

Project 2025 Intends To Weaponize The Federal Government By Strengthening A Future Conservative President's Power — Insisting On Loyalty To The President And The Project 2025 Agenda— Effectively Subverting The Will Of The People

SUMMARY: The far right's agenda to massively strengthen a possible future conservative president's power is omnipresent throughout Project 2025's manifesto, Mandate for Leadership. It insists on loyalty to the president and Project 2025's agenda and effectively subverts the will of the people.

Policy proposals in the [Heritage Foundation-backed transition project](#) manifesto that clearly demonstrate its attempt to weaponize the federal government include:

- **Project 2025 intends to radically weaken the FBI**, demoting it within the DOJ, making it subject to more political appointees, and terminating “major active FBI investigations” that are “contrary to the national interest.”
- **The Project 2025 manifesto also calls on the next conservative administration to reevaluate its relationship with the news media, suggesting that the White House Press Corps might not be given office space in the White House** and that the White House Correspondents Association might not be the best-coordinating body for the press corps. Project 2025 also encourages the Office of Communications leadership team to “work together closely to drive the national narrative about the White House.”
- **Project 2025 embraces a strong unitary executive theory**, calling the federal government “a behemoth, weaponized against American citizens and conservative values” that conservatives intend to reverse to further empower a conservative president. It also instates federal government employees who “will be above all loyal to the president and the constitution” and policies that would strip federal agencies of long-standing decision-making power.
- **Project 2025's plans for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) include expanding the number of political appointees at DHS and giving them more power while simultaneously reducing congressional oversight** and decertifying the labor union to require employee conformity.

By strengthening the president, demanding unfettered loyalty, reducing Congressional oversight, requiring conformity among federal agency employees, demoting and controlling the FBI, and tightening its grip on the press corps to drive the national narrative about the White House, **Project 2025 is crystal clear about the far-right's commitment to weaponizing the federal government to serve its extreme agenda.**

Project 2025 Embraces A Strong Unitary Executive Theory — Calling The Federal Government “A Behemoth, Weaponized Against American Citizens And Conservative Values” That Conservatives Intend To Reverse To Further Empower A Conservative President And Instate Federal Government Employees Who “Will Be Above All Loyal To The President And The Constitution” And Policies That Would Strip Federal Agencies Of Long-Standing Decision-Making Power.

Project 2025 Embraces A Strong Unitary Executive Theory, Calling The Federal Government “A Behemoth, Weaponized Against American Citizens And Conservative Values” That Project 2025 Intends To Reverse To Further Empower A Conservative President.

The Unitary Executive Theory Is “An Expansive Interpretation Of Presidential Power That Aims To Centralize Greater Control Over The Government In The White House.” “Lawyers in the Reagan-era Justice Department developed the so-called unitary executive theory, an expansive interpretation of presidential power that aims to centralize greater control over the government in the White House. Under stronger versions of this vision, Congress cannot fracture the president’s control of federal executive power, such as by vesting the power to make certain decisions in an agency head even if the president orders the agency to make a different decision, or by limiting a president’s ability to enforce his desires by removing any executive branch official — including the heads of ‘independent’ agencies — at will.” [New York Times, accessed [5/6/24](#)]

Project 2025 Calls The Federal Government “A Behemoth, Weaponized Against American Citizens And Conservative Values” That Project 2025 Intends To Reverse. “The federal government is a behemoth, weaponized against American citizens and conservative values, with freedom and liberty under siege as never before. The task at hand to reverse this tide and restore our Republic to its original moorings is too great for any one conservative policy shop to spearhead. It requires the collective action of our movement.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/6/24](#)]

Project 2025 Says “The Modern Conservative President’s Task Is To Limit, Control, And Direct The Executive Branch,” Adding That The Task Is Made Harder By “The Increasing Reality That Many Agencies Are Not Only Too Big And Powerful, But Also Increasingly Weaponized Against The Public And A President Who Is Elected By The People.” “The modern conservative President’s task is to limit, control, and direct the executive branch on behalf of the American people. This challenge is created and exacerbated by factors like Congress’s decades-long tendency to delegate its lawmaking power to agency bureaucracies, the pervasive notion of expert ‘independence’ that protects so-called expert authorities from scrutiny, the presumed inability to hold career civil servants accountable for their performance, and the increasing reality that many agencies are not only too big and powerful, but also increasingly weaponized against the public and a President who is elected by the people and empowered by the Constitution to govern.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/6/24](#)]

