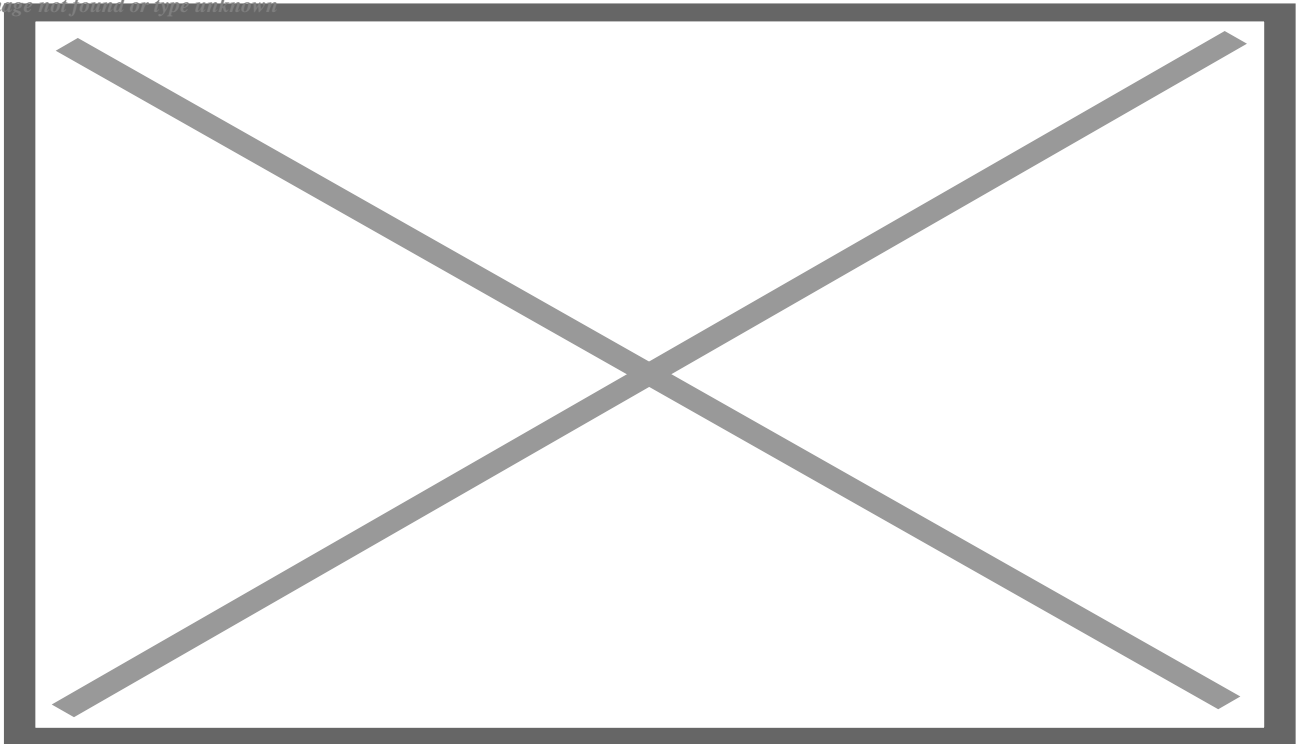


DeSantis cuts one-third of his presidential campaign staff as he mounts urgent reset

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Tallahassee, July 27 (RHC)-- Florida Governor and Republican presidential candidate Ron DeSantis was supposed to push ahead with his campaign over the past several days, but the moment was overshadowed by Donald Trump.

The former president was the overwhelming focus for much of the day as DeSantis spoke out at a press conference and sat for a highly anticipated interview designed to reassure anxious donors and primary voters that he's still well-positioned to defeat Trump.

Ron DeSantis, the Republican presidential contender, is now cutting far more campaign staff than previously thought as he works to reset his stumbling campaign amid unexpected financial trouble.

DeSantis, long considered former President Donald Trump's chief rival in the GOP's 2024 primary contest, has cut a third of his campaign staff — or 38 people, according to campaign aides who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal campaign strategy.

The dramatic staffing cuts include the “less than 10” employees that the DeSantis team revealed letting go earlier in the month just as federal filings showed that his campaign was burning through cash at an unsustainable rate, even before launching a substantial paid advertising campaign.

“Following a top-to-bottom review of our organization, we have taken additional, aggressive steps to streamline operations and put Ron DeSantis in the strongest position to win this primary and defeat Joe Biden,” DeSantis campaign manager Generra Peck said in a statement. “DeSantis is going to lead the Great American Comeback and we’re ready to hit the ground running as we head into an important month of the campaign.”

Revelations about the staffing cuts came on the same day DeSantis was involved in a multi-car accident on a Tennessee highway in the midst of a fundraising tour. The Florida governor was not hurt, according to his campaign and law enforcement. A female staff member was treated for a minor injury.

The latest revelations mark a new low for a presidential candidate who entered the Republican primary this spring with sky-high expectations as Republican primary voters signaled a willingness to move on from Trump. Yet two months later, the 44-year-old DeSantis stands a distant second in most polls as GOP operatives and donors alike question his readiness for the national stage.

Still, with the first votes of the primary season still six months away, DeSantis has time to recover as Trump's allies brace for the possibility of a third criminal indictment.

DeSantis' team has quietly expressed confidence for months that voters would eventually tire of Trump's escalating legal troubles and personal baggage. But that same baggage, playing out in the U.S. legal system just as the GOP primary intensifies, is leaving precious little oxygen for him and his rivals to break through. And Trump's standing with Republican primary voters seems to be growing stronger with every new legal challenge.

Still, DeSantis' team has raised a stunning \$150 million for his presidential ambitions so far. The vast majority, \$130 million, has gone to a super PAC run by allies who cannot legally coordinate with the campaign.

The DeSantis campaign itself raised more than \$20 million in the first six weeks he was in the race, though federal filings released over the weekend revealed that he and his team had burned through more than \$8 million in a spending spree that included more than 100 paid staffers, a large security detail and luxury travel.

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