

## Talking Points

**The following comes from a recently issued statement by the League of Women Voters of Florida and if used should be quoted/attributed as such:**

One of the first responsibilities of all governments is to protect its citizens from harm. That is an agreement made between citizens and elected leaders.

The League and many Floridians believe that the government closest to the people governs best. Erosion of the power of home rule is corrosive to democracy leaving local officials stripped of their authority to make decisions based on local conditions that vary tremendously across the state.

Earlier in the pandemic the governor applauded local governments in North Florida for deciding to keep beaches open because of low transmission rates at that time.

In fact, in March 2020, the Governor stated "*What I think I want to do, is also delegate the local administrators the authority to tailor that as circumstances change, because I think this is a very dynamic situation.*"

To limit the will of local officials on local matters is like cancelling out the vote of the people that placed that local official in office. We commend Governor DeSantis to his earlier position when he said that local authorities know best.

**The following comes various sources of information as stated below and do not require attribution to the League of Women Voters of Florida:**

The state of Florida is now reporting record numbers of new COVID-19 cases, record numbers of COVID-19 hospitalizations, and soaring numbers of COVID 19-related deaths, across all age groups and primarily among non-vaccinated individuals.

Luckily, scientific research has demonstrated unequivocally the efficacy and safety of COVID-19 vaccines and mask wearing.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has released a statement recommending that "all eligible individuals should receive COVID-19 vaccines, and all students older than two years of age and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use)."

The Florida Medical Association has released a statement recommending that all healthcare practitioners and medical support staff should receive the COVID-19 vaccine and utilize harm reduction techniques, such as the wearing of masks, for the safety, protection, and well-being of our communities.

In all ways possible, local elected leaders, school board members, school administrators and government officials in Florida should strongly encourage, and

if they believe its is necessary for safety, to require the following ( excluding persons with medically documented reasons not to be vaccinated or to wear masks):

- 1) The vaccination of all eligible individuals including children 12 and older.
- 2) The wearing of masks by those over age 2 in schools, medical facilities and other locations where there is possible contact with multiple individuals who may be non-vaccinated and/or carriers of the COVID-19 virus.
- 3) Appropriate testing performed based on endemic rate of infection and location of individuals (schools, long-term care facilities, etc)
- 4) Prompt and accessible reporting of cases should be encouraged so parents are caretakers can make appropriate decisions on behalf of their children