The Project 2025 Manifesto Recommends Vastly Reducing The Powers Of The Executive Branch, Adding The Next Conservative President Should Choose Their White House Counsel Based On Who “Will Be Above All Loyal To The President And The Constitution.”

Project 2025 Says The Next Conservative President Should Choose Their White House Counsel Based On Who “Will Be Above All Loyal To The President And The Constitution.” “The President should choose a White House Counsel who is well-versed in the Constitution, administrative and regulatory law, and the inner workings of Congress and the political process. Instead of choosing a specialist, the President should hire a counsel with extensive experience with a wide range of complex legal subjects. Moreover, while a candidate with elite credentials might seem ideal, the best one will be above all loyal to the President and the Constitution.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/6/24](#)]

The Project 2025 Manifesto Recommends Vastly Reducing The Powers Of The Executive Branch, Adding That Doing So “Will Require A Rare Combination Of Boldness And Self-Denial.” “The great challenge confronting a conservative President is the existential need for aggressive use of the vast powers of the executive branch to return power— including power currently held by the executive branch—to the American people. Success in meeting that challenge will require a rare combination of boldness and self-denial: boldness to bend or break the bureaucracy to the presidential will and self-denial to use the

bureaucratic machine to send power away from Washington and back to America's families, faith communities, local governments, and states." [Project 2025, accessed [5/6/24](#)]

- **The Manifesto Says Minimizing The Executive Branch's Power Will Take Boldness And Self-Denial As It Will Need "Boldness To Bend Or Break The Bureaucracy To The Presidential Will And Self-Denial To Use The Bureaucratic Machine To Send Power Away From Washington."** "The great challenge confronting a conservative President is the existential need for aggressive use of the vast powers of the executive branch to return power— including power currently held by the executive branch—to the American people. Success in meeting that challenge will require a rare combination of boldness and self-denial: boldness to bend or break the bureaucracy to the presidential will and self-denial to use the bureaucratic machine to send power away from Washington and back to America's families, faith communities, local governments, and states." [Project 2025, accessed [5/6/24](#)]

Project 2025 Recommends The Next Conservative President Should Reinstate Administrative Pay-As-You-Go, Or PAYGO, Which Trump Originally Reinstated In His First Term, "Regardless Of Whether Congress Adopts The President's Full Set Of Budget Recommendations;" This Would Effectively Neuter Federal Agencies Of Budgetary Decision-Making Power For Their Own Programs.

Project 2025 Says That "Regardless Of Whether Congress Adopts The President's Full Set Of Budget Recommendations, The President Should Reintroduce The Concept Of Administrative Pay-As-You-Go, Or Administrative PAYGO." "Regardless of whether Congress adopts the President's full set of budget recommendations, the President should reintroduce the concept of administrative pay-as-you-go, or administrative PAYGO. This simple procedural requirement imposes budget neutrality on the discretionary choices of federal agencies, of which there are many in nearly all areas of policymaking. This simple step forces the executive branch to control what it can control." [Project 2025, accessed [5/6/24](#)]

- **Project 2025 Says That PAYGO "May Occasionally Yield To Other Overarching Requirements, Such As A Presidential Regulatory Budget," But "In Nearly All Cases, Administrative PAYGO Plays A Unique And Indispensable Role In Enforcing Fiscal Responsibility At Federal Departments And Agencies."** "The principle may occasionally yield to other overarching requirements, such as a presidential regulatory budget, but in nearly all cases, administrative PAYGO plays a unique and indispensable role in enforcing fiscal responsibility at federal departments and agencies." [Project 2025, accessed [5/6/24](#)]

