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Project 2025 facts: No handbook for tyranny

Project 2025

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION PROJECT

Steve Bakke  October 20, 2024

Ronald Reagan was president when The Heritage Foundation first issued its conservative “Mandates for Leadership.” The “Project 2025” version has been falsely reimagined by democrats as they strive to bring fear into voters’ minds. The “blame it on Project 2025” narrative is used to demonize republicans and Donald Trump.

The misleading nonsense about Project 2025 being Trump’s official plan has no factual basis, as verified by CNN’s Daniel Dale: “A Harris campaign official said the campaign has ‘made a deliberate decision to brand all of Trump’s policies’ as ‘Project 2025.....’ They made it up.

CNN examined further Project 25’s text and concluded several things, including: “One of Harris’ claims about Project 2025 is false, while another is at least misleading.....[Project 25] does not show that Trump intends to cut Social Security; the document barely discusses Social Security.....”; and there’s “No Project 2025 call to end the Affordable Care Act.”

USA Today’s fact-check declared as false the democrats’ claim that “Project 2025 is a plan from Trump.” FactCheck.com, a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Century also found false claims about “Project 25.” For example: “In several cases, Democrats have gone beyond the facts”: the document does not propose outlawing IVF. In fact, IVF is strongly supported by candidate Trump. Contrary to being a creation of Donald Trump, many Project 2025 proposals directly conflict with Trump’s expressed intentions.

CBS News/Minnesota did fact-checking and determined that the document doesn’t support a national registry of pregnancies as claimed. It does support maintaining abortion statistics, which is already being done by private organizations.

Rumors of ‘terminating the constitution,’ are false. Rather, Project 2025 expresses its commitment to strengthening self-government, a dominant goal of our constitution. The administrative state has become almost a separate unaccountable branch of government, often churning out heavy-handed rules. Quoting the document: “A more restrained administrative state translates into less control over American’s’ lives.”

The governmental restructuring being suggested in Project 2025 adds accountability and brings the administrative state under more control of the president, as originally designated in the Constitution.

Some critics make claims about topics never mentioned in the document, such as: ending no-fault divorce; ending same-sex marriage; banning contraception; and eliminating unions. However, federal funding of abortions is opposed.

There are suggestions to improve ACA policies, but no support for banning it. School lunch programs would be moved to HHS but not ended. There is a suggestion to make lunch programs available based on family income.

Regarding Social Security, improvements are suggested, but cutting benefits isn’t mentioned. Raising the retirement age is nowhere advocated. Cutting Medicare benefits is

not advocated. There is a call for eliminating Medicare fraud and waste. And remember, Trump has expressed his opposition to cutting Social Security and Medicare.

Some claims about the document are correct: supporting federal death penalty enforcement; funding private religious schools; deporting certain illegal immigrants; and increasing arctic drilling. There is a plan to shut down the Department of Education, but it transfers control to state and local governments.

Project 2025 is not a threat to democracy. Fascism and dictatorship aren't promoted. There are no hints of creating a dystopian land such as depicted in "Handmaids Tale," with fertile women subjected to child-bearing slavery for barren conservative ruling-class women, along with cruel and gruesome discipline.

It's OK if critics disagree. It's not OK to misrepresent the content of Project 25 or to confuse it with Trump's policy proposals. Some of its ideas and suggestions will never see the light of day, and some Trump won't support. There's much speculation and imagination in most of the criticism. And sadly, there's a potential for violent overreaction when Project 25 is characterized as a harbinger of something evil such as in the "Handmaid's" theme.

As President, Trump wasn't a dictator. He's never been a tyrant, nor will he ever be. Project 2025 is simply a conservative policy document, but not a Christian nationalist playbook. However, it does give a sense of support for community and societal standards, prioritizes strong national defense, emphasizes family-friendly policies, and prefers streamlined government.

A modest level of research will uncover the facts about Trump's policies and Project 2025 and clarifies their similarities and differences.