

**Remarks With Governor Ronald D. DeSantis of Florida Upon Arrival at the Migrant Detention Facility and an Exchange With Reporters in Ochopee, Florida  
July 1, 2025**

*The President.* Hello, everybody. The trip was nice, and the job they've done is fantastic. And this is what you need.

And Ron worked beautifully with Kristi and all of the people at Homeland Security and got it done in how many days, Ron?

*Gov. DeSantis.* Eight days, all—a new facility was up and running, so——

*Detention of Undocumented Immigrants/Border Security*

*Q.* And is this the model going forward, Mr. President?

*The President.* It can be. I mean, you don't always have land so beautiful and so secure. We have a lot of bodyguards and a lot of cops that are in the form of alligators. You don't have to pay them so much. But I wouldn't want to run through the Everglades for long. We'll keep people where they're supposed to be.

This is a very important thing. We're setting records at the border. You know, we had no people come through last month. Zero. No people. But we're going to keep it that way.

So Ron did great, and I want to thank you.

*Gov. DeSantis.* Well, look we—thank you, Mr. President. Thanks for your leadership.

The border, you did that quicker than—we knew you'd do it, but you did it so quick, which is great. But Biden let in how many millions? And you've got to take care of them. And so this is one example of State operating this. The Feds are approving it, supporting it.

We're also going to have 2,000 more at Camp Blanding, which is our National Guard site. And we're the only State in the country that mandates our State and local law enforcement to cooperate with ICE. And it's made a huge difference. On any given day, Florida constitutes about 20 percent of all immigration arrests nationwide, and that's just because of the partnership that we have.

So I think it's great that the President is here. What I would just say is: Don't let Florida be the only state. We've got very red States that should be doing this just as much as Florida is doing. That will increase their numbers, and then what happens is you'll have a lot of people that will deport on their own because they don't want to end up in an "Alligator Alcatraz" or some of those other places.

So I think this is a model, but we need other States to step up.

*Additional Detention Facilities in Other States/Self-Deportation*

*Q.* I was going to ask you: Could this be enticing for other States to come up with their own model?

*The President.* They are doing it. We have Louisiana doing it big. Alabama is doing it. We have a lot of States. They seem to be red States. Not too many blue States, for whatever reason. You know, it's a—but the red States, Republican-run States are doing it. The blue States don't do very well at security and policing, unfortunately.

What would you say, Kristi?

*Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi L. Noem.* You know, I would say that is exactly right. The governor here has been fantastic in forming this partnership with the Department of Homeland Security.

We were looking at different contracts with different vendors and thought, "Why not go straight to our Governors and ask them to help us solve this problem?"

Florida was unique in what they presented to us, and I would ask every other governor to do the exact same thing. This is unique because we can hold individuals here. They can have their hearings, get due process, and then immediately be flown back home to their home countries.

And their home countries are welcoming them. They're setting up loans for houses. They've got food assistance. They're helping to facilitate welcoming them home. I just got home from Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and they're all excited about getting their individuals back home from the United States, so——

*The President.* And there is a lot of self-deporting.

*Secretary Noem.* There is.

*The President.* That's one thing, I was actually surprised. But a lot of self-deporting. And when you have something like this, even more so.

*Secretary Noem.* Yes.

So I'd ask Ron one question. I flew over the Everglades, we did a little circle. I said, "Let me see—that's a big piece of land." Took us 25 minutes to fly around. Is there potential for enlargement or additional facilities out there?

*Gov. DeSantis.* There may be. I mean, I think what we're doing is—because this is an important part of Florida, we're using the existing footprint of this airport. So, when you guys go over there, you'll see all the beds, the medical, the galley, everything is on the concrete. We're not using any of the other stuff.

Now, as you'll see, there's a lot of concrete. So there very well may be. I know Secretary Noem and her team have said as soon as the President departs, we'll be open to start receiving folks.

*Secretary Noem.* Yes. Yes.

*Gov. DeSantis.* And so we'll see what the tempo is. We do have the 2,000 in Northeast Florida that will open very soon.

*Secretary Noem.* Yes.

*Gov. DeSantis.* So it is possible to do. One of the things I think that is exciting about this is we're offering up our National Guard and other folks in Florida to be deputized to be immigration judges. We're working with the Department of Justice for the approvals.

*The President.* Yes. Yes.

