

# [***GOP Debate: DeSantis Blames Trump For Republicans Poor Performance In Tuesday s Elections***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KH-TDM1-JBCM-F31Y-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 883 words

**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Trump s preferred candidate for Kentucky governor lost to his Democratic opponent in the deep-blue state and Ohio voters delivered a referendum on Roe v. Wade s reversal, which Trump has taken credit for.

**Body**

**Topline**

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis attacked former President Donald Trump in his opening remarks during Wednesday s GOP presidential primary debate, blaming him for a string of Republican shortcomings after GOP-backed policies and candidates were defeated in Tuesday s election.

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Florida Governor Ron DeSantis speaks during the third Republican presidential primary debate at the Knight Concert Hall at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in Miami, Florida, on November 8, 2023. (Photo by MANDEL NGAN/AFP via Getty Images)

AFP via Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

DeSantis called out Trump for saying Republicans were gonna get tired of winning, after launching various criticisms of Trump, including pointing out his absence at Wednesday s debate, his failure to make Mexico pay for a border wall and the additional national debt incurred under his presidency.

I m sick of Republicans losing in Florida, DeSantis said from the stage of the third debate in Miami, when asked by NBC moderator Lester Holt why the candidates should be nominated instead of Trump, adding that Donald Trump s a lot different guy than he was in 2016, repeating a frequent attack line he s used on the former president.

DeSantis also touted his own election record in Florida, where he won a second term in the 2022 midterm election by nearly a 20-point margin and became the first GOP gubernatorial candidate to carry Miami-Dade County since former Republican Gov. Jeb Bush in 2002.

**News Peg**

Trump s preferred candidate in the Kentucky gubernatorial race, state attorney general Daniel Cameron, lost to incumbent Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear on Tuesday in the deep-red state as Beshear won multiple counties that voted for Trump in 2020. It was among several wins for Democrats that served as a boost to President Joe Biden after a series of damning polls showing him trailing Trump in a hypothetical matchup next year. Democrats also won full control of the state legislature in Virginia, setting the stage for them to block Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin s legislative agenda, including a 15-week abortion ban. And voters in Ohio approved a constitutional amendment that solidifies the right to abortion, making it the first GOP-led state to enshrine abortion rights in its constitution since Roe v. Wade s reversal, which Trump has taken credit for after his Supreme Court nominees tipped the balance of power to lean heavily conservative. Trump blamed Cameron s loss on his ties to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), a Trump foe and one of the most unpopular senators in the country.

**Contra**

Biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy blamed GOP Party Chair Ronna McDaniel for the GOP s worse-than-expected performances in elections since she took the helm in 2017, and also suggested the corrupt media establishment was to blame, while accusing the NBC moderators of bias against Republicans. The other three candidates on the stage: former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott and former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, did not mention Tuesday s election results in their opening remarks. In other public commentary after Tuesday s election, Christie directly blamed Trump, calling him political poison in atweet, while Haley s campaign called both Trump and DeSantis losers in a memo reacting to the results.

**Key Background**

Trump sat out the debate for the third consecutive time Wednesday, as the field of candidates who qualified was whittled to five, and instead held a rally in Hialeah, Florida. DeSantis headed into the debate on wounded footing after he became the butt of his rivals jokes over speculation he secretly wears heightboostersinside of his ill-fitting cowboy boots (allegations he has denied) and as Florida Republicans have increasingly coalesced around Trump. Haley has also dented DeSantis second-place lead, gaining three points in polls since the last debate in September, putting her within four points of DeSantis, according to FiveThirtyEight spolling average, while DeSantis polling figures have remained largely stagnant.

**Tangent**

Acoalitionof former DeSantis staffers have signed on to work for Trump s campaign as he has solidified his path to the GOP nomination, while the former president has continued to recruit Florida Republican lawmakers to endorse him, with some actively working against DeSantis. Florida Republican state Rep. Randy Fine, the only Republican Jewish lawmaker in the state, recently retracted his endorsement of DeSantis, accusing him of failing to stop pro-Palestinian protests on college campuses amid the Israel-Hamas war. DeSantis called the move pure ***politics*** and, days later, called for state universities to ban chapters of Students for Justice in Palestine, accusing them of having linked themselves to Hamas. Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.) also recently endorsed Trump, who had already racked up endorsements from the majority of Florida s congressional delegation by April.

**Further Reading**

Trump Blames McConnell s Stench After Trump-Endorsed Kentucky Candidate Loses (Forbes)

Why Tuesday s Election Is A Positive Sign For Biden s 2024 Chances Dems Win Key Races As Abortion Rights Prevail(Forbes)

How Tuesday s Election Was A Rebuke Of Trump Extending His Losing Streak(Forbes)

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