AMERICAN AUTOCRACY THREAT TRACKER

State Democracy Defenders Action

A Comprehensive Catalog Based on Donald Trump and His Associates' Plans, Promises, and Propositions

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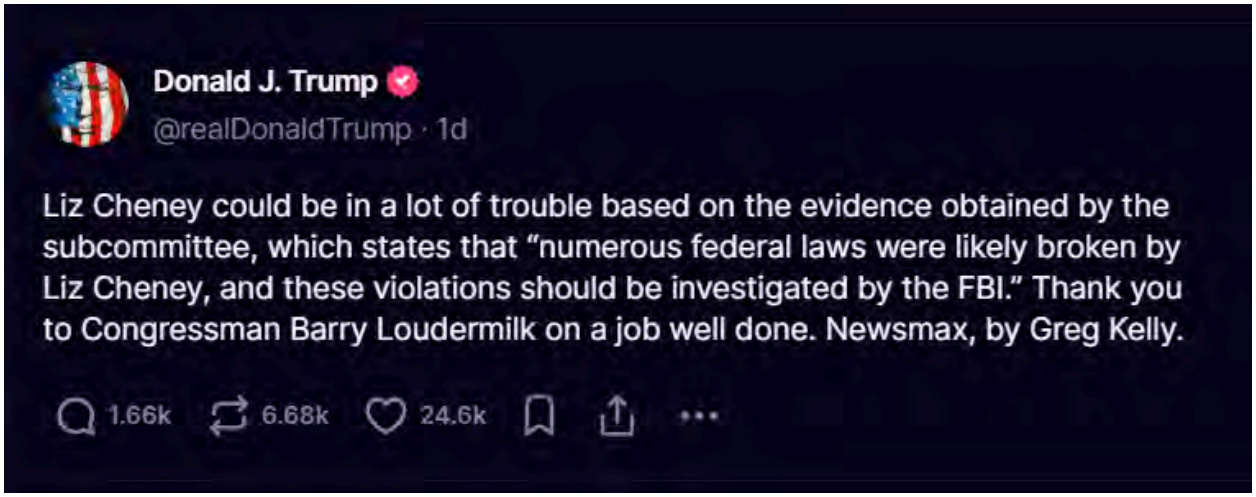
Introduction

Donald Trump, his allies and key appointees have proclaimed plans that would turn America towards dictatorship. If they succeed in realizing their stated aims, they will transform our 250 year democracy into an autocracy along the lines of Victor Orban's Hungary—or worse. That follows from statements like that of the President-elect that he will assume dictatorial powers on "day one" of his administration or that he will seek to retaliate against his opponents—a revenge theme endorsed by his announced nominees to run the FBI and DOJ. For example, Trump said in his *Meet the Press* interview on December 8th that Liz Cheney "should go to jail" for her role on the Jan. 6th Committee. Then on December 17th, he doubled down based on a "report" by one of his congressional allies:



We should take deadly seriously those and the thousands of other threats against democracy by Trump, his key nominees and his allies. Indeed, Trump has already begun acting on threats to other targets, and on December 17th began suing *The Des Moines Register* and others over a pre-election poll that turned out to erroneously state his level of support. And yet while some are springing into action to address these perils, many others remain supine. It is imperative to sound the alarm so that Congress, other federal and state officials, the press and the public can respond commensurate with the risk and based on accurate, in-depth information about the specific autocratic plans.

The "American Autocracy Threat Tracker" aims to sound that alarm and spur that preparedness. In the over 300 pages of detail that follows, we comprehensively catalog Trump's and his allies' specific plans and promises for his second term. We focus on announced actions that are of greatest concern for the future of our democracy. Throughout, we rely on quoted statements and citations to the publicly available factual record. We update the Threat Tracker regularly to include important new developments.

We begin in Section One with details about those who have been reported to be working on Trump's transition or announced as joining a Trump administration and their autocratic views. In

Section Two, we turn to other transition issues, including breaks with precedent and ethics which undermine democratic institutions and guardrails. That is followed by analysis of Trump's promise "to be a dictator for one day," with a focus on three areas he has emphasized: immigration, energy, and pardons of those involved in the Jan. 6 insurrection, in Sections Three through Five, respectively.

We then proceed to cover the full range of threats in other policy areas in the next 22 sections, ranging from the use of government power to target perceived foes to fostering alliances with foreign authoritarian regimes; from employing military force to suppress dissent to institutionalizing his philosophy of election denial and subversion; from abusing government power to enrich himself, his family, and his friends to planning mass firings of civil servants and mass deportations of migrants. Finally, in Section 28, we catalog potential solutions to address this autocratic threat, followed by a selected bibliography.