*Gov. DeSantis.* I'm sure Pam will approve. But then you have—I'll have a National Guard judge advocate here. If someone has a notice to appear, Biden would tell them to come back in 3 years and appear.

Now you'll be able to appear in like a day or two, so they're not going to be detained hopefully for all that long. We'll have people here in this facility that can make—you know, it's a bureaucracy. The President has got to deal with the bureaucracy.

Now, that Supreme Court ruling was good——

*The President.* Right.

*Gov. DeSantis.* ——because that's going to allow him to be able to exercise Article II the way the Founders intended. But you still have bureaucracy, so we want to cut through that so that we have an efficient operation between Florida and DHS to get the removal of these illegals done.

[*At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.*]

### *Immigration Enforcement Actions/Border Security*

*Q.* And are you still prioritizing going after the worst of the worst, or are you now arresting anyone who is here?

*The President.* We're doing the worst of the——

*Secretary Noem.* The worst.

*The President.* ——worst always first.

*Secretary Noem.* Yes.

*The President.* And I think it's great government, what we've done. And nobody can ever forget what this group of people—Biden or whoever it was—because you know it probably wasn't even Biden. I don't think he knew what the hell he was doing. Biden—whoever it was, what this—what this group of people—a small group that circled the Resolute Desk, what they did to this country.

Think of it, what your time—all the time you have to waste doing this. It's an unforced error. We had nothing. We had no problem with this. There was never anything like this. We had great borders. It was bad when I came in. Within 3 months, I fixed them. This is in 2016. Now I come in, the difference is this was 20 times worse.

*Secretary Noem.* That's right.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

*The President.* Their open-border policy did so much damage to our country, and we're fixing it. But the effort and the money and all the things that it takes to build—[*inaudible*]*—it's just like an unforced error.*

Yes.

### *Additional Deterrents to Illegal Border Crossings*

*Q.* Mr. President, in 2018, you suggested putting alligators in the Rio Grande to prevent crossings in Texas. Is this a dream come true for you, sir?

*The President.* Well, I was thinking about that, I must say. It was meant more as a joke, but the more I thought of it, the more I liked it, if you want to know the truth. And they were seriously—they were actually crocodiles. They were crocodiles from Africa. They are a step beyond.

*Secretary Noem.* A step beyond.

*The President.* But no, that was really meant as a joke, but a lot of people liked it, and a lot of people think we should do it, frankly.

### *The President's Legislative Agenda/Border Security*

*Q.* The Senate, it appears, is about to vote on the "Big Beautiful Bill."

*The President.* I hear we're doing well, Ron. I hear we're doing well.

*Q.* Are you confident this can get done——

*The President.* I don't know, confident——

*Q.* ——by the Fourth of July?

*The President.* ——what does confident mean, when you're like——when you have one vote, and you have a hundred people going to vote? I think so. I think it's going to be the greatest bill ever passed—even for you, as an example, tremendous amount of Homeland Security money.

*Secretary Noem.* [Inaudible]

*The President.* Tremendous amount.

*Secretary Noem.* [Inaudible]

*The President.* It's going to keep the border secure. Because, you know, we have them secure now, but we need to build more wall. I built almost 600 miles of wall. We need more wall. And all of that's covered in this bill. This bill is amazing for everybody.

It's an amazing bill for Florida too. Really great for Florida.

### *Medicaid*

*Q.* Have you heard the concerns about the Medicaid, though—cuts, though, Mr. President?

*The President.* No, no, we're not going to be playing with Medicaid.

*Q.* An estimated——

*The President.* Only waste, fraud, and abuse——

*Q.* ——11.8 million Americans could lose their coverage.

*The President.* Yes, yes, the Democrats have it wrong.

*Q.* Are you breaking your promise?

*The President.* Yeah. Waste, fraud, and abuse. We're doing—in fact, if you look at what's gone on, we've gone way back. We take care of Medicaid; we take care of Medicare. They will blow Medicare and Medicaid because they're—they have no idea what they're doing, just like they don't have any idea what they did on the border. They have no idea. Medicaid is in big trouble with the Democrats.

*Q.* Do you promise anyone who loses their health care coverage that is because of waste, fraud, and abuse?

*The President.* Waste, fraud—only, waste, fraud, and abuse, which is what everybody wants.

