



Project 2025

The **2025 Presidential Transition Project**,^[3] also known as **Project 2025**, is an initiative organized by the Heritage Foundation with the aim of promoting a collection of conservative and right-wing policy proposals to reshape the United States federal government and consolidate executive power should Donald Trump win the 2024 presidential election.^{[4][5]} The Project asserts that the entire executive branch is under the direct control of the president under Article II of the U.S. Constitution and the unitary executive theory.^{[6][7]} It proposes reclassifying tens of thousands of federal civil service workers as political appointees, in order to replace them with loyalists more willing to enable Trump's policies.^{[8][9]} In doing so, proponents argue that the change would dismantle what they view as a vast, unaccountable, and mostly liberal government bureaucracy.^[10] The Project seeks to infuse the government and society with Christian values.^{[11][12]} Critics have characterized Project 2025 as an authoritarian, Christian nationalist plan to steer the U.S. toward autocracy.^{[11][13]} Many legal experts have said it would undermine the rule of law,^[14] the separation of powers,^[5] the separation of church and state,^[15] and civil liberties.^{[5][14][16]}

Project 2025 envisions widespread changes to the government, particularly economic and social policies and the role of the federal government and its agencies. The plan proposes taking partisan control of the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Commerce, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), dismantling the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and sharply reducing environmental and climate change regulations to favor fossil fuel production.^{[14][17]} The blueprint seeks to institute tax cuts,^[18] though its writers disagree on the wisdom of protectionism.^[19] Project 2025 recommends abolishing the Department of Education, whose programs would be either transferred to other agencies or terminated.^{[20][21]} Funding for climate research would be cut and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) would be reformed according to conservative principles.^{[22][23]} The project seeks to cut funding for Medicare and Medicaid,^{[24][25]} and urges the government to explicitly reject abortion as health care.^{[26][27]} The project seeks to eliminate coverage of emergency contraception under the Affordable Care Act^[24] and enforce the Comstock Act to prosecute those who send and receive contraceptives and abortion pills nationwide.^{[27][28]} It proposes criminalizing pornography,^{[29]:5[30]} removing legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity,^{[30][31]} and terminating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs^{[5][31]} and affirmative action^[32] by having the DOJ prosecute "anti-white racism."^[33] The Project recommends

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PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION PROJECT

Established	April 2022 ^[1]
Purpose	Reshape the <u>U.S. federal government</u> to support the agenda of <u>Donald Trump</u>
Location	<u>Washington, D.C.</u> , <u>U.S.</u>
Director	<u>Paul Dans</u>
Publication	<i>Mandate for Leadership, 2023</i>
Parent organization	<u>The Heritage Foundation</u>
Budget	\$22 million ^[2]
Website	<u>www.project2025.org</u> (<u>https://www.project2025.org</u>)

the arrest, detention, and deportation of illegal immigrants living in the U.S.^{[34][35][36]} It proposes deploying the military for domestic law enforcement.^[37] It promotes capital punishment and the speedy "finality" of those sentences.^{[38][39]}

Some conservatives and Republicans have criticized the plan for its stance on climate change^[40] and foreign trade.^[19] Other critics believe Project 2025 is rhetorical "window-dressing" for what would be four years of personal vengeance at any cost,^[10] in addition to trying to undo "most everything implemented" during the Biden administration.^[41] The project's authors acknowledge that most of the proposals would require the Republican Party to control both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.^[10] Some aspects of the plan have recently been ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court and would face court challenges, while others are norm-breaking proposals that might survive court challenges.^[42]

Although Project 2025 cannot legally promote a specific presidential candidate, many contributors are associated with Donald Trump and his 2024 presidential campaign.^{[43][44][45]} The Heritage Foundation employs numerous people closely aligned with Trump,^{[46][47][48]} and coordinates the initiative with various conservative groups run by Trump allies.^[49] In 2023, Trump campaign officials acknowledged the project aligned well with their Agenda 47 program.^[50] Trump campaign advisers have had regular contact with Project 2025,^[51] though the project's controversial proposals have also caused the Trump campaign to view it as an annoyance.^{[52][53]} On July 5, 2024, Trump publicly distanced himself from Project 2025, saying he "knew nothing about it" and that some of its ideas were "ridiculous and abysmal".^{[54][55][56][57][58]} Some critics dismissed Trump's claims, pointing to the involvement of figures close to Trump in the project.^{[59][60]} The distancing came days after Heritage Foundation President Kevin Roberts suggested in an interview that there would be a second American Revolution, which Democrats and others criticized as a veiled threat of violence.^{[61][62]} The project has described a "battle plan" to regain control of the government.^{[63][64][65][40]}

Background

The Heritage Foundation has published its *Mandate for Leadership* series since 1981, with updated editions released in parallel with presidential elections.^[67] Heritage calls its *Mandate* a "policy bible".^[67] Heritage claims that almost two-thirds of its 1981 *Mandate* were attempted by Ronald Reagan^[68] and nearly two-thirds of its 2015 *Mandate* were attempted by Donald Trump.^{[68][69]} *Politico* has called Project 2025 "far more ambitious" than previous editions^[10] and *The New York Times* said it operates on "a scale never attempted before in conservative politics".^[70]

The Heritage Foundation is closely aligned with Trump^[52] and coordinates the initiative with a constellation of conservative groups run by Trump allies.^[71] Heritage president Kevin Roberts sees the organization's current role as "institutionalizing Trumpism."^[72] Project 2025 was established in 2022 to provide the 2024 Republican presidential nominee with a personnel database and ideological



Kevin Roberts, president of the Heritage Foundation, established Project 2025 with the goal of "building a governing agenda, not just for next January but long into the future."^[66]

framework,^[70] after civil servants refused to support Trump during his attempt to institute a Muslim travel ban, his effort to install a new attorney general to assist him in his attempts to overturn the 2020 election, and his call for the use of lethal force during the George Floyd protests, saying "When the looting starts, the shooting starts".^[73] Associate project director Spencer Chretien argued that it was "past time to lay the groundwork for a White House more friendly to the right."^[16]

In April 2023, the Heritage Foundation published the 920-page *Mandate*, written by hundreds of conservatives,^[74] most prominently former Trump administration officials.^[4] Nearly half of the project's collaborating organizations have received dark money contributions from a network of fundraising groups linked to Leonard Leo, a major conservative donor and key figure in guiding the selection of Trump's federal judicial nominees.^[45]

Axios reported that while Heritage had briefed other 2024 Republican presidential primaries candidates on the project, it is "undeniably a Trump-driven operation", pointing to the involvement of Trump's "most fervent internal loyalty enforcer" Johnny McEntee as a senior advisor to the project. The 2024 Trump campaign said no outside group speaks for Trump and that its "Agenda 47"^[75] is the only official plan for a second Trump presidency.^[76] Two top Trump campaign officials later issued a statement seeking to distance the campaign from what unspecified outside groups were planning, although many of those plans reflected Trump's own words. *The New York Times* reported the statement "noticeably stopped short of disavowing the groups and seemed merely intended to discourage them from speaking to the press".^[77] Nevertheless, the campaign said it was "appreciative" of suggestions from like-minded organizations.^[78]

Project 2025 is not the only conservative program with a database of prospective recruits for a potential Republican administration, though these initiatives' leaders all have connections to Trump.^{[79][80]} In general, these initiatives seek to help Trump avoid the mistakes of his first term, when he arrived at the White House unprepared.^[81] By reclassifying tens of thousands of merit-based federal civil service workers as political appointees in order to replace them with Trump loyalists,^{[82][83]} some fear they would be willing to bend or break protocol, or in some cases violate laws, to achieve his goals.^{[84][85]}

