



## THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

**COMMITTEES:**  
Appropriations  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and  
Human Services  
Health Policy  
Rules

**SENATOR GARY M. FARMER, JR.**

*Democratic Leader*  
34th District

March 4, 2021

The Honorable Monty Wilkinson, Acting Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Acting U.S. Attorney General Wilkinson,

I am writing you to express my utmost concern about a number of troubling reports related to COVID-19 vaccine distribution in Florida, raising questions whether any quid pro quo was involved in the allocation of these vaccines, and to request that your office conduct a full and thorough investigation into any potential wrong-doing on the part of Governor DeSantis.

Over the course of the past few months there have been several well documented reports of exclusive vaccination sites that limited access to paying members of private clubs and residents of affluent gated communities. In a number of cases, the establishment of these vaccine sites have been preceded with or followed by substantial contributions to a political committee controlled by Governor Ron DeSantis.

Yesterday, the Miami Herald reported on the most recent and perhaps most disturbing instance of what appears to be a scheme to trade access to lifesaving vaccinations for hefty campaign contributions. According to the Herald, by January 22 of this year over 1,200 residents of the Ocean Reef Club (an exclusive community with a six figure initial membership fee) had received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, well before most eligible Floridians even had a chance to get in line. In fact, the club's medical center received enough of the scarce doses to be held in reserve for members' second doses.

Governor DeSantis' clear vaccine priority for wealthy individuals appears to be intimately tied to political payments, an extremely troubling "pay to play" scheme if the allegations are borne out. In the months preceding Ocean Reef's vaccine distribution, numerous residents all provided Ron DeSantis' political committee with donations of \$5,000 or more. Furthermore, late last month another Ocean Reef resident furnished DeSantis' political committee with a \$250,000 donation. This is only the most recent report of Governor DeSantis' top donors being given priority vaccine access, and is reflected by a record month of \$2.7 million in contributions to his political committee in February of this year.

**REPLY TO:**

- Broward College Campus, 111 East Las Olas Boulevard, Suite 913, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 (954) 467-4227
- 228 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5034

Senate's Website: [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

**WILTON SIMPSON**  
President of the Senate

**AARON BEAN**  
President Pro Tempore

The prioritization of the wealthy and affluent for vaccinations is morally reprehensible in its own right, but the exchange of hard-to-get vaccines for political contributions is nothing short of criminal. If this scheme is what it appears to be, the Governor of Florida has used medical resources provided to the state by the federal government for his own personal and political gain. With this in mind, I would urge you to launch a full investigation into the actions of Governor Ron DeSantis' pay-to-play vaccine arrangements, and any potential criminality that may arise.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary M. Farmer Jr.", written in a cursive style.

State Senator Gary M. Farmer Jr  
Florida State Senate Democratic Leader