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Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Landmark Legislation to Ban Vaccine Passports and Stem Government Overreach

St. Petersburg, Fla. – Today, Governor Ron DeSantis was joined by local legislators and small business owners in St. Petersburg where he signed Senate Bill (SB) 2006, landmark legislation aimed at stemming the tide of local and state government overreach.

The bill takes aim at arbitrary lockdowns, vaccine passports and enhances emergency preparedness for future emergencies. Governor DeSantis also signed Executive Orders 21-101 and 21-102 suspending all local emergency orders until July 1, 2021, at which point local orders will be permanently invalidated pursuant to SB 2006.

“Over the last year we’ve avoided protracted lockdowns and school closures in Florida because I have refused to take the same approach as other lockdown Governors. This legislation ensures that legal safeguards are in place so that local governments cannot arbitrarily close our schools or businesses,” **said Governor Ron DeSantis**. “In Florida, your personal choice regarding vaccinations will be protected and no business or government entity will be able to deny you services based on your decision. I’d like to thank President Simpson, Speaker Sprowls and the Florida Legislature for getting this legislation got across the finish line.”

“While many states around the country are just now beginning to re-open, under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, Florida has been responsibly opening back up over the last year. Our economy is bouncing back stronger than anyone could have imagined as more and more people flee high tax, high regulation states and chose the freedom we have here in Florida,” **said Senate President Wilton Simpson**. “This legislation codifies the actions our Governor took to over the last year to respond to the pandemic, from our state stockpile to a

dedicated emergency fund. It also protects us from the government overreach we have seen in other states.”

“We have made it a mission in Florida to be ready for whatever disaster comes our way. Nobody could have predicted we would face a global pandemic such as this, but this session we looked at every aspect of the pandemic to determine how we can best be prepared for the threat of tomorrow. This bill balances protecting public health and guarding our economy from government overreach,” said Speaker of the House Chris Sprowls. “I applaud Governor DeSantis for doing what was necessary, despite the cries of critics and naysayers, to ensure Florida remained healthy and strong.”

“If there is one thing that this pandemic has taught us, it is that Florida continues to be the example of how to govern during these unprecedented times. Leaders like Governor Ron DeSantis, President Wilton Simpson, and Speaker Chris Sprowls are the reason that vaccines are widely available, our businesses are back open, and we continue to head down the path of normalcy again. The passing and signing of SB 2006 codifies many of the lessons learned from the ongoing pandemic. I couldn’t have gotten this bill across the finish line without my colleague Rep. Tom Leek in the House. There is still work that needs to be done and I look forward to marching towards a better, safer future,” said Senator Danny Burgess.

"This legislation strikes the appropriate balance between protecting one’s safety and one’s personal liberty," said Representative Tom Leek.

SB 2006 will ensure that neither the state nor local governments can close businesses or keep students out of in-person instruction at Florida schools, except for hurricane emergencies, and caps all local emergency at seven-day increments.

The legislation also allows the Governor of Florida to invalidate a local emergency order if it unnecessarily restricts individual rights or liberties. The bill also improves Florida’s emergency planning for future public health emergencies, by adding personal protective equipment and other public health supplies to the inventory of the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Additionally, the legislation codifies the prohibition of COVID-19 vaccine passports. Governor DeSantis enacted this prohibition through an executive order last month, blocking any business or government entity from requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination.