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FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS RESPOND TO RECKLESS REPUBLICAN ATTACKS ON CHILDHOOD VACCINES

Tallahassee, FL — Today, in a press conference with Governor Ron DeSantis, Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo announced that Florida would seek to end childhood vaccine mandates.

All 50 states have childhood vaccine mandates, with all states allowing medical exemptions and [more than half](#) — including Florida — allowing religious exemptions. The World Health Organization estimates that vaccines have saved over [100 million infant lives](#) in the last 50 years.

Dr. Ladapo's 2023 confirmation was met with [unanimous opposition](#) from Senate Democrats, largely over concerns about scientific integrity.

Senate Democratic Leader Lori Berman:

"This is ridiculous. Florida already has broad medical and religious exemptions for childhood vaccines, so any family that has a sincere opposition to vaccination can opt-out. Removing the mandate wholesale is dangerous, anti-science, and anti-child. Nobody wants to go back to the days of iron lungs.

"Republicans have gone from entertaining anti-science conspiracy theories to fully endorsing an anti-science health policy. As a member of the Senate Health Policy Committee, I'll be doing everything in my power to protect our kids from these reckless attempts to harm them."

Senator Tina Polsky:

"Vaccines are crucial for our children because they protect them from deadly diseases and keep entire communities safe through herd immunity. Diseases, including polio, that once destroyed our children's health and futures, will have the chance to return under this dangerous policy change. I voted against Dr. Ladapo's confirmation in 2023 because he has a habit of misrepresenting science and making decisions that affect the health of Floridians. He remains determined to prioritize political dogma over smart health decisions."

Senator Shevrin Jones:

“Ending vaccine mandates poses a grave public health risk and will likely lead to a resurgence of preventable diseases. This reckless move jeopardizes the health and lives of countless Floridians — from children to seniors — especially those too young to be vaccinated or those with compromised immune systems. The DeSantis administration is actively undermining public health, making communities more vulnerable to outbreaks and increasing the burden on healthcare systems.”

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