The two officials released a similar memo days later, after *Axios* reported Trump intended to staff a new administration with "full, proud MAGA warriors, anti-GOP establishment zealots, and eager and willing to test the boundaries of executive power to get Trump's way", which would include targeting and jailing critics in government and media.^[86] *Axios* also reported on people being considered for senior positions in a second presidency, including Kash Patel, Steve Bannon, and Mike Davis, a former aide to senator Chuck Grassley, who has promised a "three-week reign of terror" should Trump name him acting attorney general.^[87] Patel had said on Bannon's podcast two days earlier, "We will go out



Many contributors of the Project have close ties to Donald Trump and his 2024 presidential campaign.^[a]



President Trump meeting with Edwin Feulner (left front) co-founder of the Heritage Foundation, Leonard Leo (fifth back on right) co-chairman of the Federalist Society, and other conservative group leaders in 2017.

and find the conspirators—not just in government, but in the media... We're going to come after you. Whether it's criminally or civilly, we'll figure that out."^{[88][89]} In June 2024, Bannon named specific current or former FBI and DOJ officials who would be hunted down for alleged crimes and treason, even if they fled the country.^{[90][91]}

Advisory board and leadership

The Heritage Foundation, an American conservative think tank founded in 1973 and based in Washington, D.C., that employs people closely tied to Trump,^{[92][93][94]} coordinates the initiative with a constellation of conservative groups run by Trump allies.^[95] By February 2024, the project had over 100 partner organizations.^[96]

Project 2025 partners employ over 200 former Trump administration officials.^[97] CNN found that at least 140 people who worked in the Trump administration had a hand in Project 2025, including more than half of the people listed as authors, editors and contributors.^[98] Vox estimates that nearly two-thirds of the authors and editors served in the Trump administration.^[99] As of July 13, 2024, there is no evidence that Trump was personally involved in drafting or approving the plan.^[99] Six of his cabinet secretaries are authors or contributors, and about 20 pages are credited to his first deputy chief of staff.^[98]

The Washington Post reported on regular communication between Project 2025 and Trump campaign advisers.^[51] In April 2024, according to Media Matters, Project 2025 senior advisor John McEntee said that they and the Trump campaign planned to "integrate a lot of our work".^[100] In May 2024, Russell Vought was named policy director of the Republican National Committee platform committee.^[101] Many contributors to Project 2025 are expected to have positions in a second Trump administration.^[102]

Trump campaign officials initially acknowledged that the project aligns well with its Agenda 47 proposals,^{[103][104]} but the Project has increasingly caused friction with the Trump campaign, which has preferred to avoid specific policy proposals.^[105] Trump has never publicly endorsed Project 2025. In November 2023, without naming Project 2025, his campaign remarked that "Policy recommendations from external allies are just that—recommendations."^{[106][107][108]}

On July 2, 2024, Heritage Foundation president Kevin Roberts created controversy by saying, "we are in the process of the second American Revolution, which will remain bloodless if the left allows it to be".^{[109][64][62]} Shortly afterward, the Foundation released a statement adding, "Unfortunately, they have a well established record of instigating the opposite."^[110] On July 5, Trump sought to distance himself from the Project.^{[107][111][112][113][114]} Political commentators including Robert Reich, Michael Steele, Ali Velshi, and Olivia Troye dismissed Trump's denial.^{[112][113][115][114]}

Philip Bump of *The Washington Post* argues that it is impossible to separate Trump's campaign from Project 2025.^[116] Project 2025 released a statement on July 5, saying the project "does not speak for any candidate or campaign" and that it is up to "the next conservative president" to decide which of its recommendations to implement.^[117] Trump advisor Stephen Miller subsequently sought to remove his company, America First Legal, from the Project 2025 list of advisory board members.^[118]

Philosophical outlook

The main Project 2025 document, *Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise*, outlines four main aims: restoring the family as the centerpiece of American life; dismantling the administrative state; defending the nation's sovereignty and borders; and securing God-given individual rights to live freely.^[119] In the *Mandate*'s foreword, Heritage Foundation president Kevin Roberts writes, "The long march of cultural Marxism through our institutions has come to pass. The federal government is a behemoth, weaponized against American citizens and conservative values, with freedom and liberty under siege as never before."^[120]

Roberts interprets the phrase "pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration of Independence as "pursuit of blessedness". According to him, "an individual must be free to live as his creator ordained—to flourish." The Constitution of the United States, he argues, "grants each of us the liberty to do not what we want, but what we ought."^[121]

Key to a good life "is found primarily in family—marriage, children, Thanksgiving dinners and the like", he writes, and, above all, in "religious devotion and spirituality".^[121] Roberts complains that the United States in 2024 is a place where "inflation is ravaging family budgets, drug overdose deaths continue to escalate, and children suffer the toxic normalization of transgenderism with drag queens and pornography invading their school libraries."^[78] In a public statement, Roberts expressed concern over "rampant crime" in the United States.^[16]

Project 2025's director is Paul Dans, who served as chief of staff at the Office of Personnel Management during the Trump administration. Spencer Chretien, a former special assistant to Trump, serves as associate director.^[3] Dans, also an editor of the project's guiding document, has described Project 2025 as "systematically preparing to march into office and bring a new army [of] aligned, trained, and essentially weaponized conservatives ready to do battle against the deep state."^{[122][123]} He has said that Project 2025 is "built on four pillars":

1. The 30-chapter, 920-page book *Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise*, which presents "a consensus view of how major federal agencies must be governed"
2. A personnel database to "be collated and shared with the President-elect's team", open to the public for submissions
3. An "online educational system" called the Presidential Administration Academy
4. A "playbook" designed for "forming agency teams and drafting transition plans to move out upon the President's utterance of 'so help me God.'"^[124]

While Project 2025 cannot, by law, explicitly promote him,^{[125][126]} Trump's campaign rhetoric has reflected its broad themes.^[127] He has said that he would fire "radical Marxist prosecutors that are destroying America",^[42] "totally obliterate the Deep State", and appoint "a real special prosecutor to

go after the most corrupt president in the history of the United States of America, Joe Biden, and the entire Biden crime family."^[42]

To be admitted to the "Presidential Personnel Database," a recruit must respond to several prompts about their ideologies. One is "name one living public policy figure whom you greatly admire and why." A recruit's social media accounts will be scrutinized. Hundreds of people would spend tens of millions of dollars to install as many as 54,000 Trump loyalists in the government.^[76] As project contributor, Russell Vought told *The Economist*, "how does someone who has an American First perspective, a populist perspective, govern credibly and effectively? Because they know the inner workings of government so well."^[128]

Policies

The Economist summarized the plan as containing some culture war issues, alongside others that are more sweeping in scope and break with past Republican orthodoxy, expanding deficits and the national debt.^[129]

