



AFRICAN AMERICAN POLICY FORUM

FAQ about Project 2025: “What’s Race Got to Do With It?”

You can tell a lot about a political initiative by looking at those who are behind it. In the case of the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025, *Mandate for Leadership* – a 900+ page blueprint for the next Republican administration to radically overhaul the federal government – [USA Today](#) has uncovered at least five contributors with a history of overtly racist writings and activities, including support for eugenic population control, opposition to “race mixing,” and attacks on “low-IQ immigrants.” At least three have supported the racist “Great Replacement” theory, which contends that powerful Democrats, leftists, or “globalists” (often a code word for Jews) are conspiring via immigration to change the racial demographics of the United States.

What does Project 2025 say about race, such that we should understand it as being largely motivated by racial hostility?

- **Project 2025’s racialized underpinnings and consequences are visible in three ways:** first, Project 2025 seeks to undermine any analytical framework (such as Critical Race Theory) that promotes a structural understanding of racial inequities in America; second, it seeks to dismantle any deliberate efforts to address those inequities; and finally, it seeks to create new practices and personnel selection policies that could permanently undo the civil rights gains of the 20th century. Indeed, Project 2025’s obsession with undoing racial equity efforts, is the metaphorical glue that holds its many parts together, appearing in sections as varied as labor policy, schooling, economic development, and census data-gathering.

How does Project 2025 attack the key framework for understanding racial inequity in America (CRT)?

- Project 2025 refers to Critical Race Theory or its acronym, CRT, 98 times, proclaiming: “The noxious tenets of ‘critical race theory’... should be excised from curricula in every public school in the country. These theories poison our children...” (p. 5).
- Keeping in mind that CRT was developed to understand why racial inequities persisted despite the civil rights revolution – and that it answers that question by noting the ongoing reality of systemic racial exclusion – **to “excise” such analysis from schools is to leave students unable to fully understand the nation in which they live.**

- The chapter on Education seeks legislation to prevent the tenets of CRT from spreading, specifically the idea that “America is systemically racist” (pp. 342-3; 375-376). They don’t merely wish to indicate their disagreement with CRT; they seek to prevent students from even *hearing* about it. **If implemented, Project 2025 would federalize the censoring of history and the state and local book bans that already affect more than 20 million children, nearly half the student population in the United States.**
- After blaming equity initiatives for mismanagement at the Treasury Department, Project 2025 recommends that “participation in any critical race theory or DEI initiative, without objecting on constitutional or moral grounds,” should serve as “grounds for termination of employment.” In other words, **Project 2025 would compel employees to have previously condemned CRT or DEI as a condition of keeping their jobs** (p.708).
- The chapter on labor policy says the next president should: “Issue an executive order banning, and Congress should pass a law prohibiting the federal government from using taxpayer dollars to fund all critical race theory training” (p. 582).

How does Project 2025 attack policies intended to address racial inequity?

- Given right-wing hostility to affirmative action, it is unsurprising that Project 2025 would take aim at equity initiatives intended to reduce racial disparities in America. But *Mandate for Leadership* goes further than that: indeed, the authors call for **eliminating the very words, “diversity, equity, and inclusion”** from all government rules, laws, and regulations. These are to be considered ideas unworthy of discussion altogether (p. 5).
- Project 2025 calls for an **end to all diversity and affirmative action policies intended to promote racial inclusion** within regulatory agencies, and questions the legitimacy of programs intended to promote opportunity for small businesses owned by persons of color (pp. 830, 832).
- Though Project 2025 favors completely abolishing the Department of Education, in the lead up to such an imagined future they propose changes to existing policy that indicate **hostility to the Department’s goals of promoting equal opportunity**. For instance:
 - They **attack the idea of racially-disparate discipline** in public schools (despite the evidence), and call for an end to investigations into such disparities if they are triggered by allegations of disparate impact (meaning policies that are facially race neutral but disproportionately harm students of color) (p. 335).

