

A Promise to Harm: What's at Stake for the Latino Community in Project 2025

A report by LatinoJustice PRLDEF
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INTRODUCTION

Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise—also known as the Project 2025 Presidential Transition Project or “Project 2025”—is a 900-plus-page document issued by the Heritage Foundation in 2023. As indicated by its title, Project 2025 is a playbook of recommended actions for the next presidential administration to implement upon taking office. Project 2025 proposals cover just about every important aspect of American life, including civic engagement, education, employment, immigration, labor, national security, and much more.

But Project 2025 is not just a roadmap for a hypothetical future—it is here and now.

We have already seen several Project 2025 proposals move at the local and state levels. Even where those proposals are not yet embedded in law, policy, or practice, the groundwork is being laid for future enactment. LatinoJustice PRLDEF expects that there will be strong efforts to advance this agenda no matter who enters the White House in January 2025.

Many of the recommendations in Project 2025, if enacted, will do great harm to the Latinx community. The proposals strike at the heart of the very rights, services, and programs that Latinos identify as crucial to their advancement and wellbeing.

LatinoJustice PRLDEF’s analysis of the document found proposals that would harm:

- Latinx children and young people, by weakening public education, cutting back on school meals, censoring curriculum, decreasing aid for college, and diluting child labor protections;
- Latino immigrants, by reviving some of the cruelest anti-immigrant policies implemented in the past 15 years and removing several paths to legal migration;
- Latino working families, by cutting overtime pay, undermining wage protections, reducing access to food assistance, and rolling back protections against discrimination in employment and housing;
- Latinos and Latinas seeking health care, by making it harder to access health care, including abortions, allowing prescription drug costs to skyrocket, and moving people off Medicare to plans that offer lower-quality care;
- Latinx LGBTQ+ people, by denying their civil and human rights, and restricting their access to gender-affirming care;
- Latinos participating in our democracy, by making Latino voters suspect and making it harder for eligible Latinos to vote; and
- Latinos threatened by environmental damage and climate change, by decimating federal agencies enforcing environmental protections and aiding in disaster recovery.

The poisonous worldview animating this document regards Latinx and other groups who have been traditionally excluded from power—including the poor, immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, various groups based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and women—as “enemies within” whose rights and power must be suppressed. The Project 2025 proposals aim to strip away the checks and balances in our government to replace it with a power structure that answers exclusively to a fortified executive branch and a small cadre of extremists, in direct violation and betrayal of our country’s foundational principles and its most noble ideals.

These ideas stand in direct opposition to the vision that has driven the work of LatinoJustice PRLDEF and other like-minded civil rights organizations. Collectively, we imagine a future where our community members are free, safe, and can access opportunities to improve their well-being and that of their families, friends, and neighbors. LatinoJustice PRLDEF has fought to defend and expand rights in our five decades of existence, and we commit to continue this fight with our brothers and sisters who believe in and deserve equality and justice.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR....

Latino Children and Young People

We have already seen Project 2025 priorities being implemented on the local and state level in ways that will significantly harm Latino children and young people, starting with **attacks on public education**. The US Latino population is young, with a [median age of 31](#). [One in four](#) people in the US under 18 are Latinx, so efforts to undermine the public education system disproportionately harm Latinos.

For starters, Project 2025 would eliminate the federal Department of Education (p. 319)¹ and thereby leave a patchwork of state-level decision-making that would create different educational opportunities depending on where you live. It would also **zero out federal funding to low-income schools** over the next decade (pp. 325, 350-351), and **defund public education**, to instead give every family public funds to be used toward private schooling (p. 326). Similar programs [already in place in nine states](#) give thousands of dollars of state funding to parents who opt out of the public education system, **diminishing resources for those who remain in the public system**. [Latino children make up almost 30% of public K-12 students](#), and only [12% of students in private schools](#)

Project 2025 would also **eliminate Head Start**, cutting off early intervention services to about 800,000 children, two-thirds of whom are Black or Latino, (p. 482), and greatly cut school meal programs (p. 303), which will have a much greater impact on Latino children as their families experience a [higher rate of food insecurity](#) compared to White non-Hispanic households.

