

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
TALLAHASSEE DIVISION**

**CAIR-FOUNDATION, INC., and
CAIR-FLORIDA, INC.,**

Plaintiffs,

v.

Case No.: 4:25cv516-MW/MJF

**RONALD DESANTIS, in his official
capacity as Governor, State of Florida,**

Defendant.

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ORDER OF DISQUALIFICATION

This is the first of three lawsuits that Plaintiffs have brought before the undersigned judge this year based on actions that state officials have taken toward them. In this case, this Court granted a preliminary injunction in Plaintiffs' favor, which is now on appeal. The second case was dismissed for lack of standing. The third case has a pending motion for preliminary injunction.

In this case and the second case, the defendants sought this Court's disqualification. In this case, Defendant DeSantis did not seek disqualification at the trial level but instead sought disqualification in the first instance in its appellate brief. In the second case, Defendants filed a motion with this Court, which this Court denied.

The request for disqualification in this case remains pending before the Eleventh Circuit. On October 13, 2026, the Eleventh Circuit directed the Clerk to set the appeal for oral argument, including the issue of disqualification. It could be quite some time before this Court gets guidance from the Eleventh Circuit on the issue of disqualification. As this Court noted in its Order denying disqualification in the second case, the arguments in favor of disqualification are meritless and nothing but rank judge shopping. Having said that, it makes no sense for the undersigned to expend judicial resources¹ in this case and the companion case if the Eleventh Circuit ultimately disagrees with this Court's view on disqualification.

Moreover, it does a disfavor to the parties. This is a distraction from the weighty legal issues that the parties have brought before this Court. Accordingly, I hereby disqualify myself. I have full confidence in my colleagues on this Court to preside over the remainder of this case and judge it fairly and wisely.

SO ORDERED on October 15, 2026.

s/Mark E. Walker
United States District Judge

¹ Although an appeal is now pending in this case, discovery is ongoing and the parties continue to file discovery motions for this Court's resolution.