

## REPORT: Exposing How Project 2025 is Already Underway in the the States

Far-right extremists are *already* working to impose some of the most unpopular proposals in Project 2025 in states across the country. Even as some try to distance themselves from Project 2025's proposals or to question its practicability in light of current backlash, it is clear that the movement is deeply tied to the core tenets of the project. Other far-right actors in state legislatures and state courts have been successfully implementing those proposals for years, and they continue to do so today. Importantly, these extremist actors are laying the groundwork for Project 2025, by using the states as a testing ground for implementing and normalizing their far-right playbook.

The kind of America that could exist if a far-right president implemented Project 2025 can be hard to imagine, but they are already real to many people across the country. Here are just a few of Project 2025's goals that have come to fruition in America today that preview this anti-democratic and regressive future:

**Ignoring the Constitution:** Underlying much of Project 2025 is a [contempt](#) for the system of checks and balances at the core of our constitutional system of government. Worryingly, we have already seen this contempt for our constitutional system play out in various states across the country.

- **Utah:** Governor Spencer Cox signed the "Utah Constitutional Sovereignty Act" to allow the state legislature to [essentially overrule](#) a federal law in violation of the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution.
- **Texas:** For years, Governor Greg Abbott has executed his own border policies, including Operation Lone star, in [contravention](#) of the federal government's long-recognized constitutional authority to make and implement immigration policy for the United States.
- **Missouri:** In 2021, Governor Mike Parson signed the "Second Amendment Preservation Act" into law, asserting that certain longstanding, valid federal laws relating to firearms "shall not be recognized by this state" and "shall be specifically rejected by this state." H.B. 85, § 1.430. This sought to invalidate federal laws in violation of the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution, as federal courts [have ruled](#).

**Abusing Military Force and State Violence:** Reporting indicates that Project 2025 has plans for the president to [invoke the Insurrection Act](#) in order to deploy the military domestically, actions that would be a shocking departure from the norms and traditions of our nation but have already been previewed at the state level.

- **Florida:** Governor Ron DeSantis signed a law in 2022 [creating](#) a state militia called the Florida State Guard solely under the governor's command. DeSantis has already abused this force by [sending it](#) to assist Texas with its illegal border operations.<sup>1</sup>
- **States Send National Guard Troops To Texas:** In 2024 alone, 12 states [sent](#) National Guard troops to assist TX with its illegal border operations: AR, GA, IA, ID, IN, MO, MT, NH, NE, TE, SD and UT.

**Attacking Civil Servants:** A fundamental principle underlying Project 2025 is removing any checks to the president's authority *within* the executive branch. Far-right actors seek to accomplish this through a variety of means, including by purging the nation's nonpartisan civil service. These actors tried and failed to effectuate this purging during the last administration through the former president's so-called Schedule F Executive Order that would have made many civil servants' employment at-will.

- **Florida:** One of [the architects](#) of Schedule F, which failed at the federal level, [has advocated](#) for the expansion of at-will civil service employment in Florida state government.

<sup>1</sup> Notably, in 2022, DeSantis [also created](#) a police unit whose sole goal was to investigate purported voter fraud in the state.

- **Texas and Georgia:** The movement to make civil servant at-will employees long predates the current movement involving Schedule F. Civil servants in Texas and Georgia are [almost entirely](#) all at-will, with civil service “reforms” in those states being effectuated in 1985 and 1996, respectively.

**Weaponizing Government:** Project 2025 does not seek to centralize power within the executive branch as an end to itself, but in order to enable the president and his allies to weaponize government against their political opponents. The most blatant example of this in Project 2025 is the plan to end the independence of the Department of Justice, but the far right’s ultimate objective is broader: to empower the president to weaponize *all* levers of state power against political adversaries.

- **Texas:** In 2021, Governor Abbott in Texas threatened to [defund](#) the state legislature as retaliation for not passing a restrictive election bill. In 2024, Governor Abbott’s education commissioner [took over](#) Houston’s nearly 200,000-student public school district.
- **Florida:** In 2023, Governor DeSantis [suspended](#) a county prosecutor for political purposes and [punished Disney](#) for opposing the so-called “Don’t Say Gay” law. Indeed, the kinds of anti-democratic policies at the heart of Project 2025 are already being tested and normalized at the state level.

**Dismantling Public Education:** A fundamental component of Project 2025 is to dismantle public education in America, including by expanding voucher programs, empowering charter schools, censoring curriculum, and outright shuttering public schools. This work has long been underway in states across the country.

