

00:00: [Twitter breaks because nobody had done a load test. After 2 minutes, about $\frac{1}{10}$ of the people decamp from Elon Musk's to David Sacks's Space, and they restart]

02:18 David Sacks: All right. Here we go.

02:42 Elon Musk: All right. Go ahead.

02:42 David Sacks: All right. I think we're broadcasting. Man, I think we melted the internet there.

02:46 Elon Musk: Yeah, that was insane. Sorry. I'm actually doing this from David Sachs's Twitter account because it looks like doing it from mine basically broke the Twitter system. Anyway, thanks, everyone, for joining. We're incredibly excited to announce that... To have Governor DeSantis on with us with this historic announcement. And then look forward to live Q&A from the audience. So, yeah, with that.

03:16 David Sacks: Yeah, I mean, so Governor DeSantis, are you there? Can you hear us? I think you broke-

03:21 Govenor DeSantis: I'm here.

03:22 David Sacks: I know. I think you broke the internet there. We had over half a million people in one Twitter space, and it was growing by like 50,000 a minute. So, congrats on breaking the internet there.

03:35 Elon Musk: Well, yeah, yeah, you... I mean, you try some new things that you're going to... It's adventurous, so... But I think the value here is actually really high for people to hear directly from presidential candidates and to answer a Q&A live. And you can get a sense for, how a candidate really is and where it's not just canned speeches and teleprompters. In fact, you can tell by some of the mistakes that it's real.... So, anyway, with that, I guess I should turn it over to-

04:11 David Sacks: Yeah. Well, so yeah, Governor, there's been a lot of speculation over the last couple of months about your plans. I understand that you may have an announcement to make. We've got, I think, a record audience assembled here. Probably the biggest room that's probably ever been assembled online. What would you like to tell them?

04:35 Govenor DeSantis: Well, I am running for President of the United States to lead our great American comeback.... Our president, well, he lacks vigor, flounders in the face of our nation's challenges, and he takes his cues from the woke mob... [De Santis recites talking points until 11:25]

11:25 David Sacks: All right, thank you, Governor. Appreciate that. I guess, just as a first follow-up here. Thank you for putting up with these technical issues. I think we're definitely breaking new ground here. As far as I know, no major presidential candidates ever announced their candidacy on social media this way, certainly in a Twitter space. So thank you for doing that. What made you want to take the chance of doing it this way as opposed to just doing it on cable news or the usual way?

11:58 Governor DeSantis: Well, when COVID hit, I had to make decisions about, do you go with the crowd or do you look at the data yourself and cut against the grain? And I chose to do the latter... [De Santis talks about COVID until 14:12]

14:11 Elon Musk: Well, thank you. Yeah, we're absolutely committed to freedom of speech and level playing field and just a vigorous debate. And hopefully this can be a platform that brings people of divergent political views to exchange those views and perhaps some minds will be changed one way or the other. But it's just incredibly important as you highlight that the First Amendment is irrelevant if all the media and the government are operating in lockstep. It makes the most important amendment, the one that was most urgently added to the Constitution moot, if you cannot have free and open debate. So Twitter was indeed expensive, but free speech is priceless.

15:10 David Sacks: Awesome. Thank you. So, Governor, I'm going to ask some questions while we get some other kind of speakers in the queue to ask questions. I think maybe some people knew this announcement was coming because there's been no shortage of hit pieces on you in the press, over the last week or two. I want to ask you about some of these accusations that are being leveled at you. Last week, the NAACP issued a travel advisory against your state claiming that Florida is not a safe place for minorities to visit. What do you say to those who've been advised that somehow they aren't welcome in your state?

15:48 Governor DeSantis: Claiming that Florida is unsafe is a total farce. I mean, are you kidding me?... [De Santis attacks the NAACP until 17:00: time stamp is broken] And oh, by the way, the head of the NAACP lives in Florida, and a lot of their board members have put out on social media during my governorship, Florida vacations where they seem to be having an awful good time.