Even a brief look at the detail that follows establishes the cause for concern and the need for solutions. With his re-election secured, Trump has moved swiftly to install loyalists in key positions, executing his vision of a centralized, loyalty-driven federal government. Once-independent agencies, designed to operate free from partisan influence, are now squarely in the administration's crosshairs. Experts caution that Trump's strategic appointments confirm his rhetoric was "not mere campaign bluster," but a deliberate move to consolidate power within the presidency, reshaping the executive branch into a tool for unchecked authority and calculated aggression. This framework could significantly erode traditional checks and balances. Institutions like the Department of Justice and the Federal Reserve, historically insulated to ensure impartiality, could instead operate under presidential directives prioritizing political loyalty over institutional integrity and constitutional balance.

At the same time, the administration's efforts to upend civil service protections pave the way for widespread purges of non-loyal personnel, further entrenching partisan control over federal agencies. The implications are stark: a government where dissent is silenced—or even eliminated—perceived wrongdoers are targeted, institutional safeguards are dismantled, and the separation of powers is increasingly undermined in favor of centralized control, shaping the executive branch into a mechanism for consolidating power.

Pairing "loyal foot soldiers" Kash Patel and Pam Bondi to lead federal law enforcement brings Trump's pledge to overhaul the FBI and DOJ into stark reality, with plans to subject employees to purges and investigations while tightening control over the agencies. Patel, a staunch opponent of the so-called "Deep State," has accused FBI, DOJ, and intelligence leaders of political bias and advocated for a "comprehensive housecleaning" of the DOJ. His proposals include dismantling the FBI's intelligence-gathering division, purging employees who refuse to support Trump's agenda, and converting the Washington, DC, headquarters into a "museum of the deep state."

As the pages below demonstrate, similar assaults on legal and normative structures that have long constituted the American experiment await in every department of government. But our own

history and that of other backsliding democracies teaches us that there are substantial responses available, and we document those as well. Defending democracy must begin with analyzing the threats to it, and in this report we undertake that mission.

I. Trump's Transition Team: Poised to Purge Federal Employees and to Attack Adversaries

- Having won the 2024 election, President-elect Trump's team is "vowing to hit the ground running with plans to totally upend Washington," *POLITICO* reported.

- Trump has announced plans to nominate several cabinet secretaries and other senior advisors who have publicly attacked the agencies they are poised to lead.
    - **Kash Patel for FBI Director:** Patel held multiple senior positions during the Trump administration, including Deputy Assistant at the White House National Security Council, Senior Director of Counterterrorism at the National Security Council in 2019, Principal Deputy to Acting Director of National Intelligence Ric Grenell, and Chief of Staff to Acting U.S. Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller. He is widely seen as fiercely loyal to Trump, focused on reinforcing his allegiance and willing to follow orders "without hesitation," raising concerns about his influence on institutional independence. On December 11, current FBI Director Christopher Wray announced his intention to resign despite having more than two years remaining in his 10-year term, clearing the path for Patel's appointment.
        - Patel is a staunch opponent of the so-called "Deep State," accusing FBI, DOJ, and intelligence leaders of political bias and alleging they exploit their authority to undermine Republicans, particularly Trump. In his book "Government Gangsters," which Trump called a "blueprint" for his next administration, Patel advocated a "comprehensive housecleaning" of the DOJ, calling for the eradication of "government tyranny" within the FBI by firing "the top ranks" and prosecuting anyone who "abused their authority for political ends" to "the fullest extent of the law." He has proposed dismantling the FBI's intelligence-gathering division, purging the bureau of employees who refuse to support Trump's agenda; shutting down the Washington, DC, headquarters to reopen it as a "museum of the deep state;" and directing thousands of headquarters employees to leave their office roles and be sent nationwide to "chase down criminals." Patel was also criticized for allegedly encouraging baseless claims from whistleblowers to target the FBI and DOJ, as documented in a House Democrats' report.
        - Patel has long demanded public disclosure of classified documents from the FBI's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election, and played a key role in combating the investigation, including selectively declassifying Russia probe transcripts and reportedly authoring the highly-criticized and misleading 2018 Nunes Memo (which he later

doubled down on). Patel, who claimed he witnessed Trump declassify documents in anticipation of leaving office and has criticized the classified documents indictment, once pledged to review and release materials he says were blocked by the National Archives. Patel has championed sweeping reforms to dismantle safeguards around classified materials, including a 24/7 "declassification office" to release "half" of all classified documents (once citing to classified material redacted in the DC case against Trump); "robust automatic declassification," granting broad declassification powers to political appointees; and default access to classified documents for presidential appointees, including the White House chief of staff and director of the OMB.

