

# [***Opinion: DeSantis' snub of Biden in Florida shows why he's bad at politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6939-W081-JBSS-S0K4-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; **Editor's note:** Dean Obeidallah, a former attorney, is the host of SiriusXM radio's daily program "The Dean Obeidallah Show." Follow him on Threads at [*www.threads.net/@deanobeidallah*](http://www.threads.net/@deanobeidallah). The opinions expressed in this commentary are his own. Read [*more opinion*](https://www.cnn.com/opinions) at CNN.

President Joe Biden [*traveled*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/02/politics/joe-biden-florida-trip-hurricane-idalia-ron-desantis/index.html) to Florida on Saturday to survey the devastation from [*Hurricane Idalia*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/01/weather/florida-idalia-damage-recovery-friday/index.html). The president met with GOP [*Sen. Rick Scott*](https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/4184611-biden-praises-rick-scott-after-desantis-snub/) of Florida and other local officials. But one person noticeably absent was Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, whose office cited the "[*security preparations*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/09/02/biden-desantis-hurricane-00113833)" for such a visit that it said would disrupt the recovery effort.

DeSantis told reporters [*he had raised concerns*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/01/politics/desantis-biden-florida-meeting/index.html) with Biden that providing security for the visit would take away resources from the recovery effort. But a White House official told CNN the governor hadn't raised that issue when the president told him of his visit before announcing it publicly.

Of course, those concerns were apparently not an issue when DeSantis welcomed Biden to the state to survey past calamities. For example, in 2021, after the deadly condo collapse in Surfside, Florida, Biden and DeSantis [*came together*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/01/biden-desantis-florida-condo-collapse-497550) as the president toured the damage.

Both offered praise for each other at the time. "You've recognized the severity of this tragedy from day one. And you've been very supportive," DeSantis [*said*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/07/01/remarks-by-president-biden-before-a-command-briefing-from-incident-commander-mayor-daniella-levine-cava-governor-ron-desantis-local-leaders-and-first-responders/) during a briefing in Miami Beach. Biden, for his part, [*added*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/02/politics/joe-biden-florida-trip-hurricane-idalia-ron-desantis/index.html), "You know what's good about this? We live in a nation where we can cooperate. And it's really important."

Just last year, again Biden and DeSantis [*publicly toured*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/05/politics/joe-biden-ron-desantis-hurricane-ian/index.html) the destruction caused by Hurricane Ian in October. At the time, DeSantis praised Biden, [*stating*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/05/politics/joe-biden-ron-desantis-hurricane-ian/index.html), "Mr. President, welcome to Florida. We appreciate working together across various levels of government." And [*Biden told reporters*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/05/politics/joe-biden-ron-desantis-hurricane-ian/index.html) that DeSantis had "done a good job" leading Florida through that disaster, calling his response "pretty remarkable."

So what changed since then? In May, DeSantis [*announced*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/05/24/politics/ron-desantis-fec-filing-2024/index.html) he was seeking the 2024 GOP presidential nomination. In other words, ***politics*** - and petty ***politics*** at that.

It's not just my view, but also that of CNN political commentator Kate Bedingfield, former Biden White House communications director, who [*called*](https://www.mediaite.com/news/ex-biden-comms-chief-calls-bs-on-small-and-petty-desantis-over-hurricane-idalia-visit-on-cnn/) DeSantis' refusal to meet with the president when he was in the Sunshine State "small and petty."

Bedingfield recalled being there in 2022 when the two men stood together to assess Hurricane Ian's devastation, saying that "it was a powerful day. And it was an opportunity to put ***politics*** aside, in a really difficult moment."

Putting aside partisan differences in the face of emergencies has become a staple of American ***politics***. We saw that with Biden and DeSantis two years in a row. During his presidency, Donald Trump [*traveled*](https://calmatters.org/politics/2020/09/newsom-trump-california-meeting/) to California to assess damage caused by wildfires with Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom. Both Trump and Newsom exchanged praise for each other despite past political differences.