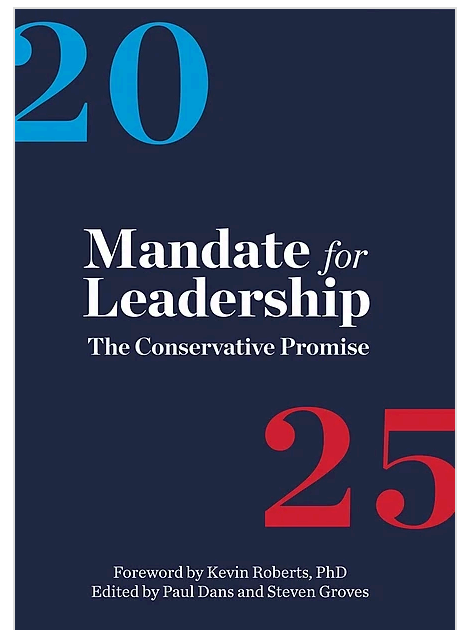
Census citizenship question

The project seeks to revive a Trump administration effort to include in the decennial U.S. census the question whether the person being counted is a U.S. citizen. The census is used to apportion congressional seats and the Electoral College. The Trump administration publicly argued it wanted the new question to prevent racial and language discrimination under the Voting Rights Act, an argument the U.S. Supreme Court rejected for the 2020 census.^[130] The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says the congressional apportionment figures must include the "whole number of persons in each state", not "citizens".^[131]

Christian nationalism

As the leader of the Center for Renewing America, Project 2025 contributor Russell Vought has spearheaded an effort to instill precepts of Christian nationalism into government and public life should Trump win a second term. In a 2021 opinion piece, Vought wrote that Christian nationalism "recognizes America as a Christian nation" and makes "a commitment to an institutional separation between church and state, but not the separation of Christianity from its influence on government and society."^[133]

According to Vought, "Christians are under assault", and he has sought to use his regular contacts with Trump to "elevate Christian nationalism as a focal point" should Trump be reelected president. Vought has close ties with another former Trump administration official and Christian nationalist,



The main Project 2025 document, published April 21, 2023.^[70]

William Wolfe, who, according to an online manifesto, seeks to implement a Bible-based system of government, whereby "Christ-ordained civil magistrates" exercise authority over the American public.^[134]

In February 2024, former Christian nationalist Brad Onishi, who now studies religion and extremism, noted that Lance Wallnau of the New Apostolic Reformation, who has said Trump was "anointed", had recently announced he was partnering with Charlie Kirk, a Project 2025 member. Onishi observed that Speaker of the House Mike Johnson has direct ties to the New Apostolic Reformation.^{[11][135][136][137][138]}

In his 2024 campaign speeches, Trump has echoed various aspects of Project 2025, including the promotion of Christian nationalism.^[139]

Climate change mitigation

Project 2025 advises a future Republican president to go further than merely nullifying President Biden's executive orders on climate change.^[74] It proposes abandoning strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change, including by repealing regulations that curb emissions, downsizing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and abolishing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which the project calls "one of the main drivers of the climate change alarm industry."^{[40][140][141][142]}

In particular, the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights would be closed,^{[121][143]} and the EPA's staff, including the science advisor, would be selected based on managerial skills rather than scientific qualifications.^[121] States would be prevented from adopting stricter regulations on vehicular emissions, as the state of California has,^[40] and regulations on the fossil fuel industry would be relaxed.^[22] For example, restrictions on oil drilling imposed by the Bureau of Land Management would be removed.^[141]

Heritage Foundation energy and climate director Diana Furchtgott-Roth has suggested that the EPA consume more natural gas, despite climatologists' concern that this would increase leaks of methane (CH₄), a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the short term.^[40] Project 2025's blueprint includes repealing the Inflation Reduction Act, which offers \$370 billion for clean technology, closing the Loan Programs Office and the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations at the Department of Energy, eliminating climate change mitigation from the National Security Council's agenda, and encouraging allied nations to use fossil fuels.^{[40][121]}

The blueprint declares that the federal government has an "obligation to develop vast oil and gas and coal resources" and supports Arctic drilling.^{[40][121]} Under this blueprint, the expansion of the national grid would be blocked and the transition to renewable energy stymied.^[74] Mandy



A Trump supporter carries a QAnon-tagged placard depicting Jesus wearing a MAGA hat at the moment the U.S. Congress was violently attacked by rioters on January 6, 2021.^[132] The placard is blurred to respect copyright.

External image

 Same image as above, without the blurring (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/37527185@N05/5082669917> 1/)

Gunasekara, a contributor to the project, acknowledges the reality of human-made climate change, but considers it politicized and overstated.^[144] On the other hand, project director Paul Dans accepts only that climate change is real, not that human activity causes it.^[40]

Project 2025 would reverse a 2009 EPA finding that carbon dioxide emissions are harmful to human health, preventing the federal government from regulating greenhouse gas emissions.^{[40][74]} It further recommends incentives for members of the general public "to identify scientific flaws and research misconduct" and to legally challenge climatology research.^[74] The report's climate section was written by several people, including Gunasekara, the EPA's former chief of staff who considers herself principal to the United States withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2017. Bernard McNamee, a lawyer who has advised several fossil fuel companies, drafted the section of Project 2025 describing the EPA's role. Four of the report's top authors have publicly engaged in climate change denial.^{[40][74]} McNamee dismisses climate change mitigation as "progressive" policy.^[74]

Republican climate advocates have disagreed with Project 2025's climate policy. Joseph Rainey Center for Public Policy president Sarah Hunt considered supporting the Inflation Reduction Act crucial, and Utah representative John Curtis said it was vital that Republicans "engage in supporting good energy and climate policy". American Conservation Coalition founder Benji Backer noted growing consensus among younger Republicans that human activity causes climate change, and called the project wrongheaded.^[40]

Economy

Project 2025 provides a range of options for economic reform that vary in their degree of radicalism. It is critical of the Federal Reserve, which it blames for the business cycle, and proposes abolishing it.^[145] It advocates for free banking and/or the dollar being backed by a commodity such as a gold. It recommends eliminating full employment from the Federal Reserve's mandate, instead focusing solely on targeting inflation.^{[124][146]}

The Project envisions eventually moving from an income tax to a consumption tax, such as a national sales tax.^[147] In the interim, the Project seeks to extend the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA).^[18] It further recommends simplifying individual income taxes to two flat tax rates: 15% on incomes up to the Social Security Wage Base (\$168,600 in 2024), and 30% above that. An unspecified standard deduction would be included, but most deductions, credits and exclusions would be eliminated.^[148] The proposal would likely increase taxes significantly for millions of low- and middle-income households.^[149]

It aims to reduce the corporate tax rate from 21% to 18%, calling it "the most damaging tax" in the country. The 2017 TCJA cut the rate from 35% to 21%.^[124] It proposes reducing the capital gains rate for high earners to 15% from the 2024 level of 20%.^{[150][151]} After these reforms are implemented, it recommends that a three-fifths vote threshold be required to pass legislation that increases individual or corporate income tax, to "create a wall of protection" for these reforms,^[124] despite a wide consensus that enforcing legislation that binds a subsequent Congress is unconstitutional.^[152] Taken altogether, these proposals are expected to increase the U.S. government deficit.^[149]

The project proposes merging the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Census Bureau, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics into a single organization, and aligning its mission with conservative principles. It recommends maximizing the hiring of political appointees in statistical analysis positions.^[153]

Project 2025 suggests abolishing the Economic Development Administration (EDA) at the Department of Commerce, and, if that proves impossible, having the EDA instead assist "rural communities destroyed by the Biden administration's attack on domestic energy production."^[121] By 2023, the Biden administration had already granted more permits for oil and gas drilling than did its predecessor.^[128] Project 2025 also seeks to facilitate innovations in the civilian nuclear industry.^{[154]:9}

The project declares that "God ordained the Sabbath as a day of rest" and recommends legislation requiring that Americans be paid more for working on Sunday.^[121] It also aims to institute work requirements for people reliant on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which issues food stamps.^[16]

