

# [***DeSantis Says Trump Didn t Do Anything To Stop Jan. 6 Riot One Of His Strongest Trump Rebukes To Date***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RD-Y3M1-DXVP-5180-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** DeSantis previously dodged questions about Trump s role in January 6 and said he would consider pardoning the ex-president, along with Capitol rioters, if he finds they were unfairly convicted.

**Body**

**Topline**

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis launched some of his strongest criticism to date against former President Donald Trump over his role in the January 6 Capitol riots Tuesday, arguing Trump should have come out more forcefully to stop the rioters, hours after Trump said he expects to soon be arrested in the Justice Department s investigation into the insurrection.

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Republican presidential candidate Florida Governor Ron DeSantis delivers remarks at the 2023 Christians United for Israel summit on July 17, 2023 in Arlington, Virginia. (Photo by Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images)

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

At a press conference Tuesday in South Carolina, DeSantis said Trump sat in the White House and didn t do anything while the riots were unfolding.

DeSantis also offered a tempered defense of Trump, echoing his narrative that the investigation is politicized: To try to criminalize that, that s a different issue entirely . . . we want to be in a situation where you don t have one side just constantly trying to put the other side in jail.

DeSantis made the comments hours after Trump said he received a letter Sunday from Justice Department Special Counsel Jack Smith notifying him that he s the target of its investigation into the January 6 Capitol riots, and asking him to appear before a grand jury weighing charges against him within the next four days.

The comments mark some of DeSantis s most potent criticism of Trump s conduct on January 6: Hedodged a questionlast month about whether Trump violated the peaceful transfer of power, and he has said previously that people broke the law that day, but also said the media has exhaustively covered January 6.

In the past, DeSantis did not rule out pardoning Trump and other January 6 Capitol rioters, telling radio host Clay Travis in May he planned to review any cases of disfavored treatment based on ***politics*** or weaponization and would be aggressive [in] issuing pardons.

**Key Background**

Trump predicted Tuesday Smith s letter requesting his appearance before a grand jury means he will be indicted and arrested for a second time by the Justice Department, writing in a statement that the DOJ has effectively issued a third indictment and arrest of Joe Biden s NUMBER ONE POLITICAL OPPONENT. It s not clear what charges the DOJ is considering, but Trump has been accused of inciting his supporters to storm the Capitol by urging them to gather in Washington that day, spreading the false claim that he was the true winner of the 2020 election and waiting hours to tell them to retreat. In addition to the potential January 6 charges, Trump pleaded not guilty in June to 37 federal felony counts alleging he mishandled classified documents after leaving office. He also pleaded not guilty in April to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in Manhattan Criminal Court in what prosecutors allege was a hush-money scheme to hide affair allegations ahead of the 2016 presidential election. The Fulton County, Georgia District Attorney s office has also convened a grand jury that is weighing charges against Trump for his role in efforts to overturn results of the 2020 election in the state.

**What We Don t Know**

Legal experts have said Trump could be charged under a federal statute that prohibits conspiracies to defraud the U.S. government in its administration of elections for his alleged role in creating fake electoral certificates that were submitted to Congress, according to amodel prosecution memorecently published by a coalition of government-adjacent lawyers. The memo also suggests Trump could be charged with inciting an insurrection or obstructing an official proceeding.

**Tangent**

Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, who is also running for the GOP nomination for president, appeared down-trodden on Tuesday by the constant talk of Trump s legal woes, which he has used to build support for his candidacy. Haley who served as Trump s ambassador to the UN told Fox News they have become a distraction from bigger issues in the election. We can t keep dealing with this drama, she said. Other candidates were mixed in their responses: Former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson reiterated his call for Trump to suspend his campaign over his actions on January 6, while biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy accused the Biden Administration of using police power to arrest its chief political rivals.

**What To Watch For**

DeSantis s comments come as his campaign and supporters have begun to publicly acknowledge that he faces an uphill battle to beat Trump for the nomination. For months, he has trailed him in polls by double digits and has had a series of missteps since he formally announced his campaign in May, including the actual launch on Twitter Spaces, which was delayed by an embarrassing series of glitches on the platform. DeSantis s campaign, in a memo last week, laid out plans for recalibrating his bid for the White House, including more traditional media interviews, something he has typically shied away from. He is scheduled to sit for an interview with CNN s Jake Tapper on Tuesday.

**Further Reading**

Trump Expects To Be Arrested Over Jan. 6(Forbes)

Trump Investigations Expand: Ivanka Trump And Jared Kushner Subpoenaed In Jan. 6 Probe, Report Says(Forbes)

Jan. 6 Panel s Final Report: Trump Should Be Barred From Public Office Over Conspiracy To Overturn 2020 Election(Forbes)

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