In October 2019, President Donald Trump "Signed An Executive Order Requiring Federal Agencies To Identify And Propose Offsets Whenever They Propose An Action That Increases Mandatory Spending," A Requirement Known As Administrative Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO). "Last week, President Trump signed an executive order requiring federal agencies to identify and propose offsets whenever they propose an action that increases mandatory spending. This requirement, known as 'administrative Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO),' is similar to statutory PAYGO that Congress has operated under at various times over the past three decades. Administrative PAYGO was put in place by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 2005. However, in another similarity to Congress's PAYGO rule, administrative PAYGO has been frequently waived or outright ignored since its enactment. The new executive order seeks to institutionalize and reinvigorate the rule." [Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, [10/16/19](#)]

In 2019, The Heritage Foundation Advocated For "Pay-As-You-Go," Or PAYGO, Claiming It "Could Prevent Billions Of Dollars In Debt-Financed Spending." "All this makes the latest executive order signed by President Donald Trump so necessary. If federal agencies and future administrations stick to the rule, it could prevent billions of dollars in debt-financed spending. The rule, which builds off a less-binding memo issued in 2005, requires the federal government to cover the cost of agency decisions that would increase spending. The process is called administrative 'pay-as-you-go,' or PAYGO." [Heritage Foundation, [10/15/19](#)]

The Heritage Foundation Said Administrative PAYGO Would Create Consequences For Federal Agencies When They Redesign Programs To Make Them More Expensive After Congress Has Passed

Budgetary Laws Allowing The Agencies To Spend “Such Sums As May Be Necessary.” “After all, Congress is supposed to make spending decisions through legislation, and the executive branch merely puts those laws into action. How then would federal agencies have the ability to raise or cut federal spending? This dysfunction is a result of two types of congressional irresponsibility. First, Congress has placed larger and larger amounts of federal spending into the ‘mandatory’ category. Such programs do not require annual spending authorizations, and are able to avoid many budgetary restraints even on the rare occasions when Congress bothers to pass a budget. Autopilot programs, which include Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, are the driving force behind the rapid growth of federal spending. Second, Congress has delegated more and more decision-making power to agencies. Laws that create mandatory programs often contain language allowing federal agencies to spend ‘such sums as may be necessary’ to carry out a directive, which almost has the effect of giving bureaucrats a blank check. If a law provides an agency with significant leeway in terms of designing and changing programs, the agency can re-design the program later to make it more expensive with few or no consequences. The new PAYGO rule would create consequences where none currently exists.” [Heritage Foundation, [10/15/19](#)]

Project 2025’s Chapter On The Department Of Homeland Security (DHS) Recommends Expanding The Number Of Political Appointees At DHS And Giving Them More Power, While Simultaneously Reducing Congressional Oversight And Decertifying The Labor Union To Require Employee Conformity.

The Project 2025 Chapter On The Department Of Homeland Security (DHS) Recommends Expanding The Number Of Political Appointees At DHS And Giving Them More Power ...

Project 2025 Says That As A “Key First Step,” The Secretary Of Homeland Security Should Create Their “Own Dedicated Team Of Political Appointees Selected And Vetted By The Office Of Presidential Personnel [...] To Help Ensure The Completion Of The Next President’s Agenda.” “In the next Administration, the Office of the Secretary should take on the following key issues and challenges to ensure the effective operation of DHS. Expansion of Dedicated Political Personnel. The Secretary of Homeland Security is a presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed political appointee, but for budgetary reasons, he or she has historically been unable to fund a dedicated team of political appointees. A key first step for the Secretary to improve front-office functions is to have his or her own dedicated team of political appointees selected and vetted by the Office of Presidential Personnel, which is not reliant on detailees from other parts of the department, to help ensure the completion of the next President’s agenda.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/8/24](#)]