The plan also takes up the popular conservative cause to [oppose the teaching of “Critical Race Theory” \(CRT\)](#) in grades K-12 and the **ensorship of critical discussions in classrooms** (p. 352). Critical Race Theory, an academic concept that racist ideas and discriminatory practices are embedded in structures of law, banking, policing and more, has been conflated with critical re-examinations of US history at all levels of schooling.

Under this “anti-CRT” banner, there is already a [growing movement](#) to **eliminate any discussions about race and systemic racism** in K-12 curricula, including 861 “anti-CRT” measures introduced around the country since 2020.

For at least the past decade, individuals who believe that schools should not teach children about important issues such as the history of slavery and colonialism have **successfully run for positions on local school boards** throughout the US. From these positions, they are wielding great power on matters decided at the local school district level, **challenging the inclusion in curricula of key issues related to justice and equality**, and attempting to erase Latino culture from the classroom, for example [banning books](#) such as Justice Sonia Sotomayor’s memoir and Roberto Clemente’s biography.

These changes at the local level have percolated up to state legislatures. In Arkansas, a state anti-indoctrination law prevented high schools from teaching Advanced Placement African American History for credit until a group of teachers and students [successfully fought back](#). In

¹ All page references are to [Mandate for Leadership: the Conservative Promise](#).

Florida, the “Stop WOKE Act” aimed to ban teachings and trainings that suggest a person is privileged or oppressed because of their race, color, sex or national origin. A [July 2024 court ruling](#) blocked the parts of the law related to workplace trainings, and an earlier ruling knocked out provisions related to higher education.

Latino youth attending college, who are [among the most burdened by student debt](#), would see fewer resources under Project 2025. The plan calls for **cuts to federal school loan programs** (pp. 167, 327, 354), it would **deny student loans to students in 25 states and the District of Columbia** because they offer in-state tuition to undocumented students (p. 167), and it would **eliminate the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program** (p. 354).

An especially shocking section of Project 2025 outlines a plan to further **weaken child labor laws** (p. 595). We have already seen an alarming increase in the number of children working and suffering major or fatal injuries at [“inherently dangerous jobs.”](#) Many of these children are Latino immigrants and include unaccompanied minors. Permitting children to work longer hours interferes with their education, adding further obstacles to their quest to create a better life in their new homes.

Currently, [at least 16 states have one or more bills](#) that would weaken their child labor laws. Several states already have watered down key protections. These include:

- an [Indiana law enacted in March](#) that **repeals all work-hour restrictions** for 16- and 17-year-olds, and **extends legal work hours** for 14- and 15-year-olds;
- a Florida law that allows 16- and 17-year-olds [to work seven days in a row](#) and removes all hour restrictions for teens in online school or home-school, **effectively permitting them to work overnight shifts**;
- an [Iowa law](#) that **allows minors to work in jobs previously deemed too hazardous**, including in industrial laundries, light manufacturing, demolition, roofing and excavation (but not slaughterhouses); and
- a West Virginia law recently enacted that allows 16- and 17-year-olds [to work some roofing jobs](#) as part of an apprenticeship program.

In sum, Project 2025 proposals would erect even more barriers to education for Latinx youth and instead relegate them to low-paying, hazardous jobs with no opportunity for economic mobility.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR....

Latino Immigrants

Project 2025's anti-immigration and anti-immigrant proposals intensify some of the cruelest policies implemented in the past 15 years, remove several paths to legal migration, and **take us back to the anti-immigrant measures of the 1990s and 2000s**, which aimed to make everyday life for immigrants residing in the US impossible.

Project 2025 seeks to reinstate and expand the notorious [horseback-mounted Border Patrol](#) (p. 139). This harkens back not just to the horrific scenes we saw in Del Rio in 2021 of [horse-mounted Border Patrol pursuing Haitian migrants](#), but takes us all the way back to the [early history of state-sponsored terrorism along the border](#) dispensed by the Texas Rangers.

