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Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks to the media about the cruise industry during a press conference at PortMiami in Miami, Fla., on April 8, 2021. (Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

REPUBLICANS PREMIUM

Florida Gov. DeSantis Suspends Local COVID-19 Emergency Orders, Bans Vaccine Passports

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Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill banning COVID-19 vaccine passports and also announced an executive order that suspends all local pandemic emergency mandates effective July 1.

DeSantis signed Senate Bill 2006, passed by Florida state lawmakers last month granting DeSantis the ability to override local emergency orders. The bill also includes a ban on vaccine passports that would levy fines of \$5,000 per violation.

“I’m going to sign the bill. It’s effective July 1. I’ll also sign an executive order pursuant to that bill invalidating all remaining local emergency COVID orders effective on July 1,” the Republican governor said in a news conference in St. Petersburg on Monday. “But then, to bridge the gap between then and now, I’m going to suspend, under my executive power, the local emergency orders as it relates to COVID.”

Describing his executive orders as the “evidence-based thing to do,” DeSantis said that proponents of lockdowns “really are saying you don’t believe in the vaccines, you don’t believe in the data, you don’t believe in the science.” He added: “We’ve embraced the vaccines. We’ve embraced the science on it.”

The order suspending local emergency mandates only affects governments, not businesses.

“In terms of what a supermarket or some of them choose to do, a Disney theme park, this does not deal with that one way or another,” DeSantis said. “It’s simply emergency orders and emergency penalties on individual businesses.”

DeSantis has been a vocal opponent of so-called vaccine passports, saying they would create two classes of vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

“You have a right to participate in society, go to a restaurant, movie, a ballgame, all these things without having to divulge this type of information,” DeSantis said on Monday.

Last week, DeSantis issued an extension for Florida’s state of emergency order for another 60 days.

New York state and some municipalities in California have embraced passport-like systems for sporting events, concerts, and other events. Some European countries and Israel have proposed nationwide passport systems, while Canadian officials have indicated they will institute a vaccine passport program for Canadians planning to leave the country.

“Absolutely,” Canadian Health Minister Patty Hajdu told the CBC in response to a question about such a system being implemented. “First of all, Canadians need to be

able to have the right kind of certification for international travel.”

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other groups have criticized vaccine passport-type systems, saying they would be potentially invasive of individuals’ privacy and would restrict individuals who don’t have smartphones that can display an app showing whether they’re vaccinated or not.

COVID-19 is the illness caused by the [CCP \(Chinese Communist Party\) virus](#).