

Benjamin Gibson Secures Fine Against TV Station for Barring Congressional Candidate from Debate

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In September of 2022, Republican congressional candidate Scotty Moore was invited to a scheduled debate against his opponent Democrat U.S. Representative Darren Soto at WESH-2 television studios in Winter Park, Fla. However, Moore was subsequently prohibited from participating in the debate due to his failure to provide proof of his COVID-19 vaccination status.

Tallahassee Managing Partner [Benjamin Gibson](#) immediately filed a complaint with the Florida Department of Health on behalf of congressional candidate Scotty Moore and against the TV station – which is owned by Hearst Television – arguing that barring Moore from the debate based on his COVID-19 vaccination status was unlawful and violates Florida’s ban on vaccine passports signed into law by Governor DeSantis in 2021.

The Florida Department of Health responded to the complaint last week and announced it had issued a maximum \$10,000 fine against WESH-2 for two violations of section 381.00316, Florida Statutes, which prohibits Florida businesses from requiring COVID-19 vaccine documentation to gain access to, entry upon, or service from the business.

Click [here](#) to read more.

About Benjamin J. Gibson

[Ben Gibson](#) is a partner in the Tallahassee office of Shutts & Bowen LLP, where he is a member of the Governmental Law practice group. Ben represents clients facing high-stakes legal issues at the intersection of business, politics, and government. His statewide practice focuses on representing corporate, political, and government clients in appellate, litigation, and administrative matters as well as government affairs. Ben regularly counsels political candidates, party committees, corporate, and nonprofit entities on navigating and complying with the complex federal, state, and local laws that govern their political activity. He represents clients in administrative and enforcement matters before the Federal Election Commission, Florida Elections Commission, and the Florida Commission on Ethics. Ben frequently advises public officials, government agencies, and corporate entities on compliance with Florida’s complex Ethics Code and gift laws, financial disclosure, public records, sunshine law, and Florida Attorney General investigations.



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