Project 2025 calls for the **US military to conduct mass deportations** of people in the country illegally (p. 142), and to lift current federal prohibitions on law enforcement agencies to **detain and apprehend immigrant individuals in sensitive locations such as churches and schools** (p. 142).

TPS is a humanitarian relief program that provides to individuals from designated countries legal authorization to reside and work in the U.S. There are approximately [863,880 people in the US with TPS](#), including people from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Approximately [530,000 people are currently in the DACA program](#); about 80% of DACA recipients are from Mexico.

Project 2025 also calls for the **repeal of Temporary Protected Status (TPS)** and the **elimination of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** (p. 146), putting in jeopardy the status and lives of almost 1.4 million people in the US. **T and U visas for victims of crime would also be eliminated.** (p. 141)

The plan seeks to end so-called chain migration—where individuals in the U.S. are able to bring family members to the county—and limit such efforts to the nuclear family (p. 145) This means that **Latinx immigrants would be limited in which and how many family members they could assist in coming to the US.**

Instead of providing visa opportunities for vulnerable populations, Project 2025 would afford visas only to the “best and brightest” (pp. 611-612). Gang violence and domestic violence would no longer be grounds for granting asylum (p. 148). It also proposes to **ban non-citizens from living in federally assisted housing** (even if they live with a citizen, p. 509). It also calls for reimplementing of the **USCIS denaturalization unit** that would aggressively pursue stripping US citizenship from individuals alleged to have obtained citizenship through fraud or other illicit means (pp. 143-144).

The demonization of immigrants in the US and cruel and punitive processes applied to the immigration and asylum-seeking process—increased and lengthy detention, delays and barriers to obtaining legal permission to live and work in the US, and [increasing use of militarized force in communities at the US-Mexico border](#)—have already created an atmosphere of fear among immigrants and people who are perceived to be immigrants, curtailing their full and healthy participation in our society.

In the past two decades, in the absence of any comprehensive reform to immigration laws, and as anti-immigrant sentiment has been stoked through false narratives that scapegoat immigrants to explain adverse economic conditions and fears of crime, we have seen a hardening consensus among decisionmakers to [suspend border entries](#) for long stretches, effectively [deny most paths of humanitarian protection](#) for asylum seekers, and continue cruel practices of detention and family separation for [over 37,000 people](#). We reject this dehumanization of millions of people who only seek the same as their neighbors—a safe home and a means to provide for their families now and in the future.

The draconian measures proposed by Project 2025 only compound an increasingly hostile environment for Latino immigrants, and those who are perceived to be immigrants, and would further drive neighbors apart without addressing the needs of immigrants and native-born alike.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR....

Latino Working Families

Several proposals in Project 2025 takes direct aim at economic opportunities for Latino working families by significantly **reducing resources for low- and moderate-income families, cutting back essential wage protections** for workers and blunting the tools they can use to organize to defend their rights. In addition, the plan's proposals aim to **weaken anti-discrimination protections** in employment and housing.

For example, the agenda calls for **limiting access to food assistance** (pp. 299-300). Latino families face [higher than average rates of food insecurity](#), making food assistance programs vital to lifting many families out of poverty. About [16% of SNAP recipients, or 5 million](#), have a Latinx head of household, and Latino children are nearly twice as likely to lack access to sufficient nutritious food as white children.

The positive effects for [one in five Latino workers](#) under recent measures to extend **overtime protections would be undone** through a Project 2025 proposal that would lower the salary for overtime eligibility (p. 492), affecting 4.3 million workers. Project 2025 also seeks to **undermine existing wage protections**, such as by repealing the 93-year-old Davis-Bacon Act, which requires contractors on public works projects to pay the prevailing wage paid to local workers doing similar work. (p. 604)

And Project 2025 would also **cut the 2021 America Rescue Plan** (p. 664), threatening growth beyond the more than 220,000 jobs it has created.