- He has pledged aggressive, targeted actions against federal officials, media, and others he accuses of undermining Trump and aiding Biden.
  - In his book "Government Gangsters", he includes an appendix listing 60 "Members of the Executive Branch Deep State" perceived to have wronged Trump. The list has been described by the press as an "enemies list," Patel calls the deep state a "cabal of unelected tyrants" and "the most dangerous threat to our democracy."
  - He has called for prosecuting those who "manipulated evidence" or "hid exculpatory information" in the Russia investigation and stripping security clearances from a "massive list" of individuals across the FBI, DOJ, CIA, and military, including private-sector figures, who were involved in the probe.
  - Patel advised Trump to revoke the clearances of 51 intelligence officials who dismissed the Hunter Biden laptop story.
  - He often demonizes the media, which he has vowed to target for allegedly helping Biden "rig presidential elections."
- Patel has consistently aligned himself with Trump's most controversial causes, leveraging his influence to support January 6 defendants, bolster far-right platforms, and obstruct Biden's transition team.
  - He has fundraised for Jan. 6 defendants and their families, promoted the "J6 Prison Choir" featuring jailed participants, and co-produced their fundraising song, "Justice for All," played at Trump rallies, once describing Jan. 6 as "a free speech movement."
  - As a former director of the company behind Truth Social, Patel admitted to deliberately courting QAnon supporters to boost the platform's struggling user base, framing it as a strategic move to capture MAGA and America First audiences.
  - During the transition following the 2020 election, Patel reportedly obstructed Biden's team's access to defense information, restricting cooperation and prioritizing control by political appointees.

- **Pam Bondi for U.S. Attorney General**: Bondi is a former local prosecutor and Florida attorney general (2011–2019), who chairs the America First Policy

Institute's litigation arm and co-chairs its law and justice center. She is a "longtime Trump loyalist" who has spent years defending Trump's conduct and attacking those who investigate him. She has called DOJ prosecutors "horrible" people who are "weaponizing our legal system" for investigating Trump and claimed the Constitution was "shredded" when Trump was indicted in Florida, for which she insists he had the right to retain the classified documents at issue. Bondi has repeatedly mischaracterized Trump's indictments, falsely claiming they were orchestrated by Biden, and has supported prosecuting DOJ prosecutors (those deemed "the bad ones") and investigating the investigators, referring to the so-called "deep state." She has vowed to "clean house" at the DOJ, stating, "now we know who most of them are" and "there's a record of it." She once praised a "lock her up" placard about Hillary Clinton, which prompted similar chants from the crowd.

- Bondi has been a steadfast defender of Trump, serving as one of his defense lawyers during his first impeachment and appearing at his New York hush-money criminal trial to support him. She has downplayed allegations against Trump, including asserting that Trump should benefit from presidential immunity. Bondi also championed Trump's baseless claims of election fraud, promoting lies about voter and ballot tampering during the 2020 election, including alongside Rudy Giuliani. Her support extends to Trump's harmful policies, including reinstating his travel ban.
- In September 2013 while running for re-election as Florida's Attorney General, Bondi accepted an illegal $25,000 campaign contribution from Trump's family foundation three days after her office was reviewing complaints of fraud against Trump University. The following month, her office announced it would not open a formal investigation into those complaints, even though the New York Attorney General had filed a lawsuit against Trump University that resulted in a $25 million settlement.

- **Russ Vought for Office of Management and Budget Director**: Vought—Trump's former OMB Director, the RNC policy director, and a self-described Christian nationalist—poses a significant threat as Trump's nominee to lead the OMB again. A "chief architect of Project 2025," Vought has been instrumental in crafting its 180-day playbook, which outlines sweeping executive orders, regulations, and memos to consolidate power. He drafted Project 2025's chapter on "Executive Office of the President of the United States," which advances a case for unleashing unchecked presidential power. Vought, together with the Center for Renewing America (CRA), which he founded and serves on the Project 2025 advisory panel, is actively advocating for plans to be ready for implementation from the outset. They are reportedly behind Trump's "Day One" plans for a dramatic expansion of executive authority. These plans include invoking the Insurrection Act to quash civil unrest and police the border, reinstating presidential impoundment powers to withhold congressionally approved funding, and clamping down on federal agency independence (a notion that should be "thrown out")—targeting entities such as the DOJ, FBI, and EPA.

