



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
COMMISSIONER NICOLE "NIKKI" FRIED
THE CAPITOL

May 19, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Governor DeSantis,

I write to you today as a fellow member of the Florida Cabinet, independently elected by the people of the great state of Florida, regarding the transparency with which COVID-19 data is being shared by the Florida Department of Health (DOH) under your purview.

It has come to my attention that Dr. Rebekah Jones, the state employee responsible for the DOH's COVID-19 dashboard, was not only involuntarily removed from her position after expressing concerns about an order she received to manipulate COVID-19 data, but was fired yesterday by the agency you oversee.

These actions undermine public trust in our government, are extraordinarily dangerous to public health, and are absolutely inconsistent with the transparency and accuracy that Floridians expect and deserve during this pandemic.

I therefore request that Surgeon General Rivkees, Dr. Carina Blackmore, Director of the Division of Disease Control and Health Prevention, and other parties responsible for these decisions appear before the Cabinet at our next meeting on May 28, 2020 to provide more information and answer questions on this matter. I have instructed my Director of Cabinet Affairs to request that this be placed on the agenda for said Cabinet meeting.

Our state government's response to COVID-19 must not only be unified, but also transparent and exercised in good faith. Anything less is a disservice to the 21 million citizens we represent.

Sincerely,

Nicole Fried
Commissioner of Agriculture

cc: Beau Beaubien, Director of Cabinet Affairs, Executive Office of the Governor
Erin Sumpter, Director of Cabinet Affairs, Office of the Attorney General
Robert Tornillo, Director of Cabinet Affairs, Office of the Chief Financial Officer