Some measures in the plan would additionally erode the economic security provided by unionized and public sector jobs. This includes **an end to all diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs across the federal government**, programs that provide pathways for people of underrepresented races and ethnicities into federal employment. Some [204,000 Latinos are directly employed by the federal government](#), and over [40% of unionized Latinos work in the public sector](#).

Project 2025 also calls on Congress to consider **abolishing all public sector unions** (p. 82) and a **ban on key tools workers use to organize** their ranks (pp. 602-603).

These attacks on labor organizing are far from new. Even as we have seen a surge in unionization efforts in a variety of labor sectors—with Latina union members seeing the [largest wage bumps](#)—and attempts by the National Labor Relations Board to [counter corporate union-busting](#), multimillionaire business owners continue to support legislation that diminishes worker power.

[Twenty-six states have enacted so-called “right to work” laws](#) that **curtail the ability of workers to organize and defend their rights**. And 2021 federal legislation, the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, would have provided arbitrators to settle contract negotiations for new unions and fined employers violating laws protecting unions; the act was [approved in the House](#) but was killed by unanimous Republican opposition.

Other proposals in Project 2025 seek to **push back on protections against discrimination in employment and housing**. For example, one item in the plan’s agenda would **end the use of “disparate impact”** — the idea that the implementation of regulations or policies that are neutral on their face can have disproportionate negative impacts on people of a particular race, ethnicity, or gender—as a measure of discrimination in housing, education, and employment (pp. 72 and 583) under civil rights laws. Another priority is to stop or minimize key data collection from agencies like the Bureau of Labor (p. 664) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (p. 583), which would **undermine efforts to identify and challenge discriminatory or exploitative employment practices**.

The proposals in Project 2025 promise to further recent policy trends wrecking equal opportunity, exacerbating wealth inequality and quelling worker power.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR....

Latinx seeking health care

The fallout from the 2022 Supreme Court decision rolling back abortion rights has allowed states to put in place **highly restrictive laws related to reproductive health** and erect [greater barriers to reproductive health care](#), as well as to [a variety of health care services](#). Proposals included in Project 2025 would exacerbate these difficulties, as well as significantly **increase health care costs for millions** of people in the US.

Latinas are especially hit by these restrictions. [Nearly 6.7 million Latinas](#)—43 percent of all Latinas ages 15-49—live in the 26 states that have banned or are likely to ban abortion. They represent the [largest group](#) of women of color impacted by current or likely state bans. **Nearly one-half of all Latinas who live in these 26 states are already mothers**, including 852,800 mothers of children under the age of three, and more than 3 million Latinas in these states are economically insecure.

Project 2025 seeks to create even more obstacles to reproductive health care by **ending medication abortion** (p. 562), making states collect and report data on people seeking abortions or who have suffered a miscarriage (p. 455), and reversing post-Dobbs protections on information about people seeking abortions, which would make it **easier for law enforcement to access confidential patient information** (p. 497).

[Over 560,000 Latinx patients](#) who receive non-abortion health care services from Planned Parenthood facilities each year would be harmed by a Project 2025 proposal to **prohibit Planned Parenthood from receiving Medicaid funds to provide non-abortion health care services** (p. 471).

Several provisions in the plan would make access to health care more costly and difficult. Some would **roll back key reforms under the Affordable Care Act**, which has made it possible for more [Latinos to have access to health insurance than at any other time in history](#) (p. 469). Another priority is to roll back and **stop efforts to lower prescription drug prices**, such as the \$35 cap on insulin (p. 465). These changes would disproportionately hurt Latinos, who are [60% more likely than non-Hispanic white adults to be diagnosed with diabetes](#), and 1.5 times more likely to die from the disease than non-Hispanic whites.

Older Latinos would especially see their health care put at risk under Project 2025, which would **push seniors from traditional Medicare plans to private plans** (pp. 463-464) under the guise of consumer choice. This would hurt the [more than five million](#) Latino seniors currently enrolled in traditional Medicare plans by putting them in plans more likely to [spend less of their funding in providing care and services](#), proven [not to provide better care](#) than traditional Medicare plans, and [more likely to deny claims for rural health care facilities](#), potentially leaving patients without any access to treatment.