He describes his efforts as creating "shadow" agencies, CRA and Vought are focused on reducing transparency, ensuring their efforts to equip the transition team for Day One remain undisclosed and avoid Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) obligations. Vought also supports White House review of the Federal Reserve's regulatory functions.

- A key advocate for reviving the controversial "Schedule F," and an "architect" on those plans, Vought was a leading force behind its original implementation in Trump's outgoing administration and has proposed using it to dismiss at least 10% of federal workers, while hinting that up to 80% of employees could be targeted as ideological adversaries
- Vought supports reviving the Holman Rule, which would allow members of Congress to target existing funding for agencies or individual federal employees, further dismantling institutional protections. In 2023, he frequently advised MAGA Republicans during government shutdown negotiations,
- During his first tenure at OMB, Vought oversaw unprecedented moves, such as withholding military aid to Ukraine during Trump's impeachment, redirecting Pentagon funds for the border wall, and obstructing Biden's transition team from accessing critical budget information. He also defended and helped oversee Trump's budget proposals, which called for deep cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.
- Vougth, like many of Trump's allies, has called for an "army of investigations" to prosecute officials who investigated Trump and his allies, emphasizing retribution over hearings alone.

- **Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. for HHS Secretary**: Trump announced he will nominate RFK Jr., an anti-vaccine activist, to lead the Department of Health & Human Services, which oversees the Food & Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Medicare, and Medicaid. RFK Jr. has a "record of spreading false claims and unhinged, right-wing medical disinformation—that vaccines cause autism, that chemicals in drinking water make kids become queer or trans, that gender-affirming care for children amounts to 'castration' and 'mutilation.'" RFK's conspiracy-theory-based presidential campaign earned Politifact's "2023 Lie of the Year."
  - In his Nov. 25, 2024 Interview with *Time*, Trump said he would have a "big discussion" with Kennedy about ending childhood vaccinations, acknowledged the administration may be getting rid of some vaccinations, and suggested there may be a connection between vaccines and autism, saying, "I want to see the numbers. It's going to be the numbers."
  - In October 2024, Trump said of RFK Jr., "I'm going to let him go wild on health."
- **Pete Hegseth for Secretary of Defense**: Hegseth—a *Fox News* host and National Guard veteran who served in Afghanistan and Iraq, obtaining the rank of Major—has been called out for his lack of "senior command experience," and

described as potentially the "least experienced defense secretary in the history of the republic." Indeed, Hegseth's most notable leadership role was as Executive Director of the Koch-funded Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) from 2012 to 2016, a group whose annual budget was approximately $16 million during Hegseth's tenure and employed 6 staff members in calendar year 2012 and 159 in 2015—a stark contrast to the Department of Defense's $840 billion budget and its extensive, globally dispersed workforce, in excess of 2.6 million as of June 30, 2024, including overseas and classified personnel, that he would lead.

- Hegseth has called for firing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and any other general who supported the military's policy of diversion, equity, and inclusion. He also said women should not serve in combat roles, has called "wokeness" the military's biggest threat, and was investigated (but not charged) by law enforcement for an alleged sexual assault in 2017; Hegseth reportedly paid the woman an undisclosed sum to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). A memo to the Trump transition team alleged the victim was disoriented and underwent a positive rape-kit examination after the incident, while Hegseth's lawyer admitted he was "visibly intoxicated." These allegations cast a shadow when viewed alongside a controversial column Hegseth oversaw as publisher of the *Princeton Tory* while in college in 2002, which argued that intercourse with an unconscious woman did not meet the legal definition of rape.
- His controversial record also includes being flagged as a possible "insider threat" and barred from serving in the National Guard at Biden's inauguration; dismissing extremism in the military despite documented ties between service members and the January 6 insurrection; successfully lobbying President Trump for pardons of service members accused of war crimes; defending waterboarding as an effective "interrogation technique" and deriding the Geneva Conventions, which require humane treatment of prisoners of war; criticizing injured veterans for accepting government benefits, claiming it undermines the "ethos of service"; and downplaying moral objections to the use of nuclear weapons during wartime.