Project 2025 is split on the issue of foreign trade.^[146] *Mandate* author Peter Navarro advises a "fair trade" policy of reciprocal, higher tariffs on the European Union, China, and India, to achieve a balance of trade, though not all U.S. levies are lower than those of its major trading partners.^[19] On the other hand, *Mandate* author Kent Lassman of the Competitive Enterprise Institute promotes a "free trade" policy of lowering or eliminating tariffs to cut costs for consumers, and calls for more free-trade agreements.^[19] He argues that Trump's and Biden's tariffs have undermined not just the American economy, but also the nation's international alliances.^[18]

Regarding banking regulation, Project 2025 recommends "merg[ing] the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the National Credit Union Administration, and the Federal Reserve's non-monetary supervisory and regulatory functions";^{[29]:705} in a footnote, the document says that "deposit insurance undermines ['the incentives of bank depositors ... to monitor bank portfolios']".^{[29]:743}

Education and research

A major concern of Project 2025 is what it calls "woke propaganda" in public schools.^[146] In response, it envisions a dramatic reduction of the federal government's role in education, and the elevation of school choice and parents' rights.^[20] For Project 2025, education should be left to the states.^[16] To achieve that goal, it proposes eliminating the Department of Education, and allowing states to opt out of federal programs or standards. Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities' Education Act (IDEA) would be administered instead by the Department of Health and Human Services. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) would become part of the Census Bureau.^[20]



Project 2025 proposes making cuts to the free school meals programs, and eliminating the Head Start program.^[21]

The federal government, according to Project 2025, should be no more than a statistics-keeping organization when it comes to education. Federal enforcement of civil rights in schools would be significantly curtailed, and such responsibilities would be transferred to the

Department of Justice, but the DOJ would be able to enforce the law only through litigation. The federal government would no longer investigate schools for signs of disparate impacts of disciplinary measures on the basis of race or ethnicity. Project 2025 explicitly rejects the "pursuit of racial parity in school discipline indicators—such as detentions, suspensions, and expulsions—over student safety."^[20]

A federal fund worth \$18 billion for low-income students (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) would be allowed to expire,^[20] and those responsibilities would devolve to the states.^[21] Public funds for education would be available as school vouchers with no strings attached, even for parents sending their children to private or religious schools.^[20] Cuts would be made to the funding for free school meals. The Head Start program that provides services to children of low-income families would be eliminated.^{[21][155]} For the project's backers, education is a private rather than a public good.^[20] Project 2025 criticizes any programs to forgive student loans.^[156]

Project 2025 encourages the president to ensure that "any research conducted with taxpayer dollars serves the national interest in a concrete way in line with conservative principles".^{[121][124]:686} For example, research in climatology should receive considerably less funding, in line with Project 2025's views on climate change.^[22]

Expansion of presidential powers

"The notion of independent federal agencies or federal employees who don't answer to the president violates the very foundation of our democratic republic", Heritage president Kevin Roberts argues.^[4] Project 2025 seeks to place the federal government's entire executive branch under direct presidential control, eliminating the independence of the DOJ, the FBI, the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, and other agencies.^[4] The plan is based on an interpretation of the unitary executive theory, arguing that Article Two of the U.S. Constitution vests executive power solely in the president.^{[70][121][44][157]}

Project 2025 proposes that all Department of State employees in leadership roles should be dismissed by the end of January 20, 2025. It calls for installing senior State Department leaders in "acting" roles that do not require Senate confirmation.^[158] Kiron Skinner, who wrote the State Department chapter of Project 2025, ran the department's office of policy planning for less than a year during the Trump administration before being forced out of the department. She considers most State Department employees too left-wing and wants them replaced by those more loyal to a conservative president. When asked by Peter Bergen in June 2024 if she could name a time when State Department employees obstructed Trump policy, she said she could not.^{[158][159]}

If Project 2025 were implemented, Congressional approval would not be required for the sale of military equipment and ammunition to a foreign nation,^[5] unless "unanimous congressional support is guaranteed".^[121]

Trump, the presumptive 2024 Republican presidential nominee, said in 2019 that Article Two of the U.S. Constitution grants him the "right to do whatever as president", a common claim among supporters of the unitary executive theory. Similarly, in 2018, Trump claimed he could fire special

counsel Robert Mueller.^[70] Trump is not the first president to consider policies related to the unitary executive theory.^{[160][161]} The idea has seen a resurgence and popularization within the Republican Party since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001.^[162]

In November 2023, *The Washington Post* reported that deploying the military for domestic law and immigration enforcement^[163] under the Insurrection Act of 1807 would be an "immediate priority" for a second Trump administration. That aspect of the plan was being led by Jeffrey Clark, a contributor to the project and former official in Trump's Department of Justice.^{[164][165]} Clark is a senior fellow at the Center for Renewing America, a Project 2025 partner.^[166] The plan reportedly includes directing the DOJ to pursue those Trump considers disloyal or political adversaries. For his alleged acts while working at the DOJ during the end of Trump's term, Clark has become a Trump co-defendant in the Georgia election racketeering prosecution and an unnamed co-conspirator in the federal prosecution of Trump for alleged election obstruction. After the *Post* story was published, a Heritage spokesman said Project 2025 contains no plans related to the Insurrection Act or targeting of political enemies.^{[164][167]}

Media Matters reported that several Project 2025 partners praised the 2024 Supreme Court decision *Trump v. United States*, which grants broad immunity from prosecution for acts committed in the course of a president's official duties.^[168]

In 2023, Michael Hirsh wrote that little of Project 2025's agenda is likely to happen, citing conservative scholars and government experts who criticize its plans to reform the federal bureaucracy as comically naïve, making the federal government more incompetent, chaotic and amateurish.^[10]

Personnel change

Project 2025 proposes reclassifying tens of thousands of federal civil service workers as political appointees in order to replace them with Trump loyalists, who would be willing to bend or break protocol, or in some cases violate laws, to achieve his goals.^{[5][169]} It established a personnel database shaped by Trump's ideology. The project uses a questionnaire to screen potential recruits for their adherence to the project's agenda.^{[2][170]}

Throughout his presidency, Trump was accused of removing people he considered disloyal, regardless of their ideological conviction, such as former attorney general William Barr. In the last year of his presidency, White House Presidential Personnel Office employees James Bacon and John McEntee developed a questionnaire to test potential government employees' commitment to Trumpism. Bacon and McEntee joined the project in May 2023.^[171] The project recommends that a White House Counsel be selected who is "deeply committed" to the president's "America First" agenda.^{[5][70]}

Project 2025 is aligned with Trump's plans to fire more government employees than allocated to the president using Schedule F, a job classification Trump established in an October 2020 executive order.^[172] Biden rescinded the classification in January 2021; Trump has said he would restore it. The Heritage Foundation plans to have 20,000 personnel in its database by the end of 2024.^[70] Vought said that the project's goal to remove federal workers would be "a wrecking ball for the administrative state".^[173]

As of 2024, only about 4,000 government positions are deemed political appointments. That could change with each administration.^{[5][70]} Schedule F would affect tens of thousands of professional federal civil servants,^[5] who have spent many years working under both Democratic and Republican administrations.^[70] According to Donald Moynihan, a professor of public policy at Georgetown University, while the apolitical and meritocratic selection of public servants is vital to administrative functioning, the Republican Party increasingly views them and public sector unions as threats, or resources to be controlled.^[174] In February 2024, Kevin Roberts said: "People will lose their jobs. Hopefully their lives are able to flourish in spite of that. Buildings will be shut down. Hopefully they can be repurposed for private industry."^[175]

