

CONGRESS

Rick Scott says the Bill of Rights trumps all

“I have the right to worship at a church service if I want to do it, I don’t believe they have a right to stop me,” Florida’s former governor said.



Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.) | Alex Brandon/AP Photo

By **ELEANOR MUELLER**

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"It doesn't matter what a governor says or president or local leaders" say when it comes to religion and other matters of personal choice, Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.) said Sunday.

"Do I believe that government should be telling us what to do? Do I believe government can tell us we don't have a right to worship? I don't believe they can," Scott told host Dana Bash on CNN's "State of the Union."

"All Floridians, all Americans, have a Bill of Rights, and we have a right to worship if they want to. I believe people are going to do it safely."

His comments citing the First Amendment came on the first Sunday after Trump labeled the country's places of worship "essential" and [demanded that they be allowed to reopen](#) nationwide despite still-rising coronavirus cases and [several reports](#) of the [illness spreading](#) among congregants.

Asked whether he would feel comfortable attending church on Sunday, the former Florida governor responded: "It doesn't matter what a governor says or president or local leaders. We have the Bill of Rights. We have a right to worship. We have a right to get together, and respect — and we need to respect people's religions."

Scott repeatedly invoked the Bill of Rights on Sunday, including when he discussed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance that Americans should wear a mask in public.

Wearing a mask is "a choice you get to make," Scott said.

"Do I believe people ought to wear masks? Yep, I do believe people ought to wear masks. Do I believe people ought to social distance? Yes, I believe people ought to social distance. Do we need the president, the governors and all the local officials to tell us how to lead our lives every day? No. We'll figure this out."

He added: "I trust the American public. I think they're gonna make good decisions."

Input from the president, governors and others in government "doesn't matter," Scott said again later. "I have the Bill of Rights, I have the right to worship at a church service if I want to do it. I don't believe they have a right to stop me."

States across the U.S. have recently [reopened their institutions and their economies](#) — either wholly or partially — despite admonishments from public health experts that it might be too soon to do so. Few have established guidelines for when and how they would restrict activities to contain additional outbreaks.

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