- **Tulsi Gabbard for Director of National Intelligence**: Gabbard is a former U.S. Representative (D-HI) who ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020 before joining the Republican party in 2024. Gabbard has no relevant experience within the intelligence community, did not serve on the House Intelligence Community, and has long been accused of repeating false Russian propaganda. Russian state TV has called Gabbard "Our girlfriend Tulsi" and said that she is "a Russian agent." Gabbard has publicly supported Syrian dictator Bashar Assad and met with him twice while she was a member of Congress, including a "secret visit" arranged by the "virulently antisemitic, pro-Assad Syrian nationalist party whose emblem [ ] resembles a Nazi swastika."
  - In his Nov. 25, 2024 Interview with *Time*, Trump dismissed concerns about Gabbard's support of Russia and Syria, saying "I'm surprised to hear it, because I think she's, like, a really great American." Trump continued to

say the allegations against Gabbard are “a mini Russia, Russia, Russia scam.”

- **Harmeet Dhillon for Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division**: Dhillon, a regular guest on Fox News, is former Vice Chair of the California Republican Party. Through her private law firm, Dhillon has filed actions suing UC Berkeley over free speech, suing California over COVID restrictions, and suing states over voting rights, redistricting, and other election issues. She was a “fierce advocate” of Trump’s false assertions of fraud in the 2020 presidential election, supported Trump’s attempt to overturn that election, and denounced efforts to enforce the Constitution’s Insurrection Clause to disqualify Trump from the 2024 ballot as “the biggest election interference fraud in world history.” Renowned constitutional scholar Erwin Chemerinsky said Dillon is “hardly a champion of civil rights as it is generally understood… there is nothing in her record about fighting discrimination based on race or sex or sexual orientation or gender identity.”
- **Mark Paoletta for General Counsel at the Office of Management and Budget:** Paoletta previously served as General Counsel at OMB for three years during Trump’s first administration and was recently nominated to fill this role again. In 2019, during his first tenure as general counsel for OMB, Paoletta delayed security assistance to Ukraine despite opposition from OMB and Pentagon staffers. The delay was later determined to be unlawful by the Government Accounting Office.
- **Kari Lake for Director of Voice of America**: Kari Lake is a former newscaster and unsuccessful candidate for Governor and Senator in Arizona. Announcing her nomination, Trump said she would “ensure that the American values of Freedom and Liberty are broadcast around the World FAIRLY and ACCURATELY, unlike the lies spread by the Fake News Media.” Lake is a prominent election denier who claimed that Joe Biden did not receive 81 million votes and reposted a claim that Democrats rig elections using mail-in ballots. She has frequently attacked the media and journalists, calling reporters “monsters” and “fake news” and pronouncing that she will be the media’s “worst fricking nightmare.”

- The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), spearheaded by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy as outside advisors, represents a radical shift in federal governance aimed at dismantling administrative structures and purported “illicit" regulations. While DOGE is framed as a “department,” it functions outside the federal government, serving only an advisory role to the White House. DOGE is partnered closely with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), led by Russ Vought, to implement “large scale structural reform” within the federal bureaucracy. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene will chair a new House oversight subcommittee "to work with" DOGE Their initiative raises alarms about the erosion of institutional expertise and potential abuse of executive power.
    - The co-chair’s Nov. 20 op-ed for the Wall Street Journal outlines DOGE’s primary objectives, executed by a “lean team of small-government crusaders.” Their mission includes regulatory rescissions, workforce reductions, and targeting

unauthorized federal expenditures—all executed through existing executive powers, relying heavily on the U.S. Supreme Court's recent highly criticized rollbacks to federal agency independence, rather than new legislation. "We will focus particularly on driving change through executive action based on existing legislation rather than by passing new laws." While ambitious in scope, DOGE's leaders emphasize their ultimate goal: to phase out the initiative entirely by July 4, 2026, delivering what they describe as a streamlined federal government aligned with the Founders' vision.

- DOGE intends to target federal regulations that lack explicit congressional authorization, arguing that a "plethora of current federal regulations" exceed agency authority and could be on the chopping block. By leveraging executive actions and legal frameworks, DOGE plans to recommend pausing enforcement of "thousands" of such regulations and initiating rescission processes. These plans, the pair say, will rely heavily in highly criticized Supreme Court decisions like: *West Virginia v. EPA* (2022), which restricted the EPA's ability to regulate carbon emissions experts warn will have much more far reaching impact; *Loper Bright v. Raimondo* (2024), where the court overturned *Chevron v. Natural Resources Defense Council* (1984)—which dictated that federal courts should defer to federal agencies in their interpretation of statutes—stripping federal agencies of significant power. "Together, these cases suggest that a plethora of current federal regulations exceed the authority Congress has granted under the law," the pair write.
- They plan to justify "mass head-count reductions" in the federal government by identifying "thousands" of regulations for elimination. To assist, they aim to assess "minimum number of employees required at an agency for it to perform its constitutionally permissible and statutorily mandated functions."
- They argue that statutory civil-service protections, designed to shield federal employees from political retaliation, do not preclude the president from enacting sweeping changes under existing legal frameworks. They highlight provisions allowing for "reductions in force" that do not target specific employees, coupled with the president's authority to "prescribe rules governing the competitive service." This authority, they assert, is "broad" and has been upheld by the Supreme Court in cases like *Franklin v. Massachusetts* (1992) and *Collins v. Yellen* (2021). In *Franklin*, the Court ruled that the president's actions are not bound by the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) unless explicitly stated by Congress, affirming executive discretion in administrative matters. Similarly, in *Collins*, the Court underscored the president's power to direct and remove executive officers, reinforcing the scope of executive authority.
- Building on these precedents, they propose measures such as relocating federal agencies out of Washington, D.C. and mandating five-day in-office workweeks,—all framed as permissible under the president's power to