- **Vouchers:** In [2023](#), 12 states expanded voucher programs and seven created new ones. Enrollment in charter schools [rose](#) from about “2.1 million students in fall 2011 to nearly 3.7 million in fall 2021.”
- **Book Bans:** In the last three years, [42 states](#) have experienced book bans and 16 states have passed [“divisive concepts”](#) legislation limiting what can be learned and taught.
- **School Closures:** During the last school year, almost 70 school districts [declared](#) school closures, with the closures particularly affecting low-income students and students of color. These state-level policies serve as a preview of what’s to come if a far-right president implements Project 2025.

**Banning Abortion and Monitoring Women:** Project 2025’s plans to restrict reproductive freedoms would enable the tracking of abortions nationwide (“abortion surveillance”), ban medication abortion by reversing FDA’s approval of mifepristone, and even weaponize the Comstock Act to ban abortion nationwide.

- **Banning or Limiting Medication Abortion Access:** This work is already underway across the country with 14 states almost completely [banning](#) medication abortion, including Indiana, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, West Virginia, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama, and Mississippi. Louisiana has even [passed a law](#) making medication abortion drugs “controlled, dangerous substances.”
- **Ban Abortion Locally:** Far-right actors have concocted legal strategies to [ban abortion](#) in towns and cities even in states where abortion is protected, including in New Mexico and Illinois.
- **Prohibit Travel to Receive Reproductive Care:** Far-right actors have sought to [prohibit those](#) living in places that do not allow abortion from traveling to a state where they are allowed to obtain one.
- **Comstock:** The far-right plan is to ban abortion nationwide even without the help of a far-right president. Part and parcel of this plan has been an effort at the local level to try and [force](#) the Supreme Court to rule on the applicability of Comstock, by passing local abortion bans based on the 19th century law.

**Attacking Civil Rights:** A fundamental objective of Project 2025 is reversing recent civil rights advances, including [long standing protections](#) for people of color, [hard-won rights](#) for LGBTQ+ individuals, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ([DEI](#)) [programs](#) both inside and outside of the federal government. For years, states across

the country have served as testing grounds for these kinds of actions that Project 2025 would like to implement on the federal level.

- **Restrict DEI Initiatives:** In the 2024 legislative session alone, state legislators in over 30 states [have introduced](#) more than 100 bills to regulate or restrict DEI initiatives. To date, TN, TX and UT have passed anti-DEI bills, with such bills having also advanced in at least one chamber in several other states.
- **Attack LGBTQ+ rights:** As of May 2024, almost 40% of trans youth between the ages of 13-17 live in one of the 25 states that [have banned](#) gender-affirming care, about [40%](#) live in one of 27 states with sports participation bans, and another 40% live in one of 31 states that have proposed or enacted a gender-affirming [pronoun ban](#).

**Targeting Immigrants to Consolidate Power:** Project 2025 seeks to radically decrease immigration and deport millions of immigrants who are already here. But it is essential to understand that these policies are not really about immigration: they are about consolidating power. For years, the far right has targeted immigrants as a scare tactic to push voters to accept the need for a strong-man authoritarian leader who can “fix” the “problem.” They have pointed to the supposed “threat” of immigration [to distract](#) the public and the media from their unpopular policy positions and from actual threats like climate change, gun violence, and domestic terrorism. And they have invoked a so-called “migrant invasion” to lay [the groundwork](#) to challenge the 2024 presidential election and eventually to expand the powers of the executive through the Alien Enemies Act or the Insurrection Act. This same anti-immigrant campaign for authoritarian ends is playing out in the states now.

- **States led by Texas** claim asylum seekers’ arrival at the southern border constitutes an “invasion” that would give them [authority](#) to engage in war, enter into [interstate compacts](#), and, presumably, [suspend habeas corpus](#).
- **Texas:** As noted above, Texas is challenging federal supremacy in immigration and foreign affairs by claiming [unilateral authority](#) to deport people, installing [razor wire](#) on the U.S. side of the Texas-Mexico border, and [placing buoys](#) with potentially lethal circular saw blades between them in the Rio Grande against the federal government’s direct orders. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is [targeting migrant-serving nonprofits](#) in the state in a baseless witch hunt meant to chill civil society and punish his enemies.
- **Louisiana:** This year, Governor Jeff Landry, [issued](#) an Executive Order entitled “Identifying, Quantifying, and Mitigating the Adverse Effects of Illegal Immigration.” The order requires that state law enforcement maintain a public list of arrested immigrants, encouraging vigilante justice and threatening some of our communities that have been historically made most vulnerable without due process of law.

Read our full report on Project 2025 [here](#), including [comprehensive research](#) on Project 2025’s plans to attack reproductive rights, workplace protections, education, and more.

To speak with us about this report or how our team of legal experts will challenge the people and organizations behind Project 2025, email [dgrahamcaso@democracyforward.org](mailto:dgrahamcaso@democracyforward.org).