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Trump's Early Actions Mirror Project 2025, the Blueprint He Once Dismissed

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President Donald Trump made clear during his campaign that he wanted little to do with [Project 2025](#), the sweeping and controversial conservative policy blueprint created by the Heritage Foundation. But just days into his second term, many of Trump's [early actions](#) align with the Project 2025 agenda.

An analysis by TIME found that nearly two-thirds of the [executive actions](#) Trump has issued so far mirror or partially mirror proposals from the 900-page document, ranging from sweeping deregulation measures to aggressive immigration reform.

Democrats had [seized](#) on Trump's connection to Project 2025 during the campaign, pointing out that many of the playbook's contributors previously worked for Trump or had connections to his orbit. Trump repeatedly said he had "no idea who is behind" the conservative blueprint and that some of its ideas were "absolutely ridiculous and abysmal." He appeared to soften his stance after winning the election, [telling TIME in November](#), "I don't disagree with everything in Project 2025, but I disagree with some things."

Despite Trump's past disavowals, many of the individuals involved in drafting Project 2025, such as Russell Vought and Brendan Carr, have been tapped to serve in prominent positions in his Administration. Vought was nominated to run the Office of Management and Budget, while Carr was tapped to lead the Federal Communications Commission. The Heritage Foundation declined to comment for this story.

A White House spokesperson tells TIME that Trump "had nothing to do with Project 2025" and that his first raft of executive orders "delivered on the promises that earned him a resounding mandate from the American people - securing the border, restoring common sense, driving down inflation, and unleashing American energy."

When Project 2025 was published in April 2023, it was designed as a roadmap for a future Republican presidential administration, with the goal of reshaping the federal government in ways that align with conservative, free-market values. The initiative's agenda includes aggressive deregulation, curbs on immigration, challenges to civil-rights protections, and a substantial reduction of the federal workforce, all with the aim of reducing the size and scope of government while reasserting executive authority.

While many of Trump's executive orders resemble Project 2025's proposals, not all of them fully align with the document's recommendations. Some executive actions, such as the push to declare an energy emergency and the attempt to challenge birthright citizenship, are not directly addressed in the blueprint, for example. But dozens of executive actions rolled out by the new administration reflect Project 2025's core objectives, particularly in areas like immigration reform, government restructuring, and deregulation.

"I suspect a lot of liberal think tanks are green with envy that a conservative think tank has this much sway over the policy agenda," says Bill Galston, chair of the Brookings Institution's Governance Studies program and a former advisor to President Bill Clinton. He adds that the influence of think tanks, however, "is bound to decline once the President and the Republican majority in Congress start working together on legislation."

Still, by embracing some elements of the Heritage Foundation's blueprint, Trump's second term appears shaped by a vision that was laid out before his return to the White House, says Skye Perryman, chief executive of Democracy Forward, a national legal organization that recently launched Democracy 2025, a resource center created in response to Project 2025 that is tracking the new administration's actions. "This is a

playbook that we've seen before and we knew would be implemented," Perryman says. "The real shame is that on the campaign trail, Trump did not level with Americans. He didn't seek to try to convince Americans that this was his agenda. He acted as if he didn't have anything to do with Project 2025, when we know and have seen that he's really seeking to accelerate that agenda."

Here's a breakdown of some of the parallels between Trump's executive actions and Project 2025.

Immigration and border security

Trump's early actions on immigration and the border demonstrate share Project 2025's vision for a more aggressive, militarized approach to immigration enforcement. For example, the blueprint advocates for the use of active-duty military personnel and National Guardsmen to assist in border security efforts, including arrest operations. Trump took similar steps almost immediately, signing an executive order on his first day in office calling for the deployment of National Guard troops to the southern border.

Trump also issued an executive order suspending the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, which is similar to Project 2025's recommendation for an "indefinite curtailment" of refugee admissions. Trump has also moved to extend the restrictions on asylum seekers and halt certain immigration pathways—policies similar to Project 2025's calls to limit refugee and asylum programs as part of a broader strategy to control immigration.

