

# FLORIDA GUBERNATORIAL

## CANDIDATE COMPARISON // GENERAL ELECTION NOV. 8, 2022

*Compiled by the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops*

In keeping with its mission, the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops aims to educate and inform Catholics about a wide range of issues. The information compiled here has been gathered from policies, public statements, official and campaign websites, and other resources, as of September 13, 2022, to help voters form their consciences before voting in November. The issues that appear here do not represent a complete list of issues that may be of importance to Catholics. The FCCB neither supports nor opposes any candidate for public office.

**RON DESANTIS**  
*Republican*



**CHARLIE CRIST**  
*Democrat*



### ABORTION

In 2022, as governor, DeSantis [signed](#) into law Florida legislation limiting abortion to 15 weeks gestation.

DeSantis [tweeted](#) after the Dobbs Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, “Florida will continue to defend its recently-enacted pro-life reforms against state court challenges, will work to expand pro-life protections, and will stand for life by promoting adoption, foster care and child welfare.”

In 2010, during his previous term as governor, Crist [vetoed](#) legislation requiring a woman seeking an abortion be given the opportunity to view an ultrasound of her unborn child.

According to his campaign website, Crist [will](#) “[veto](#) any anti-choice legislation passed by the legislature.” He “will sign an Executive Order defending the right to access a safe abortion” and will “fight for Floridians’ rights to make decisions about their own bodies.”

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In 2022, as governor, DeSantis [announced](#) the Hometown Heroes program with a \$100 million budget to provide Florida’s frontline community workers assistance with down payments and closing costs to help purchase a primary residence in the communities where they work. DeSantis also approved \$363 million for affordable and workforce housing in the 2022-2023 budget.

If elected, Crist [plans to](#) fully fund the affordable housing trust fund, expand down payment assistance programs, appoint a Housing Czar who will support the work of local governments to innovate and meet broad housing affordability goals, and crack down on investment practices that are driving housing prices to unaffordable levels.

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In 2019, DeSantis [signed](#) a criminal justice reform package that increased the threshold to trigger felony theft charges from \$300 to \$750, allowed judges flexibility in sentencing nonviolent drug offenders, and allowed earlier release of nonviolent offenders from prison for good behavior. In 2022, DeSantis [signed](#) legislation that allows Floridians on probation to receive expanded workforce and educational credits to shorten their terms of probation.

If elected, Crist [will form](#) a commission to review mandatory minimum sentencing laws, provide funds to form conviction review units, and ensure Florida has improved criminal justice data collection. He will also expand civil citation programs for minors, create a reentry program task force, and allow expanded expungements of juveniles’ criminal records.

### DEATH PENALTY

In his first year as governor, DeSantis [signed](#) three death warrants, resulting in two executions. He has not signed a death warrant since 2019.

During his previous term as governor from 2007 to 2011, Crist [signed](#) five death warrants, resulting in five executions.



FLORIDA CONFERENCE  
OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

*The information contained in this document is provided for educational purposes only. The Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops does not endorse or oppose any candidate or political party.*

## EDUCATION

DeSantis [signed](#) the Parental Rights in Education Act, Parents' Bill of Rights, Individual Freedom Act, and the Fairness in Women's Sports Act. These laws promote parental rights in the public education system, work to remove critical race theory and gender ideology from public schools, increase curriculum transparency, and prohibit biological men from participating in women's athletics at the high school and college level.

DeSantis also [signed](#) into law the largest school choice expansion in Florida's history and increased public school funding, including teacher pay and per-student funding.

If elected, Crist would [work to repeal](#) the Parental Rights in Education law.

Crist [will declare](#) a "teacher shortage emergency" and work to recruit and retain public school teachers and education support staff. Crist has also pledged to increase teacher pay, expand VPK to pre-K3, increase availability for all-day pre-K, make Education Commissioner an elected position, increase focus on exceptional student education, and give more power to local school boards. Information could not be found on Crist's current position on school choice.

## ENVIRONMENT

DeSantis [secured](#) \$3.3 billion over four years for Everglades restoration and the protection of water resources, surpassing a \$2.5 billion goal.

In 2022, DeSantis [vetoed](#) a bill that would have favored utilities and reduced incentives for residential and rooftop solar installation. He also [vetoed](#) a bill that would have created unnecessary regulatory hurdles that may have compromised Everglades restoration projects.

In 2022, as a U.S. Congressman, Crist [helped secure](#) federal funding for Everglades restoration and over \$4 million to improve water infrastructure in his district.

If elected, Crist will [set a goal](#) of one million Florida solar roofs. He will [make](#) clean water for all Floridians a top priority by stopping pollution of Lake Okeechobee, replacing septic tanks in urban areas, and accelerating restoration of the Everglades.

## GENDER IDEOLOGY

DeSantis supports an Agency for Health Care Administration [rule](#) prohibiting Medicaid reimbursements for several services related to gender dysphoria, i.e. sex reassignment surgery, cross-sex hormones and puberty blockers, based on the finding that they "are not consistent with widely accepted professional medical standards and are experimental and investigational with the potential for harmful long term affects."

If elected, Crist [will support](#) Medicaid coverage for sex reassignment surgery, cross-sex hormones and puberty blockers for gender dysphoria. As a U.S. Congressman, Crist [served](#) as a Vice Chair of the Congressional LGBTQ Equality Caucus and was lead cosponsor of the Equality Act, which would add the terms "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the definition of "sex" in federal civil rights laws.

## HEALTH CARE

In 2021, DeSantis [signed](#) into law a bill expanding postpartum Medicaid coverage for pregnant women and their children. He has [opposed](#) broader Medicaid expansion.

Per his campaign website, Crist [supports](#) Medicaid expansion to include adults up to 64 years of age with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In 2019, DeSantis [said](#), "Florida has zero tolerance for human trafficking and those who allow it to thrive in the shadows," and he [signed](#) legislation to prevent trafficking by increasing training of hospitality workers and law enforcement.

In 2021, as a U.S. Congressman, Crist [helped secure](#) federal funding for various Florida programs to prevent human trafficking and assist human trafficking victims.

## IMMIGRATION

As governor, DeSantis signed into law several bills regarding immigration, such as [one](#) banning local government entities from having policies legally limiting cooperation with federal agencies, and [another](#) requiring E-Verify for public employers. In 2022, DeSantis [signed](#) a law that prevents the state from doing business with bus or air carriers that transport unaccompanied children to Florida.

In 2022, Crist [tweeted](#), "We need comprehensive immigration reform. As governor, I will fight for a more accessible pathway to citizenship." As a U.S. Congressman, he [voted for](#) the American Dream and Promise Act, which would provide permanent legal protection and a pathway to citizenship for certain undocumented immigrants who entered the U.S. as children, known as Dreamers.