorn policy through...bureaucracy,” and avoid seeking congressional approval for such action. The governor predicted Congress would not approve the requirements.

At a time when the economy is struggling with supply chain problems, an uptick in inflation, and job creation levels that are less than expected, DeSantis warned that the new vaccine mandates would cause more disruption to businesses and the workforce.

“The practical result of this is it’s going to exacerbate a lot of what we’re seeing with the economy,” he said, adding, “this is going to cause more economic pain.”

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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE CITY OF RIVIERA BEACH, FLORIDA NOTICE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

The City Council of the City of Riviera Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida will conduct a Public Hearing on Wednesday, November 17, 2021, at 6:00 PM or soon thereafter, and from time to time thereafter as necessary, at the Riviera Beach Event Center located at 190 E 13th Street, Riviera Beach, FL 33404, to consider enactment of the below proposed Ordinance on second and final reading.

The City of Riviera Beach proposes to adopt the following ordinance: “Comprehensive Plan Amendment”, Ordinance Number 4132. A public hearing on the ordinance will be held on Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at the Riviera Beach Event Center located at 190 E 13th Street, Riviera Beach, FL 33404.

To obtain a complete copy, please contact the Office of the City Clerk between the hours of 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM, except weekends and holidays at (561) 845-4090 or by email at cityclerk@rivierabeach.org.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIVIERA BEACH, PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY’S ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BASED ON EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REVIEW IN ORDER TO PROVIDE CONSISTENCY WITH CURRENT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS PER SECTION 163.3191(4), FLORIDA STATUTES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DELETING ANY AND ALL REFERENCES TO RULE 9J-5; FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, AS PROVIDED WITHIN ALL ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, MORE SPECIFICALLY THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT ELEMENT, AND TO ADDRESS PERIL OF FLOOD PRINCIPLES PER SECTION 163.3178(2)(F), FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS AND SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE AND BE ADVISED, that if any interested person desires to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this hearing, such interested person, at own expense, will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, persons needing special accommodations to participate in the proceedings should contact the City Manager’s Office at 561-845-4010 no later than 48 hours prior to the proceedings. If hearing impaired, telephone the Florida Relay Services 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice) for assistance.

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