



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on April 10, 2024

## Private Meeting with Donors Shows DeSantis Has Eyes Set on 2028

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis isn't abandoning his hopes of sitting in the Oval Office yet.

As reported by [NBC News](#), the once-rising star in the GOP, whose presidential campaign was widely seen as a spectacular failure, met with approximately 100 of his closest supporters and donors at South Florida's Hard Rock Hotel and Casino on Saturday. It was both a "thank you" to his backers and a subtle indication that more is yet to come.

Those within DeSantis' circle say he has his eyes on a 2028 White House bid, when Donald Trump is certain to be out of the picture.

Since dropping out of the Republican primary and refocusing on his gubernatorial duties full-time, DeSantis has remained in communication with his primary political contributors, sustained his attention on immigration matters beyond Florida (such as deploying additional National Guardsmen to the southern border), advocated for federal constitutional amendments to establish congressional term limits, and openly endorsed the sort of culture-war initiatives that initially elevated his profile as a Republican figure on the national stage.

Supporters of DeSantis perceive these actions, coupled with the weekend gathering at the Hard Rock, as indications that the Florida governor is once again contemplating a presidential run. With term limits preventing him from seeking reelection as governor, DeSantis acknowledged during a February expression of gratitude to supporters that he had not definitively ruled out any future pursuits. However, he cautioned that it would be premature to make such assertions at this time.

One DeSantis supporter who was present at the weekend's event at the Hard Rock told NBC, "I think you can absolutely read between the lines. He has done nothing to try and downplay the idea, nor should he."

During the weekend's events, DeSantis did not explicitly broach the topic of running for president again, as reported by three attendees. However, he conveyed to the audience his belief that two significant Florida ballot initiatives — one concerning the incorporation of abortion protections into the state constitution and another regarding the legalization of recreational marijuana — would not succeed come Election Day. Additionally, he discussed the conservative-driven changes at the state level since he assumed office, drawing parallels to developments at the federal level.

One of the most high-profile guests at the event was Representative Chip Roy (R-Texas), one of the few members of Congress who openly endorsed DeSantis' presidential campaign.



AP Images  
Ron DeSantis



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“Chip Roy really got into how f— up the federal government is, and how it looks like the current speaker is going to be taken out,” one attendee of the Saturday gathering said. “It was pretty much the DeSantis-Massey-Chip Roy show that they did throughout the campaign. Very familiar to when he was rolling out the blueprint stuff.”

And NBC further reported:

The event was hosted by pro-DeSantis super PAC Fight Right, which emerged towards the end of his campaign for president. It was stocks with some of DeSantis’ closest allies and seen as the byproduct of continued tension with Never Back Down, which initially served as the main pro-DeSantis super PAC.

Despite being hosted by a super PAC, the event was not a fundraiser and money was not raised as part of the event. It was billed as a “thank you” to donors.

This marks the most recent focus on donor retention, an aspect that was previously perceived as a vulnerability for DeSantis. Shortly after concluding his campaign activities, DeSantis convened a call with donors and supporters, including delegates who had committed to backing him at the RNC.

DeSantis reportedly steered clear of mentioning Trump at the private donor event and has been respectful of the man with whom he had engaged in a bitter primary rivalry. Insiders say this is part of the governor’s effort to repair his damaged standing with Republicans nationwide.

“I think there is certainly a need for reformation. He needs to repair his image nationally,” an attendee said. “I don’t know anyone is going to be like sending him to Pennsylvania right now, and I don’t know that that would do any good.”

In recent days, DeSantis has continued his streak of tackling hot-button national issues by means of state legislation. On Monday, he signed two pieces of legislation enhancing the state’s addiction-recovery program, asserting that these actions would strengthen the state’s efforts to combat the overdose crisis.

One of the bills is intended to protect first responders from exposure to fentanyl. The other [designates June 6](#) as a day for the Florida Department of Health to promote “awareness of the dangers of opioid overdose and the availability and safe use of opioid antagonists as an effective way to rapidly reverse the effects of opioid overdose.”

DeSantis clearly isn’t content to be remembered in history as merely a governor and a failed presidential candidate. Another attempt at the presidency is inevitable. But will voters be willing to give him another chance after the heated 2024 primary?



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