- They call for **an end to the allocation of money intended to address the disproportionate placement of Black students in special education classes**, and the unequal discipline to which they're often subjected within them (p. 336).
- Project 2025 calls for **the elimination of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)**, the entity charged with ensuring that government contractors comply with civil rights laws (pp. 583-4), **and Executive Order 11246**, which prohibits most federal contractors from discriminating based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin. It is also the order requiring government contractors to take affirmative action to ensure they are truly equal opportunity employers (p. 584).

How does Project 2025 seek to create a new set of laws and practices that would make it hard if not impossible to reconstruct an equity agenda?

While the attacks on Critical Race Theory, DEI initiatives, and other equity efforts are disturbing enough, the most pernicious aspects of Project 2025 concern the desire to produce an entirely new structure of laws, personnel policies, and practices that would permanently undermine the nation's ability to alleviate racial disparities.

- One oft-discussed aspect of Project 2025 – but whose racial implications are typically ignored – is the plan to replace thousands of civil servants throughout the federal government with political appointees, vetted using a standard of qualifications based less on experience and talent than MAGA-friendly ideology. **Were such a plan to succeed, not only would it disproportionately injure African Americans in those civil service positions, but it would create a new and fanatical bureaucracy, permanently hostile to any future equity initiatives.**
- But even if Democrats (or less reactionary Republicans) gained power again and reverted to civil service protections (or appointed their own people), Project 2025 includes a number of proposals that would hamstring any future efforts at alleviating racial disparities. Among these:
 - **Banning racial data collection.** Project 2025 argues that all forms of racial classification, including the mere collection of data on racial groups, which can inform policy makers about the needs of particular communities, is inherently racist. As such, they call for an end to such data gathering by the Labor Department and EEOC (pp. 582-3). It is as if their mantra were: “See No Evil, Hear About No Evil, Remedy No Evil.”
 - **Ending disparate impact jurisprudence.** Project 2025 is especially hostile to the notion that discrimination can exist absent individualized intent. Despite the Supreme Court's long standing recognition that policies can have an unjust impact even in the

absence of racist intent – and deserve to be remedied – Project 2025 insists we should “Eliminate disparate impact as a valid theory of discrimination,” because “Disparities do not (and should not legally) imply discrimination per se.” (p. 72).

- **Reorient civil rights enforcement priorities.** Despite the history of civil rights laws, initially created to ensure greater racial equity, Project 2025 argues for a reorientation of EEOC priorities, away from racial justice and fairness, and toward discrimination claims made by those who claim their religious beliefs have been insufficiently accommodated by employers (p. 587).
- **End efforts to ensure an accurate racial count of the population.** Though one might think everyone would want the decennial census to be accurate, Project 2025 wants to disband the Census Bureau’s National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic and Other Populations (NAC), which seeks to improve census participation and accuracy among persons of color (p. 682). If eliminated, undercounting of such persons would likely increase, thereby reducing allocations of government resources to their communities.
- **Reorient the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA).** While the MBDA was created as a way to promote opportunities for for businesses owned by marginalized group members, Project 2025 would either seek to end it altogether, on the grounds that it discriminates against majority (white) businesses, or, at the very least, reorient its mission from promoting opportunity to “Conducting policy analysis on the benefit of free markets, the evils of socialism and Communism, and the destructive effect of taxes and regulations on minority businesses” (p. 684).
- **Adopt a “Parents Bill of Rights” which would likely result in mass censorship of racial history in schools.** While two dozen states have sought to ban “divisive concepts” like discussions about systemic racism, Project 2025 calls for a national “parent’s bill of rights,” which would give parents a private right to sue any school or teacher whose teaching on subjects like gender, race, or sexuality, “undermines their right and responsibility to raise, educate, and care for their children” (345). While theoretically all parents, including Black ones, would have this right, it is clear from the larger framing of Project 2025 that its purpose would be to empower white parents to intimidate schools into ditching lessons on racial history which made them feel bad.

Project 2025 would radically change America in ways detrimental to the nation’s most marginalized populations, essentially repealing 70 years of racial progress. Already too many states have started down this road, especially in the area of education. **In many of these states, Project 2025 is not a future plan but a present reality.** This is why we must stand up now to prevent the nationalization of these efforts, and insist that we won’t go back.