Project 2025 encourages the U.S. Congress to require federal contractors to be 70% American citizens, ultimately raising the limit to 95%.^[121]

By June 2024, the American Accountability Foundation, a conservative opposition research organization led by former aide to Republican senators Tom Jones, was researching certain key high-ranking federal civil servants' backgrounds. Called Project Sovereignty 2025, the undertaking received a \$100,000 grant from Heritage, with the objective of posting names on a website of 100 people who might oppose Trump's agenda. Announcing the grant in May 2024, Heritage wrote that the research's purpose was "to alert Congress, a conservative administration, and the American people to the presence of anti-American bad actors burrowed into the administrative state and ensure appropriate action is taken." Some found Project Sovereignty 2025 reminiscent of McCarthyism, when many Americans were persecuted and blacklisted as alleged communists.^{[176][177][178]}

Political scientist Francis Fukuyama has said that while the federal bureaucracy is in dire need of reform, Schedule F would "dangerously undermine" the functionality of the government.^[179]

Foreign affairs

On the campaign trail, Trump has avoided any real specificity about foreign-policy plans for a second term,^[180] but Kiron Skinner, who wrote Project 2025's State Department chapter, considers China a major threat, and is critical of any conciliatory move toward it.^[181] In its Preface, Project 2025 states, "For 30 years, America's political, economic, and cultural leaders embraced and enriched Communist China and its genocidal Communist Party while hollowing out America's industrial base."^{[124]:11}

Works of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) would be dramatically curtailed due the Heritage Foundation's distaste for what it calls the agency's "divisive political and cultural agenda that promotes abortion, climate extremism, gender radicalism, and interventions against perceived systemic racism." The word "gender" would be systematically purged from all USAID programs and documents. Project 2025 indicates specific United Nations agencies to be defunded and



Project 2025 proposes pressuring NATO member states to increase their military spending, in order to confront threats from Russia.

suggests the president be given more power to allocate U.S. foreign aid.^[182] Such aid will not be allocated to help poorer countries address the impact of climate change. Rather, it will be devoted to advancing fossil fuel companies' interests.^[22]

Project 2025 favors neither interventionism nor isolationism. Instead, it emphasizes that all decisions related to foreign policy must prioritize national interests.^[183]

Nuclear policy

The *Mandate* argues that the U.S. should maintain its nuclear umbrella only for member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and that these countries should be responsible for deploying their own conventional forces to deter Russian aggression.^[121] As of June 2024, all NATO member states except Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain have allocated at least 2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to defense. Iceland does not have a military.^[184]

The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* has called Project 2025's nuclear policy "the most dramatic build up of nuclear weapons since the start of the Reagan administration", and the beginning of a new global nuclear arms race. It includes the prioritization of nuclear weapons development and production over other security programs, rejecting Congressional efforts to find cost-effective alternatives for the plans, increasing the number of nuclear weapons above treaty limits, rejecting current arms control treaties, expanding the capability and funding of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), preparing to test new nuclear weapons despite the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and accelerating all missile defense programs.^[185]

More specifically, the plan calls for a speech shortly after inauguration to "make the case to the American people that nuclear weapons are the ultimate guarantor of their freedom and prosperity." This would be followed by developing and producing new and modernized warheads, including the B61-12, W80-4, W87-1 Mod, and W88 Alt 370; deploying a new, nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile; deploying as-yet-unproven directed-energy and space-based weapons and a "cruise missile defense of the homeland".^[185]

Plans include placing multiple warheads on each Minuteman III ICBM and its Sentinel replacement by 2026, putting nuclear warheads on Army ground-launched missiles, adding nuclear capabilities to hypersonic missile systems, directing the Air Force to investigate a road-mobile ICBM launcher, expanding the pre-positioning of nuclear bombs and weapons in Europe and Asia, and directing the NNSA to "transition to a wartime footing". This would be funded by directing the NNSA to submit monthly briefings to the Oval Office and submitting separate budget requests from the Energy Department, along with directing the Office of Management and Budget to submit a supplemental budget request to Congress.^[185]

Healthcare and public health

Project 2025 accuses the Biden administration of undermining the traditional nuclear family, and wants to reform the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to promote this household structure.^[24] According to Project 2025, the federal government should prohibit Medicare from negotiating drug prices^[24] and promote the Medicare Advantage program, which consists of private

insurance plans.^{[124]:464–65} Federal healthcare providers should deny gender-affirming care to transgender people and eliminate insurance coverage of the morning-after pill Ella, as required by the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare).^[24]

Project 2025 suggests a number of ways to cut funding for Medicaid,^[25] such as caps on federal funding,^[25] limits on lifetime benefits per capita,^[25] and letting state governments impose stricter work requirements for beneficiaries of the program.^[32] Other proposals include limiting state use of provider taxes,^[25] eliminating preexisting federal beneficiary protections and requirements,^[25] increasing eligibility determinations and asset test determinations to make it harder to enroll in, apply for and renew Medicaid,^[25] providing an option to turn Medicaid into a voucher program,^[25] and eliminating federal oversight of state medicaid programs.^[25]

Project 2025 aims to dramatically reform the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by making it easier to fire employees and to remove DEI programs. Conservatives consider the NIH corrupt and politically biased.^[23]

Project 2025 accuses social media networks—directly naming Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok—of jeopardizing young Americans' mental health and social ties by creating a form of addiction. "Federal policy cannot allow this to continue," it says.^{[124]:5–6}

Immigration reforms

This *Mandate for Leadership* suggests abolishing the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and replacing it with an immigration agency that incorporates Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and elements of the departments of Health and Human Services and Justice.^{[121][186]} Other tasks could be privatized.^[186] The admission of refugees would be curtailed, and processing fees for asylum seekers would increase, something the Project deems "an opportunity for a significant influx of money".^[121] Immigrants who wish to have their applications fast-tracked would have to pay even more.^[146]



Stephen Miller, known for his anti-immigration views, was and remains a key figure in forming Trump's immigration policy.

In April 2024, Heritage said that Project 2025 policy includes "arresting, detaining, and removing immigration violators anywhere in the United States."^[154]

Stephen Miller, a key architect of immigration policy during the Trump presidency, is a major figure in Project 2025 and under consideration for a senior role in a second Trump administration.^[76] In November 2023, Miller told Project 2025 participant Charlie Kirk that the operation would rival the scale and complexity of "building the Panama Canal". He said it would include deputizing the National Guard in red states as immigration enforcement officers under Trump's command. These forces would then be deployed in blue states.^[187]

Miller was considering deputizing local police and sheriffs for the undertaking, as well as agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Drug Enforcement Administration. He said these forces would "go around the country arresting illegal immigrants in large-scale raids" who would then be taken to "large-scale staging grounds near the border, most likely in Texas" to be held in internment camps before deportation. Trump has also spoken of rounding up homeless people in blue cities and detaining them in camps.^[187] Funding for the border wall with Mexico would increase.^[146]

Project 2025 encourages the president to withhold federal disaster relief funds granted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) should state or local governments refuse to abide by federal immigration laws, by, for example, not sharing information with law enforcement.^[186]

Issues of identity

Project 2025 attacks what it calls "radical gender ideology"^[156] and advocates that the government "maintain a biblically based, social-science-reinforced definition of marriage and family."^[121] To achieve this, it proposes ending same-sex marriage, removing protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender identity, and eliminating provisions pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)—which it calls "state-sanctioned racism"—from federal legislation.^{[30][31][188]} Federal employees who have participated in DEI programs or any initiatives involving critical race theory might be fired.^[121]

