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Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference at The Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Fla., on Feb. 24, 2022. (Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

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PREMIUM **POLICIES & IMPACTS**

# DeSantis Criticizes Biden's Move to Force Gender Ideology by Cutting Off School Lunch Funding

By [Rita Li](#) | June 7, 2022 Updated: June 7, 2022

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Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has criticized President Joe Biden's move to seize [school lunch](#) program funding to further what DeSantis characterized as “woke gender ideology.”

“In Florida, we are fighting against Biden's intentionally destructive policies like denying school lunches for states that refuse to implement woke gender ideology in the schools,” DeSantis said in a June 5 Twitter post.

It came as the Biden administration is stripping funding for public school lunch programs over what it called “discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity,” to be in line with the White House's anti-LGBTQI policy.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture ([USDA](#)) [announced](#) early in May that public schools must prohibit such discrimination—which would require certain schools to allow transgender youth to use gender-designated bathrooms of their choice—to secure federal funding from the [National School Lunch Program](#). State and local agencies, program operators, and sponsors that receive funds must investigate relevant allegations, the department said, without mentioning the consequences for disobedience.

The free-and-reduced price meal programming, which is to ensure low-income students receive necessary nutrition, provides lunches for more than 30 million students nationwide as of 2016, according to government figures.

“I mean, give me a break!” DeSantis said in a video alongside his Sunday post, adding Biden is “totally off his rocker to be doing that.”

**Ron DeSantis**   
@GovRonDeSantis 

In Florida, we are fighting against Biden’s intentionally destructive policies like denying school lunches for states that refuse to implement woke gender ideology in the schools.

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3:00 PM · Jun 5, 2022 

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The Republican governor on March 28 signed legislation that prohibits public schools from teaching sexual issues, such as gender identity or sexual orientation, to children in kindergarten through third grade. So far, more than a dozen states have laws in place requiring students to use bathrooms and compete in sports according to their assigned gender at birth.

“We’re prepared for what Biden throws our way,” DeSantis said. “We’re just prepared to be able to defend the taxpayers and the hard-working people in the state of Florida, and I couldn’t be prouder for doing that.”

Last week, he [signed off](#) on Florida’s record-setting \$109.9 billion “Freedom First” [budget](#) for the 2022–2023 financial year, which is to prioritize the freedoms of Floridians and blunt the impact of a “Biden-induced recession.”

DeSantis is not the only Republican governor against the leveraging of school lunch programs to promote gender ideology.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem [announced](#) on June 2 that she intends to sue the Biden administration over overhauling the federal program.

“@JoeBiden is insisting that we allow biological males to compete in girls’ sports or else lose funding for school lunch programs,” the governor said last week via Twitter. “Mr. President, we’ll see you in court,” her post reads.

USDA didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

“No one should be denied access to nutritious food simply because of who they are or how they identify,” USDA’s Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Deputy Under Secretary Stacy Dean said in a statement.