

# The Delray Democrat

## Is It Fascism Yet? Part 2: DeSantis's Plan to "Make America Florida"<sup>1</sup>

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"He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future."  
*Moms for Liberty, quoting Adolf Hitler*

[Is It Fascism Yet? Part One](#) looked at America's two most recent brushes with fascism, during the failed administrations of George W. Bush and Donald Trump.

Unlike Bush and Trump, Ron DeSantis is smart, brutally focused, and ruthlessly ambitious. If DeSantis becomes president, there may be a different ending—for both our experiment in democracy and a sustainable life on our planet.

### First, Fire All the Teachers

In William Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 2*, a rabble-rouser who is inciting a mob to rebellion shouts, "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers."

This is commonly interpreted as a condemnation of lawyers. There's a diametrically opposed reading that, as a lawyer, I prefer, namely, that a civilized and democratic society depends upon lawyers. As Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens once wrote, "disposing of lawyers is a step in the direction of a totalitarian form of government."

This reading is supported by context. After all, the mob has already burned books and executed people who can read, as blogger Olivia Rutigliano has [noted](#): "The leaders of the rebellion know that it's easier take over an ignorant population than one in which people understand their rights."

Teachers are equally if not more important to the maintenance of a democracy. As FDR [wrote](#), "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education."

Although DeSantis's malignant crusade against education hasn't inflamed mobs to commit murder (yet) or start burning books (yet), some 357 books have been removed from school shelves, frequently on the objection of a single parent. That's why Florida in the 2020s is starting to feel like England in the 1450s and Germany in the 1930s.

DeSantis can't kill all the teachers, but his racist, homophobic laws have made their lives a living hell. Only their devotion to the children has prevented a mass exodus. He has applauded efforts by the Orwellian-titled "Moms for Liberty" to harass teachers, school board members, and school administrators, sometimes with threats of violence, in a frenzied campaign to impose their hateful agenda on all of Florida. Not only has this group been labeled an [extremist](#) organization, but

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<sup>1</sup> [The Delray Democrat](#), August 2023, page 1.

prominent members have alliances with neo-fascist groups like the Proud Boys, whose former leader Enrique Tarrío once [referred](#) to Moms for Liberty as “the gestapo with vaginas.” Classy.

This is only the beginning. DeSantis’s real goal is a Cultural Devolution, first in Florida and then in the rest of America. Chairman Mao would be proud.

The principal reason he’s been successful is his ability to dupe a large portion of the electorate into believing that he is defending Floridians from an existing threat when in reality the real threat is the one he is creating. It’s all about projection.

### **Projection Is an Unconscious Defense Mechanism and Also a Conscious Political Strategy**

Psychologists define “defensive projection” as individuals displacing their own negative or socially unacceptable feelings, impulses, or desires onto someone or something else. Donald Trump is the poster child.

His favorite insult is to label someone a “loser,” but his résumé is the one littered with failures and bankruptcies. Trump accuses Joe Biden of dementia, but Trump is the one who launches into stream of consciousness recitations of grievances like a lunatic off his meds on a New York City subway. Trump leads “lock her up chants,” but it is he and not Hillary Clinton who has been indicted twice (and counting).

Projection is more a conscious political strategy than an unconscious defensive mechanism for DeSantis. The false claim that students are being indoctrinated in “woke” ideologies permits him to “pre-inoculate” his crusade to turn the schools into “de-education camps” in which to mold an army of White Supremacists. He knows that “he who owns the youth owns the future.”

The claim that students were being brainwashed in Critical Race Theory is a brazen lie. CRT is taught only in post-graduate seminars and it is supported by decades of data that demonstrate systemic racism.

### **Grooming “Groomers”**

As of last year, DeSantis’s administration has spent nearly \$6 million to train public school teachers across the state on how to teach civics, an effort better referred to “grooming ‘groomers.’”

It was an apparent failure, according to a [report](#) in the *Miami Herald*. Florida high school teachers were paid \$700 to be trained to teach DeSantis’s new “Civics Literacy Excellence Initiative” and were eligible for \$3,000 bonus if they completed a 60-hour course on the new civics standards. While attendees didn’t object to the new standards per se, many complained that the training was “infused with Christian and conservative ideology” and that it whitewashed the history of slavery in America. One teacher summed it up best: “There was this Christian nationalism philosophy that was just baked into everything that was there.”

The same distortions and disinformation that suffused the civics training have apparently been regurgitated into the widely and rightly condemned social studies standards just released by the Florida Department of Education. Here are some examples:

**Instruction includes how slaves developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied**

**for their personal benefit.”** *When criticized for its attempt to thus sugarcoat what was a crime against humanity, the Florida Department of Education offered 16 historical figures who had benefitted from being enslaved. It turned out that nearly half had never been enslaved, and the professions of others were misstated.*

**Compare the living conditions of slaves in British North American colonies, the Caribbean, Central America and South America, including infant mortality rates.”** *Think for a minute what pathetic excuse for a human being would seek to justify the crime against humanity that is the institution of slavery by arguing that the conditions of the enslaved were worse in other countries. On the subject of infant mortality, consider that infants born to Black women are more than twice as likely to die relative to those born to White women and that maternal mortality for Black women is closer to triple the rate for White women. If DeSantis and his minions were interested in education rather than indoctrination, these figures would be presented as examples of systemic racism.*

**Instruction [on Reconstruction] includes acts of violence perpetrated against and by African Americans but is not limited to 1906 Atlanta Race Riot, 1919 Washington, D.C. Race Riot, 1920 Ocoee Massacre, 1921 Tulsa Massacre and the 1923 Rosewood Massacre.** *Not a single one of the cited “massacres” and “riots” was perpetrated by Blacks—all involved White Mobs murdering African Americans.. That is why real historians use the term “White Terrorism” to refer to the violence that occurred in the post-Reconstruction Era.*

**Examine the evolution of the labor force in the use of indentured servitude contracts. Instruction includes the comparative treatment of indentured servants of European and African extraction.** *Once again the guidelines seek to justify the atrocity of slavery. It is true that indentured servants were treated almost as badly as the enslaved, but only a monster could fail to see the difference between someone who enters into a labor agreement (however uneven) for a specified period of time and a person who has been kidnapped into permanent bondage.*

*It also ignores the fact that the condition of White indentured servants improved following Bacon’s Rebellion. That pivotal event, which essentially led to the invention of race and racism in America, is not mentioned once in the guidelines.*

*In 1675, a white property owner, Nathaniel Bacon, untied poor Whites, indentured servants, and the enslaved in a revolt against plantation owners. It was suppressed, but plantation owners immediately took steps to prevent any such future alliances by providing poor Whites with some slight privileges. As Michelle Alexander wrote in The New Jim Crow, “Their own plight had not improved by much, but at least they were not slaves.”*

*This pitting of poor Whites against Blacks was repeated during the Populist Era in the late Nineteenth Century after poor Whites and Blacks united. Once again the White ruling class played “divide and conquer.” That was the origin of the Jim Crow laws, which did little to improve the lot of poor Whites but mollified them with the assurance that they were at least better off than Blacks.*

**Instruction includes the transition from an indentured to a slave-based economy.** As Heather Cox Richardson points out, “this presents human enslavement as simply one of a number of labor

systems, a system that does not, in this telling, involve racism or violence.”

### **This Was Our Fault**

A recent New York Times poll found respondents evenly split in a Biden-Trump rematch. A total of 2.5 million Florida Democrats were too lazy, too uninformed, or “too clever by half” to vote in 2022. Unless they come out in 2024, the question posed in the title of this article may well be answered in the affirmative.