Public school teachers who want to use a transgender student's preferred pronouns would be required to obtain written permission from the student's legal guardian.^[156] Project 2025's backers also want to target the private sector by reversing "the DEI revolution in labor policy" in favor of more "race-neutral" regulations.^[188] Project 2025 is part of a trend of intensifying backlash against DEI in the early 2020s.^[188]

The White House's Gender Policy Council would be disbanded.^[121] Government agencies would be forbidden from instituting quotas and collecting statistics on gender, race, or ethnicity.^{[121][188]} Project contributor Jonathan Berry explains, "The goal here is to move toward colorblindness and to recognize that we need to have laws and policies that treat people like full human beings not reducible to categories, especially when it comes to race."^[188] The U.S. Census Bureau would be reformed according to conservative principles.^[121]

Journalism

Project 2025 proposes reconsidering the accommodations given to journalists who are members of the White House Press Corps.^[5] It proposes defunding the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private, nonprofit corporation that provides funding for the Public Broadcasting System and National Public Radio, as "good policy and good politics".^[189]

Law enforcement

In the view of Project 2025, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has become "a bloated bureaucracy with a critical core of personnel who are infatuated with the perpetuation of a radical liberal agenda" and has "forfeited the trust" of the American people due to its role in the investigation of alleged Trump–Russia collusion. It must therefore be thoroughly reformed and closely overseen by the White House, and the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) must be personally accountable to the president.^[121]

A DOJ reformed per Project 2025's recommendations would combat "affirmative discrimination" or "anti-white racism", citing the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Former Trump DOJ official Gene Hamilton argues that "advancing the interests of certain segments of American society... comes at the expense of other Americans—and in nearly all cases violates longstanding federal law."^[33] Therefore, the DOJ's Civil Rights Division would "prosecute all state and local governments, institutions of higher education, corporations, and any other private employers" with DEI or affirmative action programs.^[32]

Legal settlements called "consent decrees" between the DOJ and local police departments would be curtailed.^[190] According to Project 2025, if the responsibilities of the FBI and another federal agency, such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), overlapped, then the latter should take the lead, leaving the FBI to concentrate on (other) serious crimes and threats to national security.^[190]

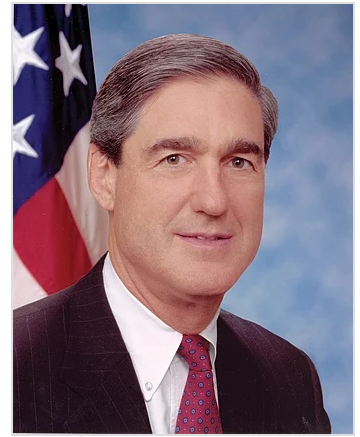
Project 2025 acknowledges that capital punishment is a sensitive matter, but nevertheless promotes it to deal with what it considers an ongoing crime wave and for "particularly heinous crimes" such as pedophilia, until the U.S. Congress legislates otherwise.^[38]

Like Trump, Project 2025 believes that the District of Columbia is infested with crime and as such suggests authorizing the Uniformed Division of the Secret Service to enforce the law outside of the White House and the immediate surroundings.^[186]

National security

Project 2025 would require the Pentagon to abolish its DEI programs and immediately reinstate all service members discharged for not getting vaccinated against COVID-19.^[5] The United States Armed Forces would not be authorized to take climate change into account in evaluating national security threats.^[22]

Project 2025 identifies China as the leading threat to U.S. national security.^{[128][183]} It also expresses concern over China's influence on American society, and recommends banning the social network TikTok (which it accuses of espionage) and the Confucius Institutes (which it accuses of corrupting American higher education). The Project also expresses concern over Chinese intellectual property theft and accuses Big Tech of acting on the behalf of the Chinese Communist Party to undermine the



The DOJ and the FBI are considered problematic by Project 2025, because of the investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, former director of the FBI, into Donald Trump.

U.S.^{[128][124]:9–13} American pension funds would be encouraged to avoid Chinese investments and American companies seeking to invest in sensitive sectors in China would face restrictions or denial of permission.^[128]

Pornography and adult content

In the foreword of Project 2025's *Mandate*, Kevin Roberts argues that pornography promotes sexual deviance, the sexualization of children, and the exploitation of women; is not protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution; and should be banned. He recommends the criminal prosecution of people and companies producing pornography, which he compares to addictive drugs.^[30] Previously, the Supreme Court has ruled against attempts to ban pornography on First Amendment grounds.^[191]

Journalist Andrew Prokop, in Vox, commented:

Roberts also adds that pornography is "manifested today in the omnipresent propagation of transgender ideology and sexualization of children," suggesting that he may define "pornography" much more broadly than is typical—that he may view any attempt to explain or teach about trans people as worthy of outlawing and imprisonment.^[192]

When the Republican Party nominated him for president in 2016, Trump signed a pledge to examine the "public health impact of Internet pornography on youth, families and the American culture." He did not fulfill this promise.^[191] But despite the affairs Trump was accused to have had in 2006 with adult-film star Stormy Daniels and Playboy model Karen McDougal,^[193] Roberts was unconcerned, telling CNN, "We understand our Lord works with imperfect instruments, including us. While on the surface it seems like a contradiction, on the whole, it may make him a more powerful messenger if he embraces it."^[191]

Women's reproductive health

Project 2025's proponents maintain that life begins at conception.^[24] The *Mandate* says that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) should "return to being known as the Department of Life", as Trump HHS secretary Alex Azar nicknamed it in January 2020, voicing his pride in being "part of the most pro-life administration in this country's history". Project 2025 says it would reposition department policies "by explicitly rejecting the notion that abortion is health care and by restoring its mission statement under the [Trump HHS] Strategic Plan and elsewhere to include furthering the health and well-being of all Americans 'from conception to natural death'. "^{[26][194][195]}

In 2022, the Supreme Court ruled in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that the Constitution does not confer a right to abortion, thereby leaving it to the states to create their own legislation on the matter, but Project 2025



Demonstrators advocating for abortion rights, which Project 2025 plans to limit

encourages the next president "to enact the most robust protections for the unborn that Congress will support".^[121]

Heritage Foundation vice president of domestic policy Roger Severino told a Students for Life conference that Project 2025 was "working on those sorts of executive orders and regulations" to roll back Biden's abortion policies and "institutionalize the post-*Dobbs* environment".^[27] For example, the Reproductive Healthcare Access Task Force President Biden created would be replaced by a dedicated "pro-life" agency that would "use their authority to promote the life and health of women and their unborn children".^[121]

The project opposes any initiatives that, in its view, subsidize single parenthood.^[11] Project 2025 encourages the next administration to rescind some of the provisions of the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970, enacted as Title X of Public Health Service Act, which offers reproductive healthcare services, and to require participating clinics to emphasize the importance of marriage to potential parents.^[196]

Severino writes in the project's manifesto that the Food and Drug Administration is "ethically and legally obliged to revisit and withdraw its initial approval" of the abortion pills mifepristone and misoprostol.^[124] He also recommends that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "update its public messaging about the unsurpassed effectiveness of modern fertility awareness-based methods" of contraception,^[124] such as smartphone applications that track a woman's menstrual cycle.^[196] Severino says that the HHS should require that "every state report exactly how many abortions take place within its borders, at what gestational age of the child, for what reason, the mother's state of residence, and by what method".^[124]