17:00 Elon Musk: That's great. Well, I mean, Florida's a great state, and I think the people realize that some of the things that are being said are just truly absurd. I mean, I saw some headline from the Atlantic basically claiming that anyone who listens to this Spaces on Twitter is basically a Nazi or yeah.

17:00 David Sacks: Yeah, that was The Atlantic. And then Vanity Fair said that you were interviewing because David Duke wasn't available. Although I'm not totally sure who they were saying was David Duke. I don't know if it was you or Governor DeSantis. It's sort of, a little bit unclear, but-

17:00 Ron DeSantis: But I think this is a function of these, the legacy media... De Santis attacks journalists until 17:00: time stamp is broken]

17:00 David Sacks: And I think they become totally hysterical, because they don't like the idea that their control over the media is being disremediated. Because now candidates for president can just speak directly to people through platforms like Twitter.

17:00 Elon Musk: Yeah. I mean, the amazing thing about Twitter and things like Spaces are that although I happen to be hosting, well, I had to switch over to David hosting it because my account was actually breaking the system. But there's really never been a mechanism before where someone could address the nation, or anyone who wanted to listen to them could, from anywhere in the world, United States or anywhere. So I think this is a really profound change. And it's also not whether the media reports something and an article is true or not, even more powerful is deciding what the narrative is. And so just like if there's only so much you can actually fit in a newspaper or a magazine, and there's only one thing you can really put on the cover of a magazine, so whoever's deciding that is deciding to not talk about other things. Whereas with a public digital town square like we have here, it's possible for the public to choose the narrative. It empowers the people, instead of a very tiny elite cabal, which I don't recognize the irony of me using that phrase. But nonetheless, it's true, and judged by the results that this is a means for the people to decide the narrative and for the people to decide which way a debate will go. Not sort of five editors in chiefs of few of newspapers, basically.

17:00 David Sacks: And I think one of the really crazy things that happened during COVID is that social networks really started censoring dissenting viewpoints on COVID, medical viewpoints that ended up being totally correct in lockstep with what the mainstream media was doing. So basically, big tech platforms were undermining their main reasons for existing, which is giving people a choice. And actually, there's somebody who I think knows more about that than any of us, which is Dr. Jay Bhattacharya who's a professor of medicine at Stanford. I want to pull him in here. Jay, you go ahead and unmute yourself if you can. It'd be great to hear from you. I know that during COVID you worked with Governor DeSantis. It'd be great just to hear a little bit about your interactions, and if you have a question for the governor.

17:00 Dr. Jay Bhattacharya: Yeah, thank you, David. Yeah, I mean, it was an absolute honor to work with Governor DeSantis, and I was really impressed by his decision making in the face of an absolute firestorm of criticism. But Governor, you did the right thing when you opened the schools. And my kids in California for a year and a half didn't see the inside of a classroom, whereas Florida kids were in school. And you can see in the results and the learning loss numbers are so much better in Florida. I'm really curious, Governor, as you're running for President, what are your thoughts about reforming the public health authority in the United States and the federal government, the CDC, the FDA, the NIH? How do you see reforms we need, so that the mistakes of the lockdowns have that happen during the pandemic don't happen again when there's another pandemic?

17:00 Ron DeSantis: Well, first, we need an honest reckoning about what happened during COVID. And the only honest reckoning is that all of those agencies, all of the elites, the public health establishment, they failed. They instituted bad policies... [De Santis talks more about COVID: time stamps are broken]

17:00 Dr. Jay Bhattacharya: So can I follow up with that? I mean, I think the other thing that I saw during the pandemic, Governor, and you was subject to it just as much as I was when we were talking about COVID YouTube censored a video of us speaking in a Roundtable that you hosted on COVID policy. There's so much of the federal government infrastructure went into suppressing honest scientific discussion during the pandemic. So it's not just public health agencies, but other agencies inside the federal government that worked to suppress the speech of Americans. And I'd love to hear your thoughts about-

