

# Donald Trump and the Mystery of Project 2025

What on earth is Project 2025, and why has it become such a talking point for the presidential elections? According to former President Trump, he knows nothing about it, other than that it represents the worst of the radical Right. In contrast, immediately after being endorsed by President Biden to take his spot in the elections, Vice President Harris stated, “My intention is to earn and win this nomination. I will do everything in my power to unite the Democratic Party—and unite our nation—to defeat Donald Trump and his extreme Project 2025 agenda.”

We now have two questions: What is Project 2025? And why has it become a political football? (One news report claims that in the last week, Project 2025 has been searched for online more than Taylor Swift!)

To indicate just how deeply Trump has distanced himself from the project, he stated over the weekend, “Some on the Right, the severe Right, came up with this Project 2025. You have the radical Left and you have the radical Right. You read some of the things, and they are extreme. They are seriously extreme.”

He also said, “I don’t know what [obscenity] it is, this Project 25. I don’t know anything about it. I don’t want to know anything about it.”

Two weeks earlier, on July 5, he posted on his Truth social network: “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.”

Talk about getting dissed.

In stark contrast, a July 15 article in The New York Times by

Paul Krugman is titled, "Don't Lose Sight of Project 2025. That's the Real Trump."

Krugman writes, "For anyone new to this: Project 2025 is a blueprint by and for some of Trump's close allies, put together by the Heritage Foundation, to ensure that if Trump wins in November, MAGA will hit the ground running."

It is 922 pages long, it is extremely dense and it calls for the complete overhaul of the federal government. (And no, I have not read the document; I have only scanned the Table of Contents and done searches for some key words.)

Writing for USA Today on July 5, Rachel Barber explained, "The detailed plan to dismantle and reconstruct the government laid out by conservative groups known as the 2025 Presidential Transition Project has critics up in arms over its 'apocalyptic' and 'authoritarian' nature." Indeed, some Jewish leaders have warned that it represents an extreme form of Christian nationalism and that "at its root is an undermining of American religious freedom."

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As for the alleged connection to Trump, Jacob Knutson at Axios writes, "At least 140 former Trump administration officials contributed to Project 2025, CNN reports."

Yet, he notes, "Trump has publicly disavowed the project; his campaign has pointed to his own policy plan, Agenda47, and the official Republican Party platform as his agenda if he wins in November."

Knutson continues, "Yes, but: The foundation boasted that the GOP presidential nominee carried out roughly two-thirds of its 2015 recommendations within a year of taking office the first time."

Indeed, while terms like “Christian” are found just seven times in the document (sometimes with the prefix Judeo-, and sometimes referencing persecuted Christians abroad), the name “Trump” is found 312 times.

As for the Heritage Foundation’s impact on Trump’s previous administration, its website notes that in 2016:

*As a candidate, Donald Trump drew his list of potential Supreme Court nominees from Heritage recommendations. Many of his policy recommendations were drawn from our Mandate for Leadership series of policy guides. After his November election, Heritage continued to provide guidance on policy and personnel, and several dozen staff worked directly with the transition team.*

Heritage also reported that in 2018, “Analysis completed by The Heritage Foundation determined that 64 percent of the policy prescriptions in Heritage’s ‘Mandate for Leadership’ series were included in Trump’s budget, implemented through regulatory guidance, or under consideration for action in accordance with Heritage’s original proposals.”

In the thinking of Heritage, then, Project 2025 would be Trump’s blueprint for his next four years if reelected.

Why, then, does he speak so negatively and dismissively about both the Heritage Foundation and Project 2025?

Trump’s critics were quick to pounce on video footage from August 2022 when he keynoted a Heritage dinner, as it allegedly began its work on Project 2025. Trump said, “This is a great group & they’re going to lay the groundwork & detail plans for exactly what our movement will do ... when the American people give us a colossal mandate to save America.”

So Trump *did* know about the project, right? Others pointed out that “this routine acknowledgement of heritage [sic] was a

full year before Project 2025 even existed. Liars gonna lie.”

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Either way, though, even if Trump knew nothing of Project 2025, why trash Heritage? Why associate them with the radical Right extremists? As Megan Basham posted, “Project 2025 is good actually and it would be nice if the GOP would have the sense not to burn the people who actually have a plan for restoring constitutional norms.”

What, then, is the Trump strategy?

Writing for The Stream, John Zmirak hit the nail on the head in terms of what appears to be motivating Trump:

*Because he knows we're terrified of the Antifa/BLM/open borders/pro-Hamas Left, Trump has been treating us on the Christian right like we're some terrified white-collar prison inmate who's desperate for protection from the MS-13 predators in the next cell block. Now that might have to change [with Harris replacing Biden], since Trump will need to run on the actual issues. If that happens, he might well win a genuine mandate. And once he was in office, real conservatives and Christians would share part of that mandate instead of shining his shoes and begging for cigarettes during our stint in the exercise yard.*

Personally, I cannot comment on the contents of Project 2025, both because of its length and because it touches on many areas outside of any areas of expertise I have.

What is clear is that: 1) from Day 1, Trump's opponents were going to accuse him of having a radical, right-wing, Christian nationalist agenda, the latest version of the lie that “all Trump supporters are dangerous, white supremacist, religious

fanatics and insurrectionists”; 2) Trump saw this coming and completely trashed Project 2025.

Either way, Trump apparently believes that Christian conservatives have nowhere else to go, and the more he can downplay the “radical Right” allegations, the better chance he has of getting elected. This is politics at its most raw: Tell people what they want to hear in order to get their vote.

For the Democrats, this means fearmongering in the extreme, throwing every possible accusation at Trump in the hope that something will stick. For Trump, it means running as far as possible from those accusations, even at the expense of historic relationships, not to mention truth itself.

Is it possible that with Trump’s election, Heritage would understand the games he had to play and he could then seek to implement whatever he liked from it? Or could it be that, with each passing day, Trump moves further away from the Christian Right in keeping with his real values?

Only Trump, his inner circle and the Lord know. But what is unmistakable is this. Trump may still be the candidate of choice for many Christian conservatives, but they can no longer believe that he is a convictional champion of their cause. He may be the best candidate, but he’s no savior.

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