

# Project 2025: Another knee on our necks

by Ariama C. Long | New York Amsterdam News



Taraji P. Henson spotlighting 'Project 2025' aka 'Project 47' during an impassioned speech at the BET awards in the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles, California on July 1, 2024.

**(CULTURAL JUSTICE)** - On July 1st, award-winning actress Taraji P. Henson spotlighted the Republican playbook in an impassioned speech at the BET awards, and suddenly everyone wants to know what Project 2025 is all about and how it affects them.

In short, Project 2025—now being rebranded as Project 47—is a collection of far-right, racist policies aimed at overhauling the presidency and governmental infrastructure that has been in place for years.

“Project 2025 will spell the end of America as we know it and make this nation a hostile state for Black people,” said the Rev. Al Sharpton, founder and president of the National Action Network (NAN), in a statement.

**What is it?**

The 2025 Presidential Transition Project, also known as the “Mandate For Leadership: The Conservative Promise,” is a 922-page document compiled by the Heritage Foundation, established in 1973 under then-President Richard Nixon. The first version of this document had 20 volumes and 3,000 pages, and was given to former President Ronald Reagan in 1980, featuring more than 2,000 conservative policies.

“The Heritage Foundation, which is a far-right extreme think tank—they have long put out presidential policy platforms,” said Colin Seeberger, senior advisor for communications at the Center for American Progress (CAP). “The difference about Project 2025 is this is incredibly sweeping in scope, backed by a coalition of more than 100 far-right groups. It includes this more than 900-page authoritarian playbook to basically dismantle U.S. democracy in order to usher in an array of far-right policies that would affect every aspect of American life.”

Recently, Heritage Foundation President Kevin Roberts, called the current phase of their operation a “bloodless second American Revolution” but alluded to the possibility of more violent insurrection to carry it out if there is resistance.

The conservative document includes recruitment tactics to identify far-right Republican loyalists to replace civil servants in the federal government, a training program to prepare them to flout government procedures, and a “secret” 180-day playbook for future Republican presidents, said Seeberger.

The murders of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, Malcolm X in 1965, and former President John F. Kennedy in 1963 slowed the Civil Rights Movement into the late 1970s—“a historic low point for America”—and conservatives, according to the document. Project 2025 pleads for a callback to bygone eras, and centers on white nationalism, pro-Christian nuclear familial ideals, dismantling the administrative state, and beefing up America’s military defenses on borders and overseas, among other things.

Anything to do with “federal spending,” climate change, religious freedoms, voter protections, civil rights for Black and Brown citizens, LGBTQIA+ rights, women’s rights, reproductive healthcare and abortion, gender equality or sexual identity protections, and discussions of race and Black history are seen as wholly leftist and therefore dangerous.

“The effectiveness of any policy designed to empower workers, prohibit discrimination, and guarantee equal rights and bodily autonomy is directly related to the government’s capacity to enforce those policies,” said Valerie Wilson, a labor economist and director of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) Action. “Project 2025 not only threatens to undo decades of hard-fought battles to pass laws protecting the civil and economic rights of all American citizens; it is a plan to severely restrict or totally eliminate any avenues for recourse against the violation of those rights, with Black and Brown

people, the working class, women, and the LGBTQ community facing the greatest risk of suffering the consequences.”

Maya Wiley, president of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, used similar language to Roberts to say, on a CAP panel, that Project 2025 “calls us to a second civil war.”

“Either we’re going to stand on the victory of ending slavery, of freeing people’s ability to have their own identity, and of understanding the role of a federal government in ensuring that we all have civil rights, [or] we will not have a democracy, and this is a blueprint for ending it,” Wiley said.

**What does that look like in the real world?**

Project 2025 has many fraught ideas, but here is a summary of the most important economic proposals.

The project would roll back overtime protections for employees, cut Social Security benefits by raising the retirement age, break up union contracts with employers and undermine negotiations, make it harder to form unions by installing an anti-worker council at the National Labor Relations Board, and allow minors to work in dangerous jobs, Seeberger said.

The project proposes to close preschools, eliminate the U.S. Department of Education, end affordable student loan repayment plans, and eliminate state school funding for immigrant students. It would also make it more expensive to own a home by increasing mortgage insurance premiums on Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans, which is a good lending option for first-time homebuyers, with terms of longer than 20 years, said Seeberger.

It also calls for slashing the corporate tax rate, putting a new tax on health insurance for people covered through employers, rollbacks to financial regulations put in place after the Great Recession in the early 2000s, and restrictions on the Federal Reserve’s “lender-of-last-resort” function that allows troubled banks to borrow money quickly—which helped the country survive severe economic downturns like the COVID-19 crisis.

A CAP analysis found that a similar financial shock and recession now would result in 8.7 million people losing their jobs by 2026 and that employment would not recover to current levels until 2031.

“If far-right extremists are successful in enacting Project 2025, the likelihood of a 2007-scale financial crisis would be greater, and this risks economic losses to workers and households that could exceed those in the Great Recession,” said Marc Jarsulic, senior fellow and chief economist at CAP and co-author of the analysis, in a statement. “The proposals in Project 2025 makes things crystal clear: Far-right extremists care more about bolstering Wall Street’s bottom line than protecting American families.”

Many of the policies concerning civil, women’s, and LGBTQ rights are already playing out on the state level or co-signed by U.S. Supreme Court rulings, namely the overturning of Roe v. Wade and the right to federally legalized abortion, as well as outlawing affirmative action in college admissions and rollbacks to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. There also has been a rash of book bans in libraries and classrooms across the country in the last two or three years.

Rachel Noerdlinger, an equity partner at Actum LLC, said in a statement, “You can count on Black women, who power the federal workforce, to be the first casualties of this realignment of our government. Our access to reproductive and maternal health will be chipped away to nothing, as our rights will be so restricted [that] they’ll make the pre-Civil

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