- **The Secretary Of Homeland Security Is A Presidentialy Appointed And Senate-Confirmed Political Appointee.** “In the next Administration, the Office of the Secretary should take on the following key issues and challenges to ensure the effective operation of DHS. Expansion of Dedicated Political Personnel. The Secretary of Homeland Security is a presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed political appointee, but for budgetary reasons, he or she has historically been unable to fund a dedicated team of political appointees. A key first step for the Secretary to improve front-office functions is to have his or her own dedicated team of political appointees selected and vetted by the Office of Presidential Personnel, which is not reliant on detailees from other parts of the department, to help ensure the completion of the next President’s agenda.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/8/24](#)]

The Manifesto Also Recommends Instating Chosen Political Appointees Into “Acting” Positions As A Way To Meet The Confirmation Requirement While Still Implementing The Conservative “Day One” Agenda. “An Aggressive Approach to Senate-Confirmed Leadership Positions. While Senate confirmation is a constitutionally necessary requirement for appointing agency leadership, the next Administration may need to take a novel approach to the confirmations process to ensure an adequate and rapid transition. For example, the next Administration arguably should place its nominees for key positions into similar positions as ‘actings’ (for example, putting in a person to serve as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Commissioner of CBP while that person is going through the confirmation process to direct ICE or become the Secretary). This

approach would both guarantee implementation of the Day One agenda and equip the department for potential emergency situations while still honoring the confirmation requirement.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/8/24](#)]

... While Reducing Congressional Oversight By Reducing The Number Of Senate-Confirmable Positions, Restricting Communications With Congress To Politically Appointed Staff Only, And Unilaterally Ending Certain Reports To Congress And Choosing Which Congressional Committees It Would Deal With.

Project 2025 Says DHS Should “Look To Remove Lower-Level But Nevertheless Important Positions That Currently Require Senate Confirmation From The Confirmation Requirement.” “The department should also look to remove lower-level but nevertheless important positions that currently require Senate confirmation from the confirmation requirement, although this effort would require legislation (and might also be mooted in the event of legislation that closes portions of the department that currently have Senate-confirmed leadership).” [Project 2025, accessed [5/8/24](#)]

The Manifesto Also Proposes An End To DHS Labor Unions As A Matter Of “National Security.”

Project 2025 Says U.S. Citizenship And Immigration Services Should Be Classified As A Sensitive Agency To Preserve “Nation Security,” Adding That “The Union Should Be Decertified.” “USCIS should be classified as a national security–sensitive agency, and all of its employees should be classified as holding national security–sensitive positions. Leaks must be investigated and punished as they would be in a national security agency, and the union should be decertified. Any employees who cannot accept that change and cannot conform their behavior to the standards required by such an agency should be separated.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/8/24](#)]

Project 2025 Also Says That Any Employee Who Can’t Accept The Decertification Of The Union And “Conform Their Behavior To The Standards Required By Such An Agency” Should Be Fired. “USCIS should be classified as a national security–sensitive agency, and all of its employees should be classified as holding national security–sensitive positions. Leaks must be investigated and punished as they would be in a national security agency, and the union should be decertified. Any employees who cannot accept that change and cannot conform their behavior to the standards required by such an agency should be separated.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/8/24](#)]

Project 2025 Intends To Radically Alter The FBI, At Once Demoting It Within The DOJ And Making It Subject To More Political Appointees And Terminating “Major Active FBI Investigations” That Are “Contrary To The National Interest.”

Project 2025 Recommends Demoting The FBI Within The DOJ So That It Is Under The General Supervision Of The Assistant Attorney General For The Criminal Division And The Supervision Of The Assistant Attorney General For The National Security Division Rather Than Under The Deputy Attorney General’s Direct Supervision, Saying This Would “Place The FBI Under A Politically Accountable Leader With Fewer Things To Manage.”