17:00 Ron DeSantis: No question. No question. So, in Florida, we recognize the danger there. So I'm actually going to be signing a digital bill of rights for Florida pretty soon, which will bar all state and local government officials from colluding, or working with a technology company for the purpose of censorship of speech... [De Santis talks more about digital bills of rights and COVID: time stamps are broken]

17:00 David Sacks: Let me pull in, we have Congressman Thomas Massie. If you're there, go ahead and unmute yourself. I mean, what we're talking about here is I think, really unconstitutional actions by federal agencies. Congressman Massie, I know that you've been involved in this problem of government agencies being weaponized and used against the American people in an inappropriate way. Do you have a comment on this and do you have a question for Governor DeSantis?

17:00 Thomas Massie: Well, first of all, let me say a big thank you to Elon Musk for buying Twitter and exposing all of this. On our Weaponization Committee, we wouldn't know so much of it if he hadn't done this almost as a public service to the First Amendment. It's a disturbing trend. As the governor said, the government is colluding with big corporations. We found out this week from an FBI whistleblower that Bank of America voluntarily gave names and information on anybody who bought a hotdog in Washington DC from January 5th to January 7th, and then overlaid that with gun purchases that they had on record anywhere in the country, for any period of time. And they say they voluntarily gave that to the FBI, so that's disturbing to me. By the way, I've never met Elon Musk, but I'm one of your biggest fans, I'm the first congressman to have a Tesla. I'm on Starlink, and I would've bought a Powerwall, but I'm off the grid and you wouldn't sell me one. So I had to make one with [wrecked Model S. And it's been running our house for five years. But my-

17:00 Ron DeSantis: And just for the record, I was with Thomas our first year in Congress. He's got the Tesla, but his license plate is Kentucky Coal. So it's probably one of the only people that have that in the country.

17:00 Thomas Massie: Thanks for outing me, Governor DeSantis. But no, so Governor DeSantis, my question to you is, you served here in Congress for six years with me, and why is it that Congress is so feckless at reigning in these government agencies, and what do you think we need to do? And if you were president, what would you urge Congress, or what bills would you like to see, and sign to reign in this sort of overreach of government bureaucracy?

17:00 Ron DeSantis: Well, first, I think there's a lot that the executive branch can do. And all I will say when it comes to these agencies, we'll go into this a little bit more as the campaign goes on, but buckle up when I get in there, because the status quo is not acceptable, and we are going to make sure that we institutionalize this government. And these agencies are totally out of control, there's no accountability... [De Santis talks about bureaucracy: time stamps are broken]

17:00 David Sacks: All right, shifting gears, Governor, I want to ask you another topic that's been in the news a lot is Disney. They blamed you for canceling plans for a billion dollar investment in Florida, said they were canceling 2000 jobs. I saw other reports that suggested Disney was going to make the cuts anyway and due to a larger budget cutting initiative, regardless of why they did it, why do you feel your fight with Disney remains important, considering you already beat them on the parental rights bill that they opposed? And what would you say to some of your opponents in this race who argue that the fight has dragged on too long?

17:00 Ron DeSantis: So first of all, Florida stands for the protection of children. We believe jamming gender ideology in elementary school is wrong. Disney obviously supported injecting gender ideology in elementary school... [De Santis attacks Disney until 35:14]

35:14 David Sacks: You know, it's funny, the media used to criticize Republicans for being in the pocket of big corporations and now they're attacking you because you're not.

35:22 Governor DeSantis: Well, not only that, David, it's interesting because the media in Florida for years had hammered Disney, and they would point out that this was not a good arrangement because Disney was not accountable... [De Santis attacks Disney until 37:21]

37:21 David Sacks: Great. Let me shift gears here to the topic of education. I want to pull Chris Rufo into the conversation. I know he worked with you on some initiatives. I think one other thing that the mainstream media I think has [inaudible 00:37:35] is, they've kind of started promoting this narrative that you want to ban books from school libraries. You refuse to teach kids about slavery or other unpleasant realities of American history, or pretend that gay people don't exist. Since many people, I think in this room we're now up to, wow, over 271,000 people. So this is I think totally unprecedented in terms of the numbers of people we have participating. By the way, I think Twitter's working much better now. I think it crashed because when you multiply half a million people in a room by an account with over a hundred million followers, which is Elon's account, I think that creates just a scalability level that was unprecedented. But with my meager followership, it seems to be working much better.