regulate the civil service. These actions, they contend, would either directly reduce workforce numbers or encourage voluntary resignations, asserting that “if federal employees don’t want to show up, American taxpayers shouldn’t pay them for the Covid-era privilege of staying home.”

- Musk and Ramaswamy aim to cut over $500 billion in annual federal spending they deem unauthorized by Congress or inconsistent with legislative intent. While broad cuts could affect programs like veterans’ health care, opioid addiction treatment, and NASA, they specifically targeted the Corporation for Public Broadcasting ($535 million annually), international organizations receiving $1.5 billion in grants, and Planned Parenthood along with other "progressive groups" ($300 million annually).
- DOGE intends to manage the fallout of mass federal job cuts by encouraging displaced employees to accept early retirement incentives or voluntary severance payments, framing these measures as a way to facilitate their transition into the private sector.

- DOGE faces significant statutory and structural limitations. As an outside-of-government commission, its capacity is limited to recommendations, creating potential roadblocks within the executive branch and from Congress, experts previously told *The Hill.* Critics also point to the Impoundment Control Act of 1974, which requires the president to spend funds appropriated by Congress, as a substantial legal hurdle. Musk and Ramaswamy counter in their *WSJ* op-ed that Trump has suggested the statute is unconstitutional and predict that the Supreme Court would agree. (As documented below, Vought has advocated for clamping down on the Act.)
- Below is a selection of statements from those involved, offering further glimpses into plans for DOGE:
  - Dec. 7, 2024, the DOGE official X page posted, “The United States gives more in aid to foreign countries than the next 9 countries combined. Where exactly is that money going and how is it being spent?”
  - Nov. 20, 2024, the DOGE official X page posted, “Federal government agencies are using, on average, just 12% of the space in their DC headquarters. The Department of Agriculture, with space for more than 7,400 people, averaged 456 workers each day (6% occupancy). Why are American taxpayer dollars being spent to maintain empty buildings?”
  - Musk recently said he could cut more than $2 trillion from the government’s $6.7 trillion annual budget.
  - Nov. 18, 2024, Russ Vought, Trump's nominee for OMB Director appeared on Tucker Carlson's show on X. Vought discussed plans to implement a "massive deregulatory agenda" in collaboration with Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy. He emphasized the need to be "as radical or aggressive as you can" in reducing the number of full-time federal employees and contractors.
  - Nov. 18, 2024, Ramaswamy wrote on X: “A reasonable formula to fix the U.S. government: Milei-style cuts, on steroids.”