Further, Project 2025 would undermine the ability of federal public health authorities to advise the medical system and the public during future pandemics and public health emergencies by asserting that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is not qualified to offer professional medical opinions applicable to specific patients (pp. 452-456).

The discrete and meaningful advances our country has made in the past decade to get closer to the goal of giving all people in the US access to health care as a human right would be completely undone by proposals that consistently put profits over people and ideology over bodily autonomy. We will continue to fight for universal access to freedom to care for our bodies so that we can care for our loved ones and our communities.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR....

Latinx LGBTQ+

The provisions of Project 2025 related to the LGBTQ+ community further an already aggressive agenda from right-wing groups to **persecute, discriminate, and otherwise sow fear and distrust against those who identify as LGBTQ+**, encouraging the broader community to shun our brothers and sisters as their basic human rights are violated.

About [7.6% of adults](#) in the US identify as LGBTQ+—double the percentage a decade ago. An estimated [2.3 million adults](#) self-identify as Latinx and LGBTQ+. Measures in Project 2025 represent an existential threat for these groups, including major rollbacks of the rights of trans people (p. 284) and **equating trans identity with pornography** and outlawing both (pp. 4-5).

Project 2025 aims squarely at LGBTQ+ families and their supporters by:

- **stripping protections for LGBTQ+ youth at schools** (pp. 333-334);
- reversing a Biden-era [revision to Title IX](#) that helped protect LGBTQ+ students and school staff from harassment or discrimination (pp. 332-333);
- making it easier for **charter schools to discriminate against LGBTQ+ students** (p. 332);
- allowing **discrimination against LGBTQ+ youth and parents in foster care and adoption** (p. 477);
- enabling health-care workers to **opt out of providing gender-affirming care** (p. 491); and
- allowing **more religious exemptions to discriminate against LGBTQ+ people** in employment, housing and services (pp. 584, 586).

LGBTQ+ people are not the moral threat against children and families they are portrayed to be by right-wing extremists. On the contrary, their struggles have highlighted civil rights and human rights principles that apply to all of us, to reject discrimination based on identity, to respect bodily autonomy and advocate for patients' rights, and on the wide variety of family structures among us. We fight for a future where LGBTQ+ people are given the space to thrive and contribute like all other members of our society, free from violence and fear.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR....

Latinos participating in our democracy

Proposals in Project 2025 threaten our democracy by subverting the infrastructure that protects access to the ballot, sowing doubt about information related to voting and elections, and criminalizing alleged election-related offenses. Overall, these proposals would **hollow out an already fragile civic compact**, and further **undermine public trust in our long-established democratic processes and institutions**.

An estimated [36.2 million Latinos are eligible to vote](#) in the 2024 elections, up from 32.3 million in 2020. While many of these voters are concentrated in states with large populations—California, Texas, Florida, and New York—they make up significant percentages of the populations in swing states such as Nevada and Arizona, and a growing percentage in states such as Pennsylvania and Georgia.

Recent right-wing attempts to **block voters' access to the ballot** have especially zeroed in on Latinos, from falsehoods about [non-citizens allegedly committing voter fraud](#), to **state voter purges** claiming that registered voters identified as Latinx were not citizens (in [Texas](#), [Tennessee](#), [Ohio](#), and [Alabama](#), among others). This has created an environment in which [right-wing activists are emboldened to intimidate volunteers](#) who are encouraging people in Latino communities to vote, and the Texas Governor [ordered violent armed raids](#) at the homes of several members of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), including [87-year-old Lidia Martinez](#), under the pretext of an “election integrity investigation.”