38:20 Elon Musk: Yeah. No, it's ... We have some scaling issues specifically related to my account. At one point in January, if I tweeted above a certain size, it would crash the servers. And then anyone else who was tweeting at the same time would lose their tweet as well. So we've got scaling issues.

38:45 David Sacks: Yes. You know you're breaking new ground when there are bugs and scaling issues. But in any event, back to the question I was asking you, Governor DeSantis, about education. The media has been saying you're trying to ban books, you refuse to teach kids about slavery, you want to say that gay people don't exist. What is the truth of the matter for people who maybe have never heard from you before? Then I want to pull Chris Rufo in on this as well.

39:08 Governor DeSantis: Yeah, so the whole book ban thing is a hoax. There's not been a single book banned in the state of Florida... [De Santis claims no books have been banned from Florida school libraries until 42:24]

42:24 Elon Musk: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I mean I was actually under the impression that there were some books banned, so this is news to me.

42:32 Governor DeSantis: Actually, the one this week was that Miami-Dade County took a book that was about poems from I think like Biden's Inauguration, and they moved it from elementary school library to middle school library... [De Santis claims no books have been banned from Florida school libraries until 43:56]

43:56 Elon Musk: Absolutely. Well, in fact, a friend of mine, Tim Urban, who has a blog called Wait But Why, and is really one of the most reasonable people on Earth, and one of the most reasonable people I've ever met, had a lot of trouble actually publishing his book simply because it debated sort of sacred cows of woke ideology. But incredibly reasonable book. So that is the kind of defacto book banning and de de facto book suppression that I see quite a lot of, is that publishers are unwilling to take risks.

44:33 David Sacks: Let me shift gears here for a second because I know we're running out of time. We're supposed to end I think around 4:00, 4:00 Pacific. But thank you for giving us a little bit of extra time here, Governor. Shifting gears to a major federal issue, immigration, I've seen these videos on social media and on TV of what looks like just insanity at the border. What is your take on what's going on there, and how would you address that as president?

45:02 Governor DeSantis: I'd reverse what Biden's doing. You need to shut the border down... [DeSantis talks about shutting the US-Mexico border until 47:03]

47:03 David Sacks: There's I think a follow-up question on immigration from Steve Deace who is a national radio personality and I think an important commentator in the great state of Iowa. Steve, do you have a comment or question? I think you just need to unmute. If Steve can unmute,

then we'll go ahead and ask him for a question. If not, we'll keep rolling here. All right. Three, two, going, going, gone. All right. Sorry, Steve.

47:44 Steve Deace: My bad. First of all, I want to echo what Congressman Massie said to Elon. Elon, if I put down money on January 1st, 2022, that Twitter was going to be the last bastion of free speech on Earth, brother, I'd be about as rich as you are on that bet right now. I mean it's incredible what you have done here and the restoration of a lot of accounts of people that were truth tellers and were ran from here for telling the truth. I saw a meme the other day that said, "Of course you have scientific consensus when you censor all the scientists who disagree." So I wanted to just say first and foremost on behalf of a lot of grateful people around the country and the world really, thank you very much for that and the investment you made in that cause. Thank you. A question as a follow-up to you, Governor, on this very issue with immigration. We have heard a lot over the years, "Lock her up. Drain the swamp. Going to build a beautiful wall. Mexico's going to pay for it," and crowds cheered and everybody loved it, and brands got built, and nothing got done. What is the bottom line assurance that you can make to the people that are listening right now all over the world and all over the country that you can actually do the agenda that you just articulated when others tweeted about it, and talked about it, but then couldn't actually follow through.