The project seeks to restore Trump-era "religious and moral exemptions" to contraceptive requirements under the Affordable Care Act, including emergency contraception (Plan B), which it deems an abortifacient,^{[197][24]} to defund the Planned Parenthood program,^[11] and to remove protection of medical records involving abortions from criminal investigations if the owners of said records cross state lines.^[24] Project 2025 contributor Emma Waters told *Politico*, "I've been very concerned with just the emphasis on expanding more and more contraception." According to her, Project 2025's policy recommendations constitute not restrictions but rather "medical safeguards" for women.^[196] Waters said she wanted the NIH to investigate the long-term effects of contraception.^[196]

In Project 2025's "Department of Justice" section, Gene Hamilton calls for enforcement of federal law against using the U.S. Postal Service for transportation of medicines that induce abortion.^[124] Project 2025 seeks to revive provisions of the Comstock Act of the 1870s, that banned mail delivery of any "instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing" that could be used for an abortion. Congress and the courts have since narrowed Comstock laws, allowing contraceptives to be delivered by mail.^{[27][28]}

Project 2025 aims to enforce Comstock more rigorously at the national level to prohibit sending abortion pills and medical equipment used for abortions through the mail. The plan would allow criminal prosecution for senders and receivers of abortion pills.^{[27][28]} Project 2025 does not explicitly promote the prohibition of abortion,^[146] but some legal experts and abortion rights advocates said adopting the Project's plan would cut off access to medical equipment used in surgical abortions to create a *de facto* national abortion ban.^{[198][199]}

Trump has not committed to a federal prohibition on abortion.^[24]

Regarding the issue of preventing teenage pregnancy, Project 2025 advises the federal government to deprecate what it considers promotion of abortion and high-risk sexual behaviors among adolescents. It also seeks to remove the role of the Department of Health and Human Services in shaping sex education in the United States, arguing that this is tantamount to creating a monopoly.^{[124]:477}

Transportation infrastructure

Project 2025 recommends curtailing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021, which authorizes funding for de-carbonizing transportation infrastructure.^[200] It views the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) unfavorably, calling it a waste of money. It suggests cutting federal funding for transit agencies nationwide in the form of the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program. It wants the FTA to conduct "rigorous cost–benefit analysis" even though the agency already scrutinizes projects before allocating funding.^[201]

Other initiatives

Draft executive orders

Project 2025 has also helped draft executive orders that are not public.^{[202][203]} *The Washington Post* reported that they include an order invoking the Insurrection Act to deploy the military for domestic law enforcement, which the Heritage Foundation denied.^[202]

Reactions and responses

Allegations of authoritarianism

Democracy experts, political scholars, and other commentators have described the project as dangerous,^[204] risking authoritarianism,^[205] and apocalyptic.^{[206][207]} Many legal experts have said it would undermine the rule of law,^[14] the separation of powers,^[5] the separation of church and state,^[15] and civil liberties.^{[5][14][16]} Snopes cites "people across the political spectrum" worried that the plan is a precursor to authoritarianism.^[208]

Ruth Ben-Ghiat, a scholar of fascism and authoritarian leaders at New York University, wrote in May 2024 that Project 2025 "is a plan for an authoritarian takeover of the United States that goes by a deceptively neutral name." She said the project's intent to abolish federal departments and agencies "is to destroy the legal and governance cultures of liberal democracy and create new bureaucratic structures, staffed by new politically vetted cadres, to support autocratic rule." She continues:

Appropriating civil rights for white Christians furthers the Trumpist goal of delegitimizing the cause of racial equality while also making Christian nationalism a core value of domestic policy. Doing away with the separation of church and state is the goal of many architects of

Trumpism, from Project 2025 contributor Russ Vought to far-right proselytizer Michael Flynn, who uses the idea of "spiritual war" as counterrevolutionary fuel ... Bannon, Roberts, Stephen Miller, and other American incarnations of fascism are convinced that counterrevolution leading to autocracy is the only path to political survival for the far right, given the unpopularity of their positions (especially on abortion) and their leader's boatload of legal troubles.^[15]

Some academics worry Project 2025 represents significant executive aggrandizement, a type of democratic backsliding involving government institutional changes made by elected executives. Cornell University political scientist Rachel Beatty Riedl says this global phenomenon represents threats to democratic rule not from violence but rather from using democratic institutions to consolidate executive power. She notes this has occurred in countries such as Hungary, Nicaragua, and Turkey, but is new to the U.S. She adds, "if Project 2025 is implemented, what it means is a dramatic decrease in American citizens' ability to engage in public life based on the kind of principles of liberty, freedom and representation that are accorded in a democracy."^{[209][210]}

Donald B. Ayer, the deputy attorney general under George H. W. Bush, said,

Project 2025 seems to be full of a whole array of ideas that are designed to let Donald Trump function as a dictator, by completely eviscerating many of the restraints built into our system. He really wants to destroy any notion of a rule of law in this country ... The reports about Donald Trump's Project 2025 suggest that he is now preparing to do a bunch of things totally contrary to the basic values we have always lived by. If Trump were to be elected and implement some of the ideas he is apparently considering, no one in this country would be safe.^[14]

Michael Bromwich, who was Justice Department inspector general from 1994 to 1999, remarked,

The plans being developed by members of Trump's cult to turn the DOJ and FBI into instruments of his revenge should send shivers down the spine of anyone who cares about the rule of law. Trump and rightwing media have planted in fertile soil the seed that the current Department of Justice has been politicized, and the myth has flourished. Their attempts to undermine DOJ and the FBI are among the most destructive campaigns they have conducted.^[14]

Max Stier of the Partnership for Public Service and others have voiced concern that the project would revive the early-American spoils-and-patronage system that awarded government jobs to those loyal to a party or elected official rather than by merit. The Pendleton Act of 1883 mandated that federal jobs be awarded by merit.^[211] Former Trump campaign and presidency senior advisor Steve Bannon has advocated the plan on his *War Room* podcast, hosting Jeffrey Clark and others working on the project.^[14] Georgetown University public policy professor Donald Moynihan wrote that Schedule F appointees could be required to swear loyalty to the president, in conflict with their constitutional obligation to swear loyalty to the U.S. Constitution.^[212]

Spencer Ackerman and John Nichols in *The Nation* and Chauncey DeVega of *Salon.com* have called Project 2025 a plan to install Trump as a dictator, warning that Trump could prosecute and imprison enemies or overthrow American democracy altogether.^{[213][214][215]} Longtime Republican academic Tom Nichols wrote in *The Atlantic* that Trump "is not bluffing about his plans to jail his opponents and suppress—by force, if necessary—the rights of American citizens."^[216]

Writing in *Mother Jones*, Washington bureau chief David Corn called Project 2025 "the right-wing infrastructure that is publicly plotting to undermine the checks and balances of our constitutional order and concentrate unprecedented power in the presidency. Its efforts, if successful and coupled with a Trump (or other GOP) victory in 2024, would place the nation on a path to autocracy."^[217]

Peter M. Shane, a law professor who writes about the rule of law and the separation of powers, wrote:

The [*New York*] *Times* quotes Vought's impatience with conservative lawyers in the first Trump administration who were unwilling to do Trump's bidding without hesitation. Criticizing the timidity of traditional conservative lawyers, Vought told the *Times*: "The Federalist Society doesn't know what time it is." As for making the Justice Department an instrument of White House political retribution, Vought would unblinkingly jettison the norm of independence that presidents and attorneys general of both parties have carefully nurtured since Watergate. "You don't need a statutory change at all, you need a mind-set change," Vought told the [*Washington*] *Post*. "You need an attorney general and a White House Counsel's Office that don't view themselves as trying to protect the department from the president."^[120]

