

CIVICS 101: INTRO TO DESANTISLAND

State lawmakers are providing fodder for Gov. Ron DeSantis' presidential aspirations. Can Florida survive the fallout?

Over the past several months, as his road-show rehearsal for a presumed presidential run proceeds apace, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has managed to take full advantage of his party's supermajority in Tallahassee.

Personal firearms, abortion, transgender healthcare, school curricula, capital punishment, even drag shows — Republicans have pushed through a raft of new legislation calculated to set right-wing hearts aflutter and liberal hair on fire.

Of course, it's often difficult to see the vast expanse of the legislative meat counter for the individual sausages (as it were) — so we've created a handy-dandy charticle!

There's no guarantee that all the bills outlined in the graphic below will make it to the governor's desk by the time the gavel drops on the current session on Friday, May 5. Regardless, DeSantis will be able to take to the campaign trail and tout a homegrown legislative blueprint that burnishes his leadership bona fides and delivers on his incessantly repeated pledge to beat back "the woke mob."

Will this Florida blueprint propel the 44-year-old Jacksonville native to the Republican nomination in Milwaukee a year from now?

The results of two recent nationwide polls aren't exactly auspicious on that count. In a recent NBC News poll of likely Republican primary voters, DeSantis trailed Donald Trump by 15 percentage points; a similar *Wall Street Journal* poll had the governor down by 13 to the defeated and indicted ex-POTUS. And the governor has taken some knocks for his personality (or lack thereof).

Of course, no matter how the upcoming presidential race plays out, Floridians will have to contend with the fallout from DeSantis' strikingly big-government agenda for years to come.

Note: Legislation in the chart below is presented roughly in reverse chronological order, and from done deal to least likely to happen. Icons indicate which basic human rights and/or American cultural touchstones they indulge or desecrate.

