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GOP Senate candidates call for fight against Islamic militants after Paris attacks



Ron DeSantis at Sunshine Summit



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DeSantis says it is time to declare that Islamic militants are America's enemy

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U.S. Senate candidate U.S. Rep. **Ron DeSantis** and other Republican candidates at the Sunshine Summit in Orlando Saturday all called for urgent recognition that Islamic extremism is to blame for the Paris attacks and should be seen as an enemy for America.

DeSantis was the last of four Republican U.S. Senate candidates to address the gathering of more than 2,000 **Republicans**, sponsored by the Republican Party of Florida at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort.

U.S. Rep. **David Jolly**, Florida Lt. Gov. Carlos López-Cantera and Orlando businessman Todd Wilcox all gave their speeches Friday in a pre-Paris attack environment. Each criticized foreign affairs and military policies of the administration of President **Barack Obama** and vowed more strength, Wilcox made that the central theme of his speech, while Jolly and López-Cantera focused mainly on conservative economics and constitutional issues.

DeSantis delivered a Saturday speech and had the chance to respond directly to the Paris attacks. He took that opportunity, accusing Obama of refusing to identify the enemy as a form of Islam, and therefore having no chance to stop it.

"The enemy is an ideology rooted in militant Islam," said DeSantis, a former Navy judge advocate general who served in Iraq and also at the high-security American terrorist prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

While he stopped short of urging immediate military reprisals by the United States, he declared ISIS must be stopped. And he added, its members must be kept away from America, saying the U.S should rescind its plan to accept Syrian refugees.

"What happened in France should recommit us to protecting our borders and our sovereignty," DeSantis said. "Refugees from Syria, if you cannot vet them, then you should not bring them in because we cannot expose our people to potential terrorists."

Wilcox, a former Army Green Beret, CIA officer and now a civilian military operations contractor, said ISIS and Islamic terrorists are threats "to all western civilization."

"Who better to help formulate and to lead debate on fighting ISIS and Islamic extremists than an Arabic-speaking, former CIA case officer who has been fighting the war on terrorism?" Wilcox challenged.

Jolly called for a strong military and American leadership in all foreign affairs, and said "Let us have a foreign policy that says ... to ISIS, 'We will fight you, we will defeat you. We will destroy you.'"

López-Cantera expressed as much frustration with policies toward Cuba and Venezuela, and said, "I will stand as a United States Senator that respects our allies but ensures our enemies fear us."

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