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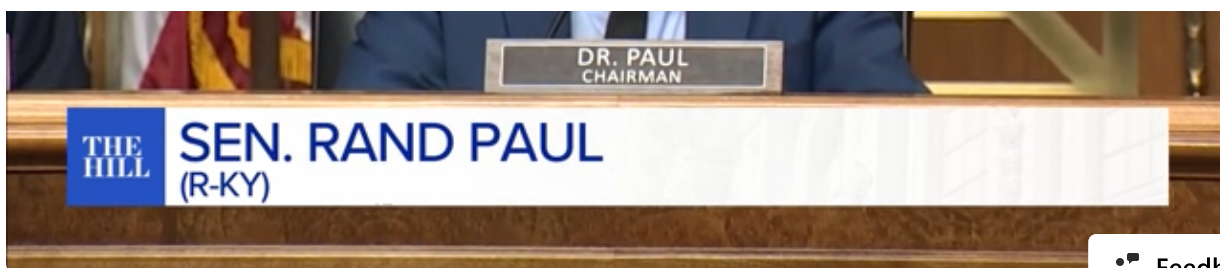
Former Fauci associate David Morens pleads guilty to conspiracy

Story by Joseph Choi • 52m • [2 min read](#)



The Hill

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Dr. David Morens, former senior adviser at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and once an associate to Dr. Anthony Fauci, pleaded guilty Thursday to a conspiracy to defraud the U.S. in relation to efforts to evade Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.



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The Department of Justice (DOJ) announced the guilty plea Tuesday.

In April, the [DOJ brought charges against Morens](#), 78, alleging conspiracy against the U.S., and he was indicted.

The House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic had uncovered evidence in 2024 that Morens had used his personal email, outside the scope of FOIA requests, to discuss National Institutes of Health grants with the infectious disease group EcoHealth Alliance.

In communications released by the House committee, Morens wrote to EcoHealth President Peter Daszak, "I can either send stuff to Tony on his private gmail, or hand it to him at work or at his house. He is too smart to let colleagues send him stuff that could cause trouble."

In a 2021 email, Morens wrote, "i learned from our foia lady here how to make emails disappear after i am foia'd but before the search starts, so i think we are all safe," Morens wrote in a separate email. "Plus i deleted most of those earlier emails after sending them to gmail."



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He faces up to five years in prison for conspiracy.

When reached for comment, Morens's attorney Tim Belevetz told The Hill, "By pleading guilty today, Dr. Morens has taken responsibility for what he did, and he will continue to do so."

In his own 2024 House hearing, Fauci distanced himself from Morens, questioning whether the former colleague even reported directly to him.

"With respect to his recent testimony before this subcommittee, I knew nothing of Dr. Morens's actions regarding Dr. Daszak, EcoHealth or his emails. It is important to point out for the record that despite his title, and even though he was helpful to me in writing scientific papers, Dr. Morens was not an advisor to me on [NIAID] policy, or other substantive issues," Fauci said at the time.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who once accused Fauci of throwing Morens "to the wolves," [reacted to the plea](#) on the social platform X, writing, "Could his plea involve implicating Anthony Fauci?"

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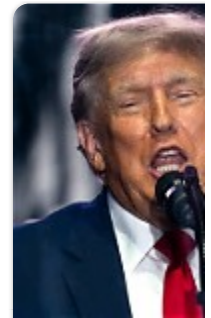
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Florida Governor Ron DeSantis suspends Palm Beach clerk accused of molesting child

Story by TMZ Staff • 1h • 2 min read



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└ Palm Beach County Jail
© Palm Beach County Jail

Ron DeSantis has suspended **Michael Allen Caruso** -- a Palm Beach clerk he had appointed and a former state representative -- after Caruso was busted for allegedly kidnapping and molesting a young child.

The 67-year-old was arrested and booked on 5 felonies Tuesday ... molestation, kidnapping, luring and enticing a child, lewd and lascivious exhibition, and child abuse ... according to multiple reports.



└ AP

According to the **Miami Herald**, the Orange County Sheriff's Office report says Caruso is accused of repeatedly molesting the child, who is his relative at

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under 12 years old.

Multiple outlets report Caruso allegedly exposed himself to the young boy while playing soccer ... touching the child's penis after getting him alone, and playing "tickle monster" to touch the boy's buttocks and genitals.

In another alleged incident on a cruise, Caruso got him away from his parents by promising him ice cream ... but instead exposed himself and placed his penis in the young boy's mouth.



 AP

In yet another alleged incident, Caruso touched the child's genitals during a fishing trip.

The boy's parents noticed he had been exhibiting sexual behavior at home, which sparked the investigation.

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The child told investigators about the alleged cruise incident, saying Caruso had allegedly showered with him, too.

Investigators say Caruso was confronted about the allegations in December and denied the claims. He allegedly told the boy's father he would go to jail if they were reported.



 Getty

Caruso was a big ally of DeSantis -- he served in the Florida House from 2018 until last year -- and the governor once called him a "legend" for backing him up on an immigration bill.

Before his arrest, Caruso was the clerk of courts and comptroller for Palm Beach ... but DeSantis has suspended him and replaced him with interim clerk **Shannon Ramsey-Chessman**.

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This isn't the first time Caruso has had appalling accusations hurled against him ... the Herald reports that his first wife, **Beverly**, had previously accused him of assaulting a child, but he dismissed the allegations.

And records reportedly show that he's been at the center of multiple reports to the Florida Department of Children and Families ... but it's unclear what those reports are about because the information's not public.

He is being held without bond pending his first appearance, and the investigation is ongoing.

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