

DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

23RD DISTRICT, FLORIDA

CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP

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CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES
NATIONAL SECURITY

STEERING AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 23, 2021

Dear Esteemed Leaders,

Last week, Governor Ron DeSantis announced that he would order flags in Florida to be flown at half-staff in recognition of the late Rush Limbaugh. Lowering the flag after someone's passing is reserved as a great honor for people who made a notable positive impact on our community. To offer this type of statewide, official recognition to someone as morally reprehensible as Rush Limbaugh is an affront to all Floridians.

As has already been announced by Commissioner Nikki Fried for offices under her purview, and by various elected officers across our community, I encourage you to ignore this order. In doing so, you will avoid glorifying a person that does not deserve any praise and you will also preserve the sanctity of the high honor offered by the act of lowering our flag.

The anticipated order is already extraordinary based on our State's flag protocol, which specifies the flag should be flown at half-staff in the event of the death of a current or former elected official or the death of a member of the Armed Forces from Florida who dies while on active duty. Rush Limbaugh clearly does not match this description.

Going outside the standard protocol for lowering the flag to half-staff should not be extended to an individual who promoted hate. Rush Limbaugh spent his career normalizing and popularizing hatred and bigotry against people of color, immigrants, women, and the LGBTQ+ community. He built a brand around disgusting insults, bolstering rape culture, spewing lies about the AIDS crisis, and nonstop bullying. The targets of his attacks often received death threats from his sycophantic fan base. To the end, he stoked the environment that led to an insurrectionist attack on our Capitol, and dismissed calls to end such violence.

American political discourse is in a dangerous state. Our country is the most divided it has been since the Civil War. As we work to heal the nation, we cannot elevate a person credited for fostering our divisions and emboldening the worst tendencies of human nature.

Governor DeSantis mentioned that he would officially order flags flown half-staff after the date of interment is announced. Once issued, I encourage you to defy this order and speak out against this blatant disregard for those who were harmed by Rush Limbaugh's repulsive legacy.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Wasserman Schultz".

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

DWS/AD