49:03 Governor DeSantis: It's a great question because I share that frustration. I think even my worst critics in Florida will acknowledge, when I tell people I'm going to do something, I don't make promises or say I'm going to do something lightly... [De Santis talks about how he gets things done until 51:47]

51:47 David Sacks: Well, Governor, I saw the cover of Time Magazine this week, and I think they were trying to do a negative story because you were sort of scowling in this portrait they made of you. In the article, they compared you to the Terminator, and I think they meant that as an insult, but I thought it was kind of cool. I thought it was a good thing. Because I think we need a cool-headed, ruthless assassin to go in and take on the woke mob, take on our out of control government, and take on problems like the ones at the border. Again, I thought it made you sound great, even though that may not have been their intention.

52:26 Ron Desantis: Well, look, at the end of the day, this whole business that we're in is about producing results. I don't care about fanfare... [De Santis talks about his impact until 53:20]

53:20 Chris Rufo: Governor, I'd love to jump in and follow up on that. This is Chris [inaudible 00:53:24]. I've had the honor of working with you in the past few years on critical race theory, gender ideology, and the DEI bureaucracy. What I've seen up close and personal, is that while many conservative politicians, going back decades, have made headlines and got on television playing culture war, they never actually get anything done.== What you've done over the last few years is really astonishing. You've eliminated CRT from all Florida's public institutions. You've stopped gender ideology dead in its tracks in K through 12. And just last week you eliminated the DEI bureaucracy in all of Florida's public universities; they'll be shut down completely. I think

what you've done is established a blueprint for fighting back against the left's long march of the institutions, and making sure that those institutions reflect the value of Florida voters, not left wing activists and the partisan press. My question for you is DC is another animal. It's quite different, the scale of the federal government. How are you going to deliver results and what is your culture war strategy facing down the swamp in DC?

54:30 Ron Desantis: Well, some of it is similar in this respect. When we're taking on things like DEI, you get blow-back from legacy media and the far left... [DeSantis talks about how he will fight against diversity until 57:33]

57:33 David Sacks: Great. Shifting gears. Dana [inaudible 00:57:38], do you have a question or comment for the governor?

57:40 Dana Loesch: I do. Thank you both so much for your time, for joining us in a very new way. I really appreciate that, I think it's really cool. And for your support of free speech too. And Elon, I have to say thank you for taking the arrows and for un-throttling the accounts of all of us who got in trouble for sharing a New York Post story about a laptop. And governor, I wanted to thank you for your leadership and your unwavering support of Second Amendment rights. You're on my program tomorrow, and I just got to say you got my vote in the primary, so I appreciate it very much. You were talking about DEI just a minute ago, and I want to ask you both about this growing threat against natural rights and free enterprise. It's this threat of de-banking. Elon, and I've read so much about you and what you've gone through. You've called ESG criteria evil incarnate. Governor DeSantis, Florida saw financially weaponized wokery earlier this year when Wells Fargo Bank dumped both the business and personal accounts of a very prominent and well-respected gun dealer in Florida. They'd been together for 25 years working with Wells Fargo and they cited new ESG guidelines. Similar to the DOJ's previous operation, Choke Point, all these activists for various causes are using this regulatory guidance to de-bank what they consider to be politically incorrect businesses for the sake of risk management. We say that our rights should not be infringed upon by the government, but what can and should be done about activist-guided financial institutions and these payment processors, who are essentially cutting off law abiding citizens and businesses?