— Tom Finkel



Illustrations: Tom Carlson; DeSantis photo: Right Cheer/Creative Commons

BILL	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	VOTES, BILL STATUS AS OF APRIL 20, 2023	INTRODUCED BY	RELATED BILLS	TL;DR
House Bill 1	Education	Revises provisions relating to Family Empowerment Scholarship Program, Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, part-time enrollment in public schools, transportation of students, graduations requirements, Commissioner of Education duties, & educator certifications.	3/17: Passed House (83-27); 3/23: Passed Senate (26-12); 3/27: Signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis	Kaylee Tuck (Republican, District 83, Lake Placid), Susan Plasencia (Republican, District 37, Winter Park)		Down with public schools. Up with "universal school choice."
House Bill 543	Public Safety	Authorizes person to carry concealed weapon or firearm if he or she is licensed to do so or meets specified requirements; requires person who is carrying concealed weapon or firearm without license to carry identification & display upon demand by law enforcement; prohibits person who is carrying concealed weapon or firearm without license from carrying such weapon or firearm in specified locations; authorizes nonresident to carry concealed weapon or firearm in this state if he or she meets same requirements as resident; requires Office of Safe Schools to develop behavioral threat management operational process.	3/24: Passed House (76-32); 3/30: Passed Senate (27-13); 4/3: Signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis	Robert Charles "Chuck" Brannan III (Republican, District 10, Macclenny)		Concealed-carry permit? We don't have to show you no stinking concealed-carry permit!
Senate Bill 300	Pregnancy and Parenting Support	Citing this act as the "Heartbeat Protection Act"; requiring the Department of Health to contract for the management and delivery of parenting support services, in addition to pregnancy support services; prohibiting physicians from knowingly performing or inducing a termination of pregnancy after the gestational age of the fetus is determined to be more than 6 weeks, rather than 15 weeks, with exceptions; providing an exception if the woman obtaining the abortion is doing so because she is a victim of rape, incest, or human trafficking, subject to certain conditions; requiring that medications intended for use in a medical abortion be dispensed in person by a physician, etc.	4/3: Passed Senate (26-13); 4/13: Passed House (70-40); 4/13: Signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis	Erin Grall (Republican, District 29, Fort Pierce)		Bans abortions after six weeks of pregnancy with drastic exceptions that allow up to 15 weeks.
Senate Bill 450	Death Penalty	Requiring a determination of a specified number of jurors, rather than jury unanimity, for a sentencing recommendation of death to the court; requiring a determination of a specified number of jurors, rather than jury unanimity, for a sentencing recommendation of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole to the court; requiring the court to impose the recommended sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole if fewer than eight jurors recommend a sentence of death; requiring the court to include in its written order the reasons for not accepting the jury's recommended sentence, if applicable, etc.	3/30: Passed Senate (29-10); 4/13: Passed House (80-30); 4/20: Signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis	Blaise Ingoglia (Republican, District 11, Spring Hill)	House Bill 555, House Bill 609, Senate Bill 520	Juries may recommend a death sentence if at least eight of the twelve members agree it should be imposed.
Senate Bill 254	Treatments for Sex Reassignment	Granting courts of this state temporary emergency jurisdiction over a child present in this state if the child has been subjected to or is threatened with being subjected to sex-reassignment prescriptions or procedures; providing that, for purposes of warrants to take physical custody of a child in certain child custody enforcement proceedings, serious physical harm to the child includes, but is not limited to, being subjected to sex-reassignment prescriptions or procedures; prohibiting certain public entities from expending state funds for the provision of sex-reassignment prescriptions or procedures; requiring certain licensed facilities, by a specified date and as a condition of licensure thereafter, to provide a signed attestation of specified information to the Agency for Health Care Administration; prohibiting sex-reassignment prescriptions and procedures for patients younger than 18 years of age, etc.	4/4: Passed Senate (27-12); 4/19: Passed House (82-31)	Clay Yarborough (Republican, District 4, Jacksonville)		Bans minors from receiving gender-affirming care (e.g., puberty blockers, hormones). Bans state-funded coverage for transgender care.
Senate Bill 1438	Protection of Children	Prohibiting a governmental entity from issuing a permit or otherwise authorizing a person to conduct a performance in violation of specified provisions; providing criminal penalties; authorizing the Division of Hotels and Restaurants of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation to fine, suspend, or revoke the license of any public lodging establishment or public food service establishment if the establishment admits a child to an adult live performance; specifying that the Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation is given full power and authority to revoke or suspend the license of any person issued under the Beverage Law when it is determined or found by the division upon sufficient cause appearing that he or she is maintaining a licensed premises that admits a child to an adult live performance; prohibiting a person from knowingly admitting a child to an adult live performance, etc.	4/11: Passed Senate (28-12); 4/19: Passed House (82-32)	Clay Yarborough (Republican, District 4, Jacksonville)		Bans minors from "adult live performances" with "lewd content." Doesn't specify drag shows or pride festivals, but you get the idea.
House Bill 1521	Facility Requirements Based on Sex	Provides requirements for exclusive use of restrooms & changing facilities by gender; prohibits willfully entering restroom or changing facility designated for opposite sex & refusing to depart when asked to do so; provides requirements for exclusive use of domestic violence centers by gender; provides requirements for correctional institutions; requires entities that receive state licenses to submit compliance documentation; authorizes AG to bring enforcement actions provides exception for individuals born with certain genetically or biochemically verifiable disorder of sex development.	4/19: Passed House (80-37); Referred to Fiscal Policy in Senate	Rachel Lora Saunders Plakon (Republican, District 36, Longwood)	Senate Bill 1674	Dictates which bathroom you use, because you can't be trusted to do that yourself, groomer.
House Bill 1069	Education	Defines "sex" for Florida Early Learning-20 Education Code; provides requirements relating to titles & pronouns; revises provisions relating to instruction & materials for specified instruction relating to reproductive health; provides additional requirements for instruction regarding human sexuality; provides district school boards are responsible for materials used in classroom libraries; revises provisions relating to objections of certain materials & process related to such objections; revises school principal, school district & district school board duties & responsibilities relating to certain materials & processes.	3/31: Passed House (77-35); Referred to Fiscal Policy Committee in Senate	Stan McClain (Republican, District 27, Ocala), Adam Anderson (Republican, District 57, Tarpon Springs)	Senate Bill 1320	Sex and gender are determined at birth and so are personal pronouns. Mention of sexual orientation and gender identity is verboten until ninth grade. Abstinence and monogamy über alles! Abets parental requests for book banning.