Project 2025 Recommends The Next Conservative Administration “Direct The Attorney General To Remove The FBI From The Deputy Attorney General’s Direct Supervision [...] And Instead Place It Under The General Supervision Of The Assistant Attorney General For The Criminal Division And The Supervision Of The Assistant Attorney General For The National Security Division, As Applicable.” “The next conservative Administration should direct the Attorney General to remove the FBI from the Deputy

Attorney General's direct supervision within the department's organizational chart and instead place it under the general supervision of the Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division and the supervision of the Assistant Attorney General for the National Security Division, as applicable. This can be accomplished through a simple internal departmental reorganization and does not need to be approved by Congress." [Project 2025, accessed [5/8/24](#)]

The Department Of Justice Chapter Says This Structural Change Would "Place The FBI Under A Politically Accountable Leader With Fewer Things To Manage." "Such a structure would allow the FBI to play an important role in advising the department's leadership on emerging threats and updating notable investigations through daily briefings conducted with the Criminal Division and National Security Division leadership, but it would also place the FBI under a politically accountable leader with fewer things to manage than the Deputy Attorney General or the Attorney General have." [Project 2025, accessed [5/8/24](#)]

Project 2025 Recommends Terminating "Major Active FBI Investigations" That Are "Contrary To The National Interest."

Project 2025 Recommends "An Immediate, Comprehensive Review Of All Major Active FBI Investigations And Activities And Terminate Any That Are Unlawful Or Contrary To The National Interest." "Conduct an immediate, comprehensive review of all major active FBI investigations and activities and terminate any that are unlawful or contrary to the national interest." [Project 2025, accessed [5/9/24](#)]

Project 2025 Calls On The Next Conservative Administration To Reevaluate Its Relationship With The News Media, Suggesting That The White House Press Corps Might Not Be Given Office Space In The White House And That The White House Correspondents Association Might Not Be The Best Coordinating Body For The Press Corps; The Manifesto Also Encourages The Office Of Communications Leadership Team To "Work Together Closely To Drive The National Narrative About The White House."

Project 2025 Calls On The Next Conservative Administration To Reevaluate Its Relationship With The News Media, Suggesting That The White House Press Corps Might Not Be Given Office Space In The White House And That The White House Correspondents Association Might Not Be The Best Coordinating Body For The Press Corps.

Project 2025 Recommends The Office Of Communications "Maintain Robust Relationships With The White House Press Corps, The White House Correspondents' Association, Regional Stakeholders, And Key Interest Groups." "Operational functions of the Office of Communications include scheduling and running press briefings, interviews, meetings, media appearances, speeches, and a range of other events. The Office of Communications must maintain robust relationships with the White House Press Corps, the White House Correspondents' Association, regional stakeholders, and key interest groups. No legal entitlement exists for the provision of permanent space for media on the White House campus, and the next Administration should reexamine the balance between media demands and space constraints on the White House premises." [Project 2025, accessed [5/7/24](#)]

Project 2025 Then Goes On To Say That "No Legal Entitlement Exists For The Provision Of Permanent Space For Media On The White House Campus, And The Next Administration Should Reexamine The Balance Between Media Demands And Space Constraints On The White House Premises." "Operational functions of the Office of Communications include scheduling and running press briefings, interviews, meetings, media appearances, speeches, and a range of other events. The Office of Communications must maintain robust relationships with the White House Press Corps, the White House Correspondents' Association, regional stakeholders, and key interest groups. No legal entitlement exists for the provision of

permanent space for media on the White House campus, and the next Administration should reexamine the balance between media demands and space constraints on the White House premises.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/7/24](#)]

Project 2025 Suggests A Conservative Administration “Should Examine The Nature Of The Relationship Between Itself And The White House Correspondents Association And Consider Whether An Alternative Coordinating Body Might Be More Suitable.” “The new Administration should examine the nature of the relationship between itself and the White House Correspondents Association and consider whether an alternative coordinating body might be more suitable.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/7/24](#)]

Project 2025 Encourages The Office Of Communications Leadership Team To “Work Together Closely To Drive The National Narrative About The White House.”

Project 2025 Encourages The Office Of Communications Leadership Team To “Work Together Closely To Drive The National Narrative About The White House.” “Leadership within the Office of Communications should include a Communications Director (who is a direct report to the Chief of Staff), a Deputy Communications Director, a Deputy Director for Strategic Communications, and a Press Secretary. This leadership team must work together closely to drive the national narrative about the White House.” [Project 2025, accessed [5/7/24](#)]