Environment and energy policy

Trump's early actions on environmental regulation and energy policy also mirror recommendations from Project 2025, particularly the blueprint's stance against climate change initiatives that some Republicans believe are unreasonably burdensome to American businesses.

On the first day of his second term, Trump signed an executive order promoting the use of Alaska's vast energy resources, echoing Project 2025's call for expanded oil and gas drilling in the region. Project 2025 also argues for Alaska energy exploration to protect national security, emphasizing the need to unlock its natural resources "as a counter to growing Russian and Chinese interest in Antarctic resources." Trump's executive order established a policy to harvest Alaska's natural resources and mandated federal agencies to

expedite permitting, leasing, and development of Alaskan resources, with a strong focus on liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects.

Trump also re-signed an executive order pulling the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Agreement, a signature policy action of his first term that is directly in line with Project 2025's stance. The blueprint suggested that America's exit from international climate accords would strengthen national sovereignty and economic competitiveness by removing restrictions on industries. "The next conservative Administration should rescind all climate policies from its foreign aid programs (specifically USAID's Climate Strategy 2022–2030); shut down the agency's offices, programs, and directives designed to advance the Paris Climate Agreement; and narrowly limit funding to traditional climate mitigation efforts," Project 2025 says.

Trump also made a move to curtail offshore wind development, which the blueprint characterized as part of an agenda that would close off large sections of the ocean to commercial activity.

Government reform and bureaucratic restructuring

One of the central goals of Project 2025 is to reshape the federal bureaucracy, reducing its size and influence, and empowering the executive branch. Trump issued a number of executive orders on his first day in office that reflect those objectives.

He revived the Schedule F executive order—a move he first introduced in 2020—that aims to reclassify certain federal employees as political appointees, effectively making it easier to remove them. Project 2025 had called for the reinstatement of this policy. The move has sparked concern among Democrats and civil service advocates, who view the policy as an attack on the independence of the federal workforce. Trump argues that it is necessary to root out political bias and inefficiency in government agencies, a point that is central to both his own Administration's agenda and the broader goals of Project 2025.

Project 2025 also outlines plans for significant cuts to the federal workforce, focusing on reducing regulations and eliminating agencies seen as unnecessary or counterproductive. Trump's early actions suggest he is taking steps in this direction, such as streamlining government functions, implementing a hiring freeze for all federal civilian employees, and focusing on reducing the size and scope of regulatory agencies.

While these moves are not identical to Project 2025's specific proposals—which include eliminating the Departments of Homeland Security and Education—they reflect the overarching philosophy of shrinking government.

Cultural issues

Trump has also adopted several social policy changes that echo Project 2025, particularly concerning issues of [gender identity](#) and diversity initiatives. One of Trump's first executive orders reversed Biden-era protections for transgender individuals in the military, reinstating the ban on transgender service members, which aligns with Project 2025's recommendation to “proudly state that men and women are biological realities” and eliminate policies that conflate gender identity with biological sex.

Trump also took steps to dismantle diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives within the federal government. One executive order rescinded policies that required federal contractors to promote affirmative action and diversity programs, in line with Project 2025's call to eliminate initiatives that promote racial or gender-based quotas.

Foreign relations

Trump's early actions also include a return to a more isolationist and unilateral approach to foreign policy, which echoes Project 2025's stance on international agreements and alliances. He signed an executive order to [withdraw the U.S. from the World Health Organization](#), marking a return to the foreign policy positions that defined much of his first term. Project 2025 explicitly called for this action, describing the WHO as an ineffective and politically biased organization that undermines American sovereignty.

In addition to his withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, Trump has also taken steps to distance the U.S. from other international partnerships, consistent with the isolationist philosophy outlined in Project 2025. One [executive order](#) issued states, “no further United States foreign assistance shall be disbursed in a manner that is not fully aligned with the foreign policy of the President of the United States,” claiming that the “foreign aid industry and bureaucracy are not aligned with American interests and in many cases antithetical to American values.”