House Bill 899	Surrendered Newborn Infants	Authorizes hospitals, emergency medical services stations, & fire stations to use newborn infant safety devices to accept surrendered newborn infants if device meets specified criteria; requires hospitals, emergency medical services stations, or fire stations to physically check & test devices at specified intervals; authorizes parent to leave newborn infant with medical staff or licensed healthcare professional at hospital after delivery of newborn infant; authorizes parent to surrender newborn infant by calling 911 & requesting EMS provider to meet at specified location to retrieve newborn infant.	3/31: Passed House (111-0)	Jennifer Canady (Republican, District 50, Lakeland)		Hospitals and emergency medical facilities may install "high-tech newborn infant safety devices," to facilitate abandonment of unwanted newborns (cf. Senate Bill 300).
House Bill 1403	Protections of Medical Conscience	Authorizes health care providers & health care payors to opt out of participation in or payment for health care services by conscience-based objections without discrimination or threat of adverse actions; requires health care provider to notify patient and health care provider's supervisor or employee or educational institution in writing when such health care provider declines to participate in health care services; prohibits boards and Department of Health from taking certain disciplinary actions.	4/20: Added to special order calendar	Joel Rudman, M.D. (Republican, District 3, Navarre)		Allows healthcare providers and insurers to deny medical services on the basis of moral, religious, and ethical beliefs.
House Bill 1281	Preemption Over Utility Service Restrictions	Prohibiting certain local governmental entities, subject to specified exceptions, from enacting or enforcing a resolution, an ordinance, a rule, a code, or a policy or from taking any action that restricts or prohibits the use of appliances; revising an exception to preemption, etc.	4/20: Added to Special Order Calendar 4/25	James Buchanan (Republican, District 74, Osprey)	Senate Bill 1256	You can pry my gas stove out of my cold dead hands!
Senate Bill 1718	Immigration	Prohibiting counties and municipalities, respectively, from providing funds to any person, entity, or organization to issue identification documents to an individual who does not provide proof of lawful presence in the United States; specifying that certain driver licenses and permits issued by other states exclusively to unauthorized immigrants are not valid in this state; requiring certain hospitals to collect patient immigration status data information on admission or registration forms; increasing the maximum fine that may be imposed for a first violation of specified provisions relating to employing, hiring, recruiting, or referring aliens for private or public employment; creating a certain rebuttable presumption that the public employer, contractor, or subcontractor has not violated specified provisions with respect to the hiring of an unauthorized alien.	4/20: On committee agenda, Fiscal Policy	Blaise Ingoglia (Republican, District 11, Spring Hill)	House Bill 1617	Makes it a crime to "knowingly and willfully" transport or harbor undocumented immigrants "into or within" the state.
House Bill 999	Postsecondary Educational Institutions	Revises powers & duties of Board of Governors; revises academic & research excellence standards for preeminent state research universities; provides requirements for hiring university faculty; provides requirements for employment, promotion, & evaluation processes for state university employees; authorizes state university boards of trustees to review tenure status of faculty members; requires such boards to confirm selection & reappointment of specified personnel; requires state university presidents to annually present specified information to such boards; creates Institute for Risk Management & Insurance Education within College of Business at University of Central Florida; revises requirements for general education core courses.	4/19: Favorable by Education & Employment Committee	Alex Andrade (Republican, District 2, Pensacola)	Senate Bill 266	No state-funded Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs at public universities and colleges. Bill restricts teaching of critical race theory while expanding powers of Board of Governors and university presidents.
Senate Bill 1220	Defamation and Related Actions	Specifying that the professional journalist's privilege does not apply to defamation or related actions; specifying that the publication of an altered or unaltered photograph, video, or audio recording may form the basis of a defamation action; specifying that a defamatory allegation is made with actual malice for purposes of a defamation action under certain circumstances; providing that the negligence standard applies in a defamation action in which the defendant does not identify the source for a defamatory statement.	4/19: On committee agenda, Rules, temporarily postponed	Jason Brodeur (Republican, District 10, Lake Mary)		Makes it easier for non-elected government officials, including police officers, to sue for defamation.
House Bill 1543	Minimum Age for Firearm Purchase or Transfer	Reducing [from 21 to 18] minimum age at which person may purchase firearm & age of purchasers to which specified licensees are prohibited from selling or transferring firearm.	3/23: Added to Second Reading Calendar	Bobby Payne (Republican, District 20, Palatka)		Sweet child of mine, you aren't old enough to drink legally, but to celebrate your 18th birthday, here's your very own Ruger!
Senate Bill 952	Employer Coverage of Gender Dysphoria Treatment	Citing this act as the "Reverse Woke Act"; requiring employers that provide coverage of gender dysphoria treatment to also cover the full costs associated with treatment that reverses such gender dysphoria treatment, regardless of the rate of coverage provided for the initial treatment; prohibiting employers from making coverage of the subsequent treatment contingent on whether the employee receives such treatment in this state; creating a right of action for aggrieved persons to recover actual total costs and damages from an employer or former employer, as applicable, under certain circumstances, etc.	3/7: Introduced	Blaise Ingoglia (Senate Republican, District 11, Spring Hill), Taylor Michael Yarkowsky (House Republican, District 25, Montverde)	House Bill 1265 (Identical)	Employers that cover gender reassignment treatment must also foot the bill for reversal thereof.
Senate Bill 1096	Monuments and Memorials	Citing this act as the "Historical Monuments and Memorials Protection Act"; defining the terms "memorial" and "monument" providing that a person or an entity that damages, defaces, destroys, or removes a monument or memorial is liable for treble the costs to return, repair, or replace the monument or memorial; prohibiting the placement of specified objects on or near a memorial that existed before a specified date, etc.	4/5: Moved to Rules Committee	Jonathan Martin (Republican, District 33, Fort Myers)		Allows citizens and entities to sue over unauthorized removal or alteration of Confederate monuments.