



CITIZENS FOR
RESPONSIBILITY &
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

June 29, 2022

BY EMAIL: desantis.opengov@eog.myflorida.com

Executive Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
400 S Monroe St. Suite 209
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Public Information Officer:

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington ("CREW") makes this request for records from the Executive Office of the Governor pursuant to the Public Records Act, Chapter 119 of the Florida Statutes.

Specifically, CREW requests:

1. All communications between the office of Governor Ron DeSantis, or any individual acting on behalf of the office of the Governor and any outside parties regarding funding for a new Pasco County sports facility (including but not limited to mentions of political activism, gun control, the Tampa Bay Rays, or vetoing funding) from March 9, 2022, to the date this request is processed.
2. All communications between the office of Gov. DeSantis, or any individual acting on behalf of the office of the Governor and the Department of Economic Opportunity regarding funding for the Pasco County sports facility (including but not limited to mentions of political activism, gun control, the Tampa Bay Rays, or vetoing funding) from March 9, 2022, to the date this request is processed.
3. All communications between the office of Gov. DeSantis, or any individual acting on behalf of the office of the Governor and the Florida Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism regarding the Pasco County sports facility (including but not limited to mentions of political activism, gun control, the Tampa Bay Rays, or vetoing funding) from March 9, 2022, to the date this request is processed.

Please search for responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. We seek records of any kind, including paper records, electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, photographs, data, and graphical material. Our request includes without limitation all correspondence, letters, emails, text messages, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages, and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings,

telephone conversations, or discussions. Our request also includes any attachments to emails and other records, as well as emails to which the subjects of this request were cc'ed or bcc'ed.

By way of background, on March 9, 2022, Florida lawmakers proposed allocating \$35 million towards a new sports facility in Pasco County that was under consideration to become the Tampa Bay Rays' spring training site.¹ Following this proposal, public outrage at mass shootings in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas pressured government officials to address gun safety concerns.² In response, the Rays announced a partnership with gun violence prevention group, Everytown for Gun Safety, on Twitter.³ A week after the Rays' announcement, Gov. DeSantis, who was endorsed by the NRA during his gubernatorial campaign, vetoed the \$35 million dollar sports facility proposal, noting that he believes the money should be spent on the Florida public's benefit, not a single company or franchise.⁴ The proposal, however, classified the facility as open to the public for tournaments and events during the Rays' offseason, making DeSantis's veto explanation inconsistent with the proposal.⁵

Given that DeSantis recently signed a bill revoking Disney's "independent special district" status in response to the CEO announcing his support for repealing Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill, it seems DeSantis is willing to punish companies for political disagreements.⁶ The requested records will clarify DeSantis's reasons for vetoing the new Pasco County sports facility's funding. There is sufficient public interest in knowing if Gov. DeSantis was motivated by personal or campaign-related interests.

If it is your position that any portion of the requested records is exempt from disclosure, Chapter 119 requires you to state the basis of the exemption you contend is applicable. Fla. Stat. § 119.07(1)(e). CREW further requests that you state in writing and with particularity the reasons for any conclusion that a record is exempt or confidential. Fla. Stat. § 119.07(1)(f). If some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, Chapter 119 requires you to redact those portions and produce the remainder of the requested records. Fla. Stat. § 119.07(1)(d).

CREW agrees to pay up to \$100 for copies of the requested records. If copying fees are expected to exceed this amount, or if you anticipate that "extensive use" of information technology resources or extensive clerical or supervisory assistance as defined in section 119.07(4)(d) will be needed to fulfill this request, please contact me at (202) 408-5565 or nsus@citizensforethics.org.

¹ Aaron Parseghian, Pasco County Leaders Still Hopeful for Future Baseball Complex, WTSP, June 7, 2022, available at [WTSP](#)

² Louis Cappelli Jr., After Uvalde, Buffalo and dozens more, action is needed on gun control now | Opinion, Courier Post, June 9, 2022, available at [Courier Post](#)

³ Tampa Bay Rays, Twitter Statement, May 26, 2022, available at [Twitter](#)

⁴ Katherine Fung, Is Ron DeSantis Taking His Culture War to the Tampa Bay Rays?, Newsweek, June 3, 2022, available at [Newsweek](#)

⁵ Parseghian, available at [WTSP](#)

⁶ Bill Chapell, DeSantis wanted to punish Disney. Repealing its tax status may hurt taxpayers instead, NPR, April 22, 2022, available at [NPR](#)

June 29, 2022

Page 3

Where possible, please produce records in electronic format. Please send the requested records to me at either [REDACTED] or Grace Honig, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, [REDACTED].

Please contact me if you have any questions about this request or foresee any problems in fully releasing the requested records. We anticipate you will fulfill your obligations under Chapter 119. If it is necessary to file an action to enforce the Public Records Act, the court may award reasonable costs of enforcement, including attorneys' fees. Fla. Stat. § 119.12. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grace Honig". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Grace" written in a smaller, more compact script than the last name "Honig", which is larger and more prominent.

Grace Honig
Research Intern