



NEW REPORT

Governor Ron DeSantis Must Withdraw Joseph Ladapo's Nomination for Florida Surgeon General

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REPORT: Governor Ron DeSantis Must Withdraw Joseph Ladapo's Nomination for Florida Surgeon General

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis' acting Surgeon General, Dr. Joseph Ladapo, is a danger to the residents of Florida and the state of public health in America. Ladapo has a disturbing record of prolonging the pandemic on behalf of his boss by abandoning his training and taking political stances instead of following science and medicine, encouraging [vaccine skepticism](#), promoting [treatments](#) unproven against COVID-19, and [discouraging](#) the use of masks for children at a time when cases were spiking across the state. He even refused to say [whether or not he was vaccinated](#) at a recent committee hearing.

But Ladapo's bad judgment doesn't end there. While the people of Florida struggle to financially recover from the pandemic, Ladapo is accepting a six figure salary while aligning himself with dangerous conspiracy theorists. Ladapo cashes in on politicizing the pandemic and the people of Florida are left to fend for themselves. Any Republican who claims to care about competency in government or keeping Floridians safe and healthy must vote no on his confirmation.

Spreading Disinformation About Vaccines, Therapeutics, and Masks

Lying Shamelessly About Vaccines. Ladapo falsely insinuated that Americans were skeptical of the COVID-19 vaccines because the federal government has been concealing information about safety and efficacy, even going so far as to claim there has been a "[concerted effort](#)" to suppress stories of adverse vaccine reactions. In one of his many misleading opinion pieces, Ladapo [speculates](#) that "the risks of a Covid-19 vaccine may outweigh the benefits for certain low-risk populations...and people who have recovered from Covid-19," completely disregarding the medical evidence that natural immunity from previous infection is [not as effective](#) as a COVID-19 vaccine. Ladapo has also repeatedly questioned the safety of the vaccine for [pregnant women](#), despite pregnancy increasing the risk of severe COVID. The CDC has recommended pregnant women get [vaccinated](#), due to the extremely serious complications COVID can cause during pregnancy, such as preeclampsia and preterm birth.

Touting Disproven And Dangerous Medical Treatments. Ladapo continually demonstrates his medical quackery by pushing 'cures' such as hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin as treatments to COVID-19. Ladapo has stated that "physicians should feel empowered to prescribe [hydroxychloroquine](#)" despite the FDA's warning that "hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine have [not been shown to be safe and effective](#) for treating or preventing COVID-19." Ladapo is also an advocate for the anti-parasitic drug, [ivermectin](#),

disregarding the FDA's repeated proclamations that ivermectin has [never been proven](#) to be a safe or effective treatment against COVID-19.

Refusing To Accept Masks While Cases Spiked Throughout Florida. Despite nearly two years of scientific evidence that masks are critical in preventing the spread of COVID-19, Ladapo has refused to accept the science, calling masks a "[distraction](#)" and referring to vaccines, masks, and testing as "[the trifecta of stupidity](#)."

Extremist Beliefs And Ties To Conspiracy Theorists

Standing With Dangerous Conspiracy Groups. Dr. Ladapo has repeatedly aligned himself with groups trading in dangerous medical practices and outright lies. Ladapo attended the now infamous press event held by [America's Frontline Doctors](#) in June of 2020 that promoted rampant COVID-19 misinformation. USA Today reported that of the members in the group "[none claim to be infectious disease experts](#) or doctors working in a hospital emergency room or intensive care unit. Many have also been vocal critics of lockdowns and supporters of the Trump administration."

Putting Vulnerable Floridians In Harm's Way. As Ladapo continues to make misleading and false claims about COVID-19 to Floridians at large, he also refuses to practice basic human decency in his one-on-one interactions. After Ladapo requested a meeting with state Senator Tina Polsky, he [refused to wear a mask](#) in her office at her request, due to her high risk for COVID-19 infection and serious illness as a breast cancer patient. After the incident, Florida Senate leader [Wilton Simpson, a Republican, renounced Ladapo's behavior](#), saying "It shouldn't take a cancer diagnosis for people to respect each other's level of comfort with social interactions during a pandemic. What occurred in Senator Polsky's office was unprofessional and will not be tolerated in the Senate."

Championing A Deadly, Pre-Vaccine Herd Immunity Strategy. Ladapo was a vocal supporter of the Great Barrington Declaration, released in fall of 2020, which recommended that public health authorities [allow COVID-19 to spread rampently](#) throughout the American public in order to achieve herd immunity. The scientific community quickly [condemned](#) the plan, calling it "a dangerous fallacy unsupported by scientific evidence...Any pandemic management strategy relying upon immunity from natural infections for COVID-19 is flawed."

Politicizing The Pandemic For Personal Gain

Lying To Bolster His Credentials. In [several opinion](#) pieces, Dr. Ladapo claimed he took "care of patients with COVID-19 at UCLA's flagship hospital" during the first surge of the pandemic. MSNBC obtained scheduling documents from UCLA, confirming that between the start of the pandemic and September 2021, Dr. Ladapo was [at no point assigned to the COVID unit](#) and was never scheduled to treat COVID-19 patients. Medical professionals at UCLA shared that Ladapo's opinion pieces became a "[source of embarrassment](#)" for the hospital and his colleagues.

Disavowed By The Medical Community. When the Florida Department of Law Enforcement conducted a routine background investigation as part of the confirmation process, Ladapo's former supervisor at UCLA [strongly advised against confirming him](#), stating, "the people of Florida would be better served by a Surgeon General who grounds his policy decisions and recommendations on the best scientific evidence rather than opinions." According to the report, Ladapo's supervisor described how the acting surgeon general's unfounded statements, "created a stressful environment for his research and clinical colleagues and subordinates [some of whom believed the doctor] [violated the duty in the Hippocratic Oath](#) to behave honestly and ethically."

Taking A Six Figure Salary From Florida Taxpayers. Reports indicate that [Ladapo will bring home a \\$362,000](#) paycheck each year, a more than \$120,000 increase from his predecessor and a slap in the face to Floridians who are facing economic hardships due to the pandemic.

Making Misinformation Mainstream. Ladapo has repeatedly weaponized his medical degree and former position at UCLA in a thinly veiled attempt to appear as a creditable public health expert. At a 2021 press event, he [promised](#), "We're going to be very explicit of the difference between the science and our opinions." At the same event, he went on to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines do not prevent infection, [claiming](#) "there's nothing special about [COVID-19 vaccines] from any preventive measure..." Ladapo has continually utilized his public status to make outlandish and unsubstantiated claims, such as [stating](#) lockdowns were "shown by research to increase deaths overall but nonetheless still considered an acceptable solution."