59:23 Ron Desantis: I think it's a fundamental issue that I think not enough conservatives have been wise to. I think more and more are, but at the end of the day, we have certain fundamental rights.... I think this whole ESG movement is really trying to do through the financial sector what they could never achieve through the ballot box... [De Santis attacks environmental sustainability until 1:01:18]

1:01:18 David Sacks: As a follow up to that, Governor, Dana mentioned operation Choke Point, and that is a term that's very familiar to crypto companies in Silicon Valley and FinTech companies. Basically, it refers to an effort by the federal government, including the SEC, to basically regulate blockchain and crypto companies out of existence. They really feel like they're being driven out of the country. I'm not talking about scammy ones or the totally fake ones like

FTX, but really high quality, good companies, including companies that are public like Coinbase. These guys are basically begging the government for just a framework. They're just like, "Tell us how to operate legally and we'll do it." I guess, where do you come down on this? What is your view, I guess broadly, of Bitcoin and people's right to hold Bitcoin and to transact Bitcoin and Dogecoin?

1:02:12 Ron Desantis: You have every right to do Bitcoin. The only reason these people in Washington don't like it is because they don't control it. They're central planners and they want to have control... [De Santis shifts for Bitcoin until 1:03:31]

1:03:31 David Sacks: Yeah, I think you're right. I think that is the strong feeling of people in Silicon Valley who are in this space and I think will be heartened to hear your answer on that. The weird thing is that.... And there is a huge constituency of crypto Twitter. For people who are maybe part of political Twitter who are wondering why we're talking about this, it really has a big audience for this topic.

1:03:52 Elon Musk: DogeCoin too. I just why I've said this a big deal.

1:03:56: David Sacks: Yeah. BitCoin and DogeCoin. So shout out to all the Doge fans out there. But the weird thing is that this administration, they seem to want to ban Bitcoin, but they want to create a CBDC, which stands for a Central Bank Digital Currency. What's your take on that?

1:04:17 Ron Desantis : We were the first state. Just last month, we actually got the Florida legislature to pass a law that says Florida does not recognize Central Bank Digital Currency, because some states were actually adding that to their uniform commercial code. You know the federal government is studying this. We did the opposite and say we did. The reason why we did that is because what the Federal Reserve has said is, "Well, we're going to consult with Congress, we'll consult with the executive branch. We don't have a CBDC right now. And ideally we would get authorization for Congress." Well, wait a minute. It's not, ideally. You must get authorization from Congress. I don't think Congress would authorize it. If they unilaterally try to do this, we're trying to provide protection for people here in Florida. I know Biden did the executive order. They're studying it. I can tell you, if I'm President, we are not doing a Central Bank Digital Currency. I think that that would be a huge, huge imposition on people's financial freedoms and financial privacy. By the way, what would the logical result of this be? If the central authority has oversight over this, of course they're going to start imposing ESG criteria. "Oh, wait a minute, you filled up your gas tank three times this week. You can't do anymore." The sky [inaudible 01:05:33] of how they would be able to manipulate this. I see it as a massive transfer of power from individual consumers to a central authority, and I don't think that that's good for a free society. I'm a no on Central Bank Digital Currency.

1:05:51 David Sacks: Well, governor, I want to thank you for the time. We could go for hours here, but I know you only had an hour and we've gone over that. I want to be respectful of your time. I know there's so many people that want to ask questions and-

1:06:02 Ron Desantis: We should do it again. I mean, I think it was fun. I think this is great, and we'll make sure that we come back and do it again. This is a great platform. I would like to see other platforms going in the same direction. A healthy democratic society needs the robust debate, so I just want to thank everybody for listening in. I'll just make that pitch again. We want you on the team, we'd love for you to go to RonDeDantis.com and make a donation so that we can get this done on this nomination, and win the election in November of 2024. God bless everybody, and thank you.

1:06:38 Speaker 4: Thanks, governor. Yeah, we have over 300,000 people in the room, it's really been pretty incredible. We started with some technical issues because of the sheer scale and unprecedented nature of what we're doing. But it's not how you start, it's how you finish, and I think this finished really strong.

1:06:54 Speaker 5: Yeah, I think it's just really great for the people to hear directly from presidential candidates and to have it in a conversational tone, which obviously results in it's going to be imperfect because it's not scripted. But it's genuine, and I think that that really gives the people an opportunity to understand who might be their president in a way that's real. So thank you very much for coming out and doing this.