



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on May 19, 2023

Trump Sides With Disney in its Dispute With DeSantis

Former President Donald Trump escalated his war of words Thursday afternoon against his chief rival for the Republican nomination, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, blaming DeSantis for the decision of the Walt Disney Company to cancel a proposed \$1 billion development in the state.

"Desanctimonious," has been "caught in the mouse trap" by "single-handedly" costing Florida in excess of 2,000 jobs, Trump said in a released statement — using one of his favorite nicknames for the Florida governor. "DeSantis' failed war on Disney has done little for his limping shadow campaign, and now is doing even less for Florida's economy," Trump claimed.



AP Images

A spokesman for DeSantis countered that Disney's decision was more of an economic than a political decision.

Trump is well-known for attacking any Republican rival standing in the way of his own presidential ambitions, resorting to nicknames such as "Desanctimonious" for the Florida governor, "Lyn' Ted" for Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, "Little Marco" for Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, and "Low-energy Jeb" for former Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

Now, as *The Wall Street Journal* opined, "the former President sided with the woke Mickey Mouse to score points over the Florida Governor."

Earlier in the week, Trump said on Truth Social — his social-media platform — that DeSantis is "being absolutely destroyed" by Disney. "His original P.R. plan fizzled, so now he's going back with a new one in order to save face. Disney's next move will be the announcement that no more money will be invested in Florida because of the Governor."

"In fact, they could even announce a slow withdrawal or sale of certain properties, or the whole thing. Watch! That would be a killer."

Trump condemned DeSantis' actions against Disney as "so unnecessary," dismissing it as just "a political STUNT!"

Chris Christie, the former governor of New Jersey, joined Trump in criticizing DeSantis over the Disney feud, contending that DeSantis' actions are not "conservative."

So exactly what did DeSantis do that Trump and Christie believe is not "conservative"?

Rather than DeSantis launching a battle against Disney "singlehandedly," as Trump described it, it was Disney that threw the first punch in retaliation for a law passed by the Florida Legislature and signed by Governor DeSantis. Last year, the Parental Rights in Education law was passed, which, among other things, restricted what type of sexually related topics can be discussed in the public elementary schools



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in Florida.

Critics of the law attempted to re-frame the issue by calling the legislation the “Don’t Say Gay” law, in an attempt to imply that issues surrounding homosexuality cannot be taught at all in public schools. Two days later, Disney pledged \$5 million in support of LGBTQ “rights” and publicly condemned the law.

Rather than simply take it, as most Republican politicians do, when a powerful big business such as Disney attempts to bully a state with economic threats, DeSantis struck back, calling for an end to Disney’s self-government. The Florida State Legislature created the Reedy Creek Improvement District (RCID) for Disney in 1967, which essentially gives Disney the same authority and responsibility as a county government.

In 1967, Florida created two municipalities within RCID — Bay Lake and Lake Buena Vista — nestled between Orange and Osceola Counties.

With this special preference, Disney was able to build roads and buildings.

No doubt Disney’s woke executives believed that their economic clout in Florida would allow them to dictate government policy beyond their self-governing district, but the Florida Legislature — not just DeSantis acting alone — dissolved this sweetheart deal. When the dissolution went into effect, Governor DeSantis announced, “The corporate kingdom has come to an end. You cannot have a corporation controlling its own government. That is not good governance.”

How Christie can argue that an arrangement allowing a private company to have a preference not given to other companies — including small business — is “conservative” is not clear, but both he and Trump evidently see a political opening against DeSantis. Which is, of course, what woke corporations such as Disney are counting on. They hope their socially liberal agenda will not be opposed by politicians because other politicians will side with them, charging those who are against special preferences as “costing jobs.”



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