        - Nov. 17, 2024, Fox News, Ramaswamy stated intentions to implement "mass reductions …in areas of the federal government that are bloated" and to "delete" certain agencies “outright.” He further remarked that "people will be surprised…by how quickly we’re able to move with some of those changes given the legal backdrop the Supreme Court has given us," signaling that recent rulings have paved the way for swift and significant governmental restructuring.
        - Nov. 14, 2024, Ramaswamy said he and Musk will “start the mass deportations of millions of unelected federal bureaucrats out of the D.C. bureaucracy.” He added that Musk “doesn’t bring a chisel, he brings a chainsaw, and we’re going to be taking it to that bureaucracy.” He later explained, “entire agencies [will] be deleted.” Indeed, Ramaswamy, during his failed bid for the GOP presidential nomination, proposed going even further than Trump generally has in dismantling the “deep state.” His platform included shutting down and replacing the FBI and IRS, and he argued that an executive order like Schedule F was unnecessary for purging agencies. Instead, he claimed that existing constitutional and statutory powers already give presidents the authority to enact such sweeping reforms. “I think that you already have that latitude, even without … Schedule F,” he said, describing the executive order as “clever” but “almost too humble in its aims.”
        - Nov. 14, 2024, DOGE said on its X page, "We are very grateful to the thousands of Americans who have expressed interest in helping us at DOGE. We don’t need more part-time idea generators. We need super high-IQ small-government revolutionaries willing to work 80+ hours per week on unglamorous cost-cutting. If that’s you, DM this account with your CV. Elon & Vivek will review the top 1% of applicants."
        - Nov. 12, 2024, Musk shared Trump’s announcement DOGE, which included Musk’s statement: "DOGE will send shockwaves through the system, and anyone involved in Government waste, which is a lot of people!"
        - “I’m excited to chair this new subcommittee designed to work hand in hand with President Trump, Elon Musk, Vivek Ramaswamy, and the entire DOGE team” Greene told CNN, reporting Nov. 21. “Our subcommittee’s work will expose people who need to be FIRED. The bureaucrats who don’t do their job, fail audits like in the Pentagon, and don’t know where BILLIONS of dollars are going, will be getting a pink slip.”
    - While running for president, Vivek Ramaswamy proposed measures that echoed and went beyond Trump’s calls to dismantle the administrative state, advocating term limits, removing civil service protections, firing over 50% of federal employees, relocating agencies, and shutting down entire departments, framing it as a “revolution” to “slay” the deep state.
        - Dec. 11, 2023, Vivek Ramaswamy wrote on X, “1. Shut down government agencies. 2. 8-year term limits for all government bureaucrats. 3. Remove

civil service protections & fire >50% of federal employees. 4. Move the remaining agencies out of D.C."

    - Dec. 6, 2023, Vivek Ramaswamy wrote on X, "The biggest open secret in modern America: the people who we elect to run the government, don't actually run the government. That's why I will fire 1 million federal employees in 2025. SHUT IT DOWN."
    - Nov. 24, 2023, Vivek Ramaswamy wrote on X, "8-year term limits for federal bureaucrats."
    - Aug 26, 2023, Vivek Ramaswamy wrote on X: "Here's the TRUTH: If you strike the swamp, the swamp strikes back. Trump did this country a great service: he rolled the log over. Now I'm bringing the pesticide. Most Republicans favor reform. I favor revolution. Any politician who says they're going to 'fix' the deep state is delusional. The administrative state is unconstitutional. The right answer: *shut it down.* I've offered unprecedented detail on the mechanics of *how* we will shut down the deep state. You can't tame the Leviathan. You have to slay it."

- Reporting from the Wall Street Journal revealed that Trump's transition team is looking into ways to eliminate, minimize, or significantly alter banking regulatory agencies. Trump advisors and DOGE officials are reportedly asking possible nominees seeking banking regulatory positions whether Trump could abolish the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

- As Democracy Forward explains, "Our nation's career civil servants — federal employees who serve the public regardless of the political affiliation of the President or partisan divides in Congress — are foundational to American democracy… Anti-democratic, far-right organizations and activists have voiced increasingly alarming threats against the civil service — ultimately threatening democracy itself."

- Trump's Agenda47 plan has been described as a "continuation of the fascist and other authoritarian policies Trump put in place during his first regime but now made even more extreme and cruel." While not all explicitly stated on his campaign website, Trump's Agenda47 promises are a clear "declaration of war on the federal government—a vow to transform its size and scope and make it more beholden to Trump's whims and worldview." Those promises include:
    - Gutting the federal bureaucracy and consolidating federal power under his direct control, Trump and his advisors plan to centralize the distributed powers of government agencies by installing loyalists in leadership positions using ideological pre-screening, reclassifying tens of thousands of civil service employees as political appointees, purging civil servants within the national security and intelligence apparatus, and subjecting independent agency actions to presidential review.
    - Having fewer cabinet level agencies means fewer congressionally-confirmed secretaries and more space for the informal circle of loyalists. (note: the authoritarian playbook of creating an "inner sanctum")

- The 2024 GOP platform states: “We will declassify Government records, root out wrongdoers, and fire corrupt employees.”

