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## Why the US has a COVID Data Crisis

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Congratulations to all. We've now endured and survived two political conventions. According to various pollsters, we're mostly unchanged in our political views. We have witnessed two starkly contrasting and totally scripted messages. And we've had two hurricanes and massive wildfires, on top of COVID-19, to remind us that Mother Nature ignores politicians.



We humans are able to act if we have information we can trust. But, in the US and in my home state of Florida, as Hamlet mused in Shakespeare's immortal play, "There's the rub."

Please take a few minutes to read Amy Maxmen's recent piece at [Nature.com](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02478-z): "Why the United States is having a coronavirus data crisis," <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02478-z>. As you do, please think about South Korea and what that country does and how it does it. Then please reflect on what you know about COVID-19 data and the trustworthiness of that data in the US.

As a Florida resident working in a Florida-based company, I am able to observe Floridians who are clients, referring professionals, independent businesses, retirees, working citizens, and members of the education community, both teachers and students, who are dealing with school-opening data or lack of same.

My takeaway is consistently confirmed as I ask Florida folks the same question over and over: Do you trust your state government's public health data and the advice coming from the DeSantis regime?

The nearly universal answer is "no." Governor DeSantis's sinking approval rating in the polls quantifies that answer. In Florida many older citizens fear COVID-19 for good reasons. They've witnessed deaths and disease at the same time they have heard Ron DeSantis messaging them with a conflicting approach. And now it is the schooling community's turn to fear COVID-19 results, as data concerning student and teacher COVID cases and exposure are or are not revealed.

Florida's COVID response, including its data management, wasn't the theme of the conventions, which are national and not Florida-focused. But Florida is a key election prize. Trump cannot be re-elected without Florida's 29 Electoral College votes. Biden is currently ahead in Florida polls, although we see wide error margins. And here in Florida both of the election campaigns are fully engaged.

We think Florida's election is really too close to call. We will have more on Florida in future writings, as Florida is big enough to alter the national business recovery and markets' reactions.

Here again is the piece we recommend reading about data: “Why the United States is having a coronavirus data crisis,” <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02478-z>.

To be fair and accurate, we should add that Florida has made a decision not to immediately follow the new, surprise CDC guideline to eliminate testing of asymptomatic people who have been exposed to COVID, a move that suggests DeSantis is finally realizing he must change his pandemic-related decision-making behavior. Better late than never. (“California, Florida, New York, Texas will not follow new U.S. COVID-19 testing plan,” Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-testing-idUSKBN25N31H>) See also “Live updates: Public health departments across U.S. rebuke CDC over testing changes,” *Washington Post*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/08/28/coronavirus-covid-live-updates-us/>.

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