### *Russia/Ukraine*

*Q.* Mr. President, Russia has about 50,000 troops stationed outside of Sumy in Ukraine. What will you do if Russia authorizes an offensive?

*The President.* We'll see what happens. I'm watching it very closely.

### *U.S. Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities/News Media*

*Q.* Mr. President——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* On Prime Minister Benjamin—on Netanyahu's visit next week. What are you hoping to get out of that, and do you think there will be any progress towards—[inaudible]?

*The President.* Well, it's going to be a very quick celebration. We had a great hit. It was a obliteration.

Okay, now it turns out it was an obliteration. You know, they demean—CNN mostly and The New York Times—fake New York Times—they demean these great soldiers. They went over there—17 hours flying, and they hit bull's-eye after bull's-eye after bull's-eye. It all blew up. Everybody saw it.

Then they get back, and CNN said, "Well, they did okay, but maybe it wasn't"—let me tell you, it was beyond obliteration. They can't—nobody can even get down there. The tunnels are busted. Everything fell into the well. It was a total and complete obliteration. And we should celebrate these heroes.

And what I'm doing is, I'm bringing them, Ron—we're bringing them to Florida or to the White House. I gave them their choice. I think they're going to take the White House.

*Gov. DeSantis.* Probably.

*The President.* I shouldn't tell you that.

#### *Election Security and Integrity/The President's Legislative Agenda*

*Q.* Mr. President, there's going to be a new bill called "Make American Elections Great Again"—

*The President.* I love it.

*Q.* —forcing the U.S. Census Bureau to redo the census to actually get an account of how many Americans—proof of citizenship—are in our area, in our country, redistricting some of the House districts. Your thoughts on that?

*The President.* Well, I'll speak for both of us. We love it. Okay? [Laughter] You're going to like this one. I know all about it. We have a—want to bring our elections back. The election in 2020 was rigged—millions and millions of votes. It had to do with COVID and a lot of things, but it really had to do with they're crooked people. The Democrats are very good at cheating on elections.

And that's why I said "too big to rig." They tried this one too. But after about 9:02, they gave up. Too many votes—you know, too big to rig.

Ron would love it. I would love it. Kristi would love it.

*Secretary Noem.* Yes. Absolutely.

*The President.* That's what they have to do. They have to bring it back.

And we have to look. You know, Ron, they—they include anybody that happens to be in your State.

*Gov. DeSantis.* California—California—

*The President.* It's out of control.

*Gov. DeSantis.* —would lose like five seats—

*Secretary Noem.* Yes.

*Gov. DeSantis.* —if they get a fair census.

And even beyond that, the Biden census, gypped Florida of at least one seat.

*Secretary Noem.* Yes.

*Gov. DeSantis.* We only got one seat in the last census. Are you trying to tell me that Florida only had one seat in that? We should have had at least two.

*Secretary Noem.* Yes.

*Gov. DeSantis.* Texas should have had another one. That could be the difference in the House of Representatives——

*Secretary Noem.* It could.

*Gov. DeSantis.* ——and the majority. So I would love for them to redo the census for '26. My legislature will redistrict those lines. We'll get it to where it's fair.

But as it's right now, this country is not fairly apportioned. I've got so many more millions of people in Florida that have representation because of that flawed census.

*Q.* Mr. President——

*The President.* I think it's going to do very well. A lot of people—I don't know if you've heard about—it's like——

*Secretary Noem.* Yes.

*The President.* ——it's captivated the country.

*Gov. DeSantis.* Yes.

*The President.* Everybody wants it. It's going to get in, it's going to pass, and we're going to be very happy.

*U.S. DOGE Service/Former White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk*

*Q.* Elon Musk is ripping into this bill again. Are you concerned that Republicans are going to be swayed by Musk and his money?

*The President.* No, I don't think so. I think what's going to happen is DOGE is going to look at Musk, and if DOGE looks at Musk, we're going to save a fortune.

Thank you very much, everybody.

*Secretary Noem.* Thank you, everybody.

*The President.* I don't think he should be playing that game with me.

Thank you very much, everybody.

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. on the tarmac at the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport. In his remarks, he referred to former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. He also referred to H.R. 1. Gov. DeSantis referred to Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Florida, remarks with Governor DeSantis upon arrival at migrant detention facility in Ochopee; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Ochopee, FL.

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