Dartmouth College professor Jeff Sharlet wrote the 2023 book *The Undertow: Scenes from a Slow Civil War*. After years traveling to meet with Trump supporters, he writes that his initial "objections to describing militant Trumpism as fascist have fallen away."^[218] He says Project 2025 is influenced by the New Apostolic Reformation, a rapidly growing evangelical and charismatic movement aligned with Trump. Sharlet contends that the Project's first mandate to "restore the family as the centerpiece of American life and protect our children" is "Q-coded—it's 'protect the blood,' it's the 14 words, it's all this stuff."^[219]

In June 2024, Steven Greenhut wrote a column for the libertarian magazine *Reason*, criticizing Project 2025 for increasing government power and risking authoritarianism and abuse by centralizing control of the executive in the president.^[205]

In July 2024, Donald Moynihan of Georgetown University wrote that Project 2025 "would add measurably to the risks of corruption in American government. President Trump talks a lot about the deep state. Again, that is very similar to what authoritarians in other countries have tended to do to justify taking more direct control over civil service systems. So I think there is a dangerous pattern here, where it would not just reduce the quality of government. It would also open the door for abuses of political power."^[220]

LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ writers and journalists have criticized Project 2025 for its intended removal of protections for LGBTQ+ people and determination to outlaw pornography by claiming it is an "omnipresent propagation of transgender ideology and sexualization of children".^[30] Writing for *Dame* magazine, Brynn Tannehill argued that *The Mandate for Leadership* in part "makes eradicating LGBTQ people from public life its top priority", while citing passages from the playbook linking pornography to "transgender ideology", arguing that it related to other anti-transgender attacks in 2023.^[221]

Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, the author of *Just Faith: Reclaiming Progressive Christianity*, criticized Project 2025 in an MSNBC article for appealing to Christian nationalism. In particular, Graves-Fitzsimmons criticized Severino's chapter on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and his opposition to the Respect for Marriage Act, a landmark law that repealed the Defense of Marriage Act and codified the federal definition of marriage to recognize same-sex and interracial marriage.^[222]

Other reactions and responses

The project has employed warlike rhetoric and apocalyptic language in describing the "battle plan" to regain control of the government, which some have interpreted as threatening political violence.^{[223][224][225]}

In April 2024, historian Emma Shortis wrote, "The Mandate's veneer of exhausting technocratic detail, focused mostly on the federal bureaucracy, sits easily alongside a Trumpian project of revenge and retribution...[plans] more broadly aim for nothing less than the total dismantling and restructure of both American life and the world as we know it...The Mandate doesn't specify who the next conservative president might be, but it is clearly written with Trump in mind...Project 2025's Mandate is iconoclastic and dystopian, offering a dark vision of a highly militaristic and unapologetically aggressive America ascendant in 'a world on fire'. Those who wish to understand Trump and the movement behind him, and the active threat they pose to American democracy, are obliged to take it seriously."^[226]

Rick Perlstein in The American Prospect questions the quality of the project, writing, "much of [the document] is too dumb to accomplish anything at all", consisting of "multiple authors debating opposite interpretations of basic public questions". He says it displays "advertisements of vulnerabilities within the conservative coalition. Wedge issues. Opportunities to split Republicans at their most vulnerable joints", and compares it to similar projects under the administrations of Warren G. Harding, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan, noting for Reagan that "Then as now, the Heritage Foundation gave a Republican president a blueprint to do it. Indeed, Project 2025's Mandate for Leadership shares the same name, and same format, with the volume Heritage published in 1981." But Perlstein does not dismiss the danger of the project, writing, "The fact that conservatives have been trying so hard for so long is what makes it more dangerous. It's our good luck that each time, some accident of history stood in the way of the worst right-wing plans."^[227]

In April 2024, responding to criticism of the project, Heritage released a 13-page document, titled "5 Reasons Leftists HATE Project 2025".^[154] Restating many of its previously published objectives, the document asserted that "the radical Left hates families" and "wants to eliminate the family and replace it with the state"; that Leftist "elites use the 'climate crisis' as a tool for scaring Americans into

giving up their freedom"; that the "radical Left wants our country to travel down [the] same dark path" toward becoming the Soviet Union, North Korea, and Cuba; and that "woke propaganda" should be eliminated at every level of government.^[154]

The project likely has a substantial political base of support, due to dissatisfaction with Washington, D.C.,^[228] or support for specific right-wing^[229] and conservative policy proposals.^[230]

In June 2024, Democratic Congressman Jared Huffman announced the formation of The Stop Project 2025 Task Force. He warned that the Project would hit "like a Blitzkrieg" and that "if we're trying to react to it and understand it in real time, it's too late. We need to see it coming well in advance and prepare ourselves accordingly."^{[231][232]} He has not been alone in calling the project "dystopian".^{[232][233]}

On June 27, the Biden campaign launched a website critical of Project 2025, hours before Biden's presidential debate with Trump.^[234]

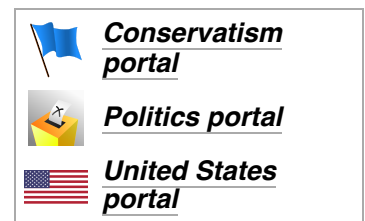
On July 5, 2024, Trump said in a statement on his platform Truth Social: "I know nothing about Project 2025. I have no idea who is behind it. I disagree with some of the things they're saying and some of the things they're saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal. Anything they do, I wish them luck, but I have nothing to do with them."^{[235][236][64]}

On July 10, 2024, hacktivist group SiegedSec announced it had hacked the Heritage Foundation and acquired 200 gigabytes of user information, citing opposition to Project 2025 and the organization's general opposition to transgender rights as the group's primary motivation.^[237]

Andrew Prokop predicts some of the more extreme aspects of Project 2025 could well come to pass, once Trump no longer has to face election.^[99]

See also

- Human rights – Fundamental rights belonging to all humans
- Human rights inflation – Criticism of human rights expansion
- Southern strategy – 20th century Republican electoral strategy for the Southern US



Notes

a. Skibell (2024):

Many of the authors of the blueprint are former Trump officials, and the Heritage Foundation has spent the past year-plus recruiting people to implement the plans within the administration, Scott said.

"So they don't just have a long, sprawling policy document,' he said, 'they also have a growing list of staff who are being tested to see if they are loyal to Trump and if they are willing to administer this in his potential administration."

Klawans (2024):

Former Trump staffers involved with Project 2025 include former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and Trump's former senior adviser Stephen Miller, the latter of whom has been described as a white nationalist.

However, as *New York* magazine said, many of Trump's indicated plans for a second term fall in line with the Project 2025 outline.

Mascaro (2024):

While the Trump campaign has repeatedly said that outside groups do not speak for the former president, Project 2025's 1,000-page proposal was drafted with input from a long list of former Trump administration officials who are poised to fill the top ranks of a potential new administration.

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External links

- Official website (<https://www.project2025.org>) 
 - "Top Project 2025 architect talks conservative blueprint for Trump second term" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxEcSjWRipI>) on MSNBC show *The Weekend*, an interview of Kevin Roberts
 - "Paul Dans discussing the 2025 Presidential Transition Project" (<https://www.c-span.org/video/?536345-3/paul-dans-2025-presidential-transition-project>) on C-SPAN call-in show *Washington Journal*
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