Project 2025 seeks to make it even more difficult for Latinos to participate in our democracy. Key priorities in the plan that diminish protections for voters include:

- **criminalizing voting** by shifting responsibility for prosecuting election-related offenses from the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division to the Criminal Division (p. 562), which would discourage voters fearing possible prosecution;
- ending ongoing federal efforts by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to **combat online disinformation and threats to secure elections** (p. 155);
- requiring state and local recipients of DHS grant funding to meet certain pre-conditions for eligibility, such as sharing voter information that would allow federal authorities to **collect voter rolls to execute aggressive voter purges** that disenfranchise voters (p. 563); and
- rescinding the ability of the Small Business Administration (SBA) and other federal agencies to become “**designated voter agencies**” that provide voter registration information to the public (p. 749).

Another important area related to Latino political power addressed in Project 2025 are major changes to the decennial Census (p. 680), the Constitutionally mandated count of everyone in the US that determines political representation and factors into spending decisions. The following aim to undermine trust and participation in [Latino and other traditionally undercounted communities](#):

- **adding a citizenship question to the Census**, reviving a failed 2020 attempt that was [widely criticized](#) as a crass attempt to distort the population count to disempower Latinos and other immigrant populations;

- **adding more explicitly conservative groups** to the partnership program “designed to promote responsiveness to the Census by employing trusted voices in various communities”;
- **reviewing changes to Census questions on race and ethnicity** to control options available to respondents, and likely counteract efforts from Latinx and other groups to develop questions and a structure that would more accurately reflect demographic changes and peoples’ self-identification.

Right-wing forces intent on narrowing access to the vote so more people give up on the system have for many years focused on Latinos, casting doubt on their citizenship and belonging. They have deployed a variety of tactics to discourage Latinos from voting, and cast doubt among the rest of the population about votes by Latinos. As more parts of the federal 1965 Voting Rights Act have been enfeebled in the courts, we continue to support state and federal versions of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act to re-cement and expand the sacred right to the vote, and to support ways to expand civic participation from everyone to strengthen the power of the people.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR....

Latinos under threat from environmental damage and climate change

By weakening and out-and-out eliminating federal agencies, programs, and policies that provide life-saving information, resources, and remedies for the increasing number of people in the US who live in polluted communities and communities under recurring threat due to climate change, Project 2025 **endangers the lives and property of millions of people** across the country.

Latinos are especially vulnerable both to the harms from man-made environmental damage, and from disastrous damage caused by extreme climate events. [More than one third of Latinos](#) live in areas that violate federal air pollution standards for particulate matter—causing and exacerbating respiratory ailments such as asthma and cancer—and more than one third live in Western states, where [arsenic, industrial chemicals, and fertilizer residues](#) often contaminate local drinking water supplies. And the majority (56%) of Latinos in the US report that [their home has experienced extreme weather events](#) in the preceding year. The three states where more than one-half of the country's Latino populations live—California, Florida and Texas—have experienced recent increases in wildfires, extreme heat, drought and flooding.

Project 2025 would decimate the safety net for those harmed by environmental damage and extreme climate events by:

- **eliminating the federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights** (p. 442), which would [threaten crucial funding to tackle environmental injustice](#) and funding for front-line community-based organizations cleaning up pollution in their areas;
- likewise **eliminating the EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance** (p. 441), which would [severely obstruct the ability of the agency to enforce environmental laws](#) such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act, essential to protecting public health;
- **dissolving the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** (NOAA, p. 664), which includes the National Weather Service, tracks weather and storms, collects long-term weather data, and provides crucial life-preserving information on hurricanes and other severe weather events;
- **winding down the National Flood Insurance Program** (pp. 153-154), and replacing it with private insurance, leaving millions of people without insurance [as more private companies have been increasing costs](#) and outright refusing policies to people in flood-prone zones; and
- increasing the threshold to declare a disaster by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA, pp. 153-154), **making it harder for states and localities to qualify for federal aid after a disaster.**

Adding these CLOSING GRAF What we've already seen: SCOTUS decision? Rollbacks in environmental protections, and pullbacks in insurance in areas that are flood-prone and subject to recurring severe storm damage.