But what potentially raised a red flag for DeSantis may be what [*happened*](https://www.nj.com/politics/2015/04/christie_on_embracing_obama_after_hurricane_sandy_i_was_doing_my_job.html) to then-GOP Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey after he toured the damage from Hurricane Sandy in late October 2012 with then-President Barack Obama. Given that the event occurred a week before the 2012 election that pitted Obama against Republican Mitt Romney, some Republicans [*slammed*](https://www.nj.com/politics/2022/02/republicans-hated-christies-obama-hug-after-sandy-kamala-harris-says-he-was-being-a-model-governor.html) Christie for, in their view, helping Obama with this bipartisan appearance.

When Christie first ran for president in 2016, he was [*peppered*](https://www.nj.com/politics/2015/04/christie_on_embracing_obama_after_hurricane_sandy_i_was_doing_my_job.html) with questions about that meeting. Christie bluntly - as usual for him - defended his actions, saying, "The president came to offer help. If they expected me to play ***politics*** and dump on the president, I wasn't going to do it."

To his credit, Romney [*defended*](https://www.nj.com/politics/2015/04/christie_on_embracing_obama_after_hurricane_sandy_i_was_doing_my_job.html) Christie for this appearance with Obama, saying in 2013 that as a former Massachusetts governor "you look for help from the federal government" at the time of a natural disaster. He [*added*](https://www.nj.com/politics/2013/06/mitt_romney_says_hurricane_san.html), "You want the president and you want the other agencies of the federal government to step in and provide help."

Despite the apparent snub over the weekend, Biden did not criticize DeSantis. When asked if he was disappointed that DeSantis didn't join him to tour the damage, he [*responded,*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/09/02/remarks-by-president-biden-reaffirming-his-commitment-to-supporting-the-people-of-florida/) "Well, no, I'm not disappointed," adding, "He may have had other reasons, because - but he did help us plan this." Indeed, Biden even [*praised*](https://www.cnbc.com/2023/09/02/biden-in-florida-promises-to-rebuild-calls-on-congress-to-provide-more-fema-funding.html) DeSantis, telling reporters that the two had been in frequent touch throughout the storm and "the governor was on top of it."

One Biden comment Saturday in Florida perfectly sums up where the president's passion lies. When asked if he had a message for DeSantis, he [*said simply*](https://www.threads.net/@acynig/post/Cws3dk-vHDI), "We're going to take care of Florida." And he has been doing just that.

On Thursday, the president [*declared*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/08/31/president-joseph-r-biden-jr-approves-florida-disaster-declaration-4/) a "major disaster" in Florida, which makes federal funding available to affected individuals for a wide range of needs. He also swiftly [*deployed*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/02/politics/joe-biden-florida-trip-hurricane-idalia-ron-desantis/index.html) resources to Florida, with about 1,500 federal responders arriving on the ground, including search-and-rescue personnel and members of the Army Corps of Engineers.

In the wake of Idalia and other recent disasters, Biden on Friday [*called*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/02/politics/joe-biden-florida-trip-hurricane-idalia-ron-desantis/index.html) on Congress to approve $4 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Relief Fund in addition to a request for $12 billion last month. Biden [*added*](https://www.cnbc.com/2023/09/02/biden-in-florida-promises-to-rebuild-calls-on-congress-to-provide-more-fema-funding.html) while in Florida Saturday standing in front of a home damaged by the hurricane, "I'm calling on the United States Congress - Democrats and Republicans - to ensure the funding is there."

While DeSantis would not appear with Biden on Saturday, he was happy to accept the federal aid the president was championing. DeSantis - who once [*opposed*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/02/politics/joe-biden-florida-trip-hurricane-idalia-ron-desantis/index.html) such aid as a member of Congress after [*Hurricane Sandy*](https://www.tampabay.com/hurricane/2022/10/03/fact-checking-comments-about-rubio-desantis-votes-against-hurricane-sandy-aid/) - [*responded*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/02/politics/joe-biden-florida-trip-hurricane-idalia-ron-desantis/index.html) about the Biden aid package, "We will apply for whatever federal money is available."

This entire episode shows us why Biden is president of the United States and why [*DeSantis' campaign*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/03/politics/ron-desantis-campaign-president-hurricane-idalia/index.html) for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination is floundering. Biden is laser-focused on helping people, while DeSantis proves his lack of political savvy. He left the campaign trail to help his state through this crisis but did himself no favors withhis petty snub of the president.

Opinion by Dean Obeidallah

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