- Trump has promised to dismantle the “deep state,” in an attempt to purportedly “return power back to the American people.” Recently, he has revived his 2016 campaign pledge to “Drain The Swamp.” According to a *CREW* analysis of Trump's activity on Truth Social from January 1, 2023, to April 1, 2024, he mentioned demolishing the “deep state” 56 times.
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said:
        - “Over the past four years, our country has seen the sickness and corruption of the ‘Washington swamp’ exposed like never before.”
        - “We’re going to cast out the corrupt political class, we’re going to restore our Republic, and we are going to ‘drain the swamp,’ and we’re going to do it once and for all. We’re gonna get it done.” The crowd, many holding “DRAIN THE SWAMP” placards, began chanting “drain the swamp.”
    - August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump said: “We’re uniting forces to … above all, to restore our republic and vanquish the corruption that's all over Washington DC right now.”
    - May 25, 2024, Libertarian Party National Convention, Washington DC, Trump vowed to “root out the sickness that has taken over our Justice Department, our FBI, and other agencies.”
    - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: “With you at my side, we will demolish the deep state,…we will drain the swamp.”
    - May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: “We will demolish the deep state.”
    - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview, asked to clarify what he means by obliterating the deep state, Trump said, “It means we want to get rid of bad people, people that have not done a good job in government. And we look at people like a company would look at people. You know, when you buy a company, you go in and you look at, how do you like the job? Job performance. They have job performance standards. And yeah, we would like to get rid of people that haven't done a good job. And there are plenty of them.”
    - June 25, 2023, Michigan, Trump said: “We will demolish the deep state. We will expel the warmongers from our government. We will drive out the globalists. We will cast out the communists, Marxists and fascists. And we will throw off the sick political class that hates our country.”
    - Jan. 28, 2023, New Hampshire Annual GOP Meeting: Trump said, “We will root out the deep state and stop the weaponization of federal agencies because there’s a weaponization like nobody’s ever seen. We will use every tool at our disposal.”
    - Nov. 15, 2022, Mar-a-Lago: In reference to the FBI and DOJ, Trump said, “We must conduct a top to bottom overhaul to clean out the festering rot and corruption of Washington DC.”

- March 12, 2022, SC, Trump said: “The deep state must and will be brought to heel.”
- March 3, 2022, Florence, SC, Trump said: "The deep state must and will be brought to heel."
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: “And as we clean up our capital, we’ll clean up and clean out our deep state…But that is a deep swamp.”He later added: “With you at my side, we will demolish the deep state, we will expel the warmongers from our government that is so poorly run, we will drive out the globalists, we will cast out the communists, Marxist and fascists and we will throw off the sick political class that hates our country….We will drain the swamp and we will liberate our country from these tyrants and villains once and for all.”
- May 31, 2024, Hugh Hewitt interview: Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, commenting on the guilty verdict in Trump’s Manhattan trial the day prior, said, “There’s no way that that should ever have been allowed, and I think everybody sees that double standard. And I think it’s going to work to President Trump’s benefit in the election. And all of us, by the way, Hugh, last night, our Republican fundraising platforms broke records. The NRCC, the RNC, I mean, there is a zeal out there in the base, and enthusiasm, a motivation, and I made the comment in another interview this morning that President Trump is no longer just an individual. He is now a symbol. He is a symbol of fighting back against this corruption of our system and the deep state and all the rest. It’s true. That’s happening in real time. And we’re all going to watch it play out over the next few months.”
- In August 2023, the *AP* reported Russell Vought as saying: “The president Day One will be a wrecking ball for the administrative state.”

- Trump has said he plans to reissue “Schedule F,” the 2020 executive order that gave him the authority to fire tens of thousands of federal employees, and in a March 2023 video promised to “wield that power very aggressively.” (Note: Trump’s October 2020 order “had little impact because he issued it in the final months of his term, and President Joe Biden rescinded it as soon as he took office.”) While the Trump official who came up with the initial policy idea estimated that around 50,000 federal workers could be affected, many experts have said this “is probably a floor rather than a ceiling,” and could affect ”hundreds of thousands” of workers (as many as 500,000, according to a union leader).
  - Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: When asked whether Trump would fire civil servants who are not loyal to him, he said “it depends….we’re going to see. But sure, if I’m allowed to do that, I would do that.”
  - March 21, 2023, Agenda47’s first promise of its “ten-point plan to dismantle the deep state and reclaim our democracy from Washington corruption” states that on “On Day One,” Trump will “re-issue [his] 2020 executive order restoring the president’s authority to fire rogue bureaucrats.” In an accompanying video, Trump said: “I will immediately reissue my 2020 executive order restoring the president’s authority to remove rogue bureaucrats. And I will wield that power very aggressively.”

- March 12, 2022, SC, Trump said at a campaign rally: “We will pass critical reforms making every executive branch employee fireable by the president of the United States.”
- March 20, 2023, CPAC: Trump said, “I will fire the unelected bureaucrats and shadow forces who have weaponized our justice system like it has never been weaponized before.”
- March 21, 2023, Agenda47’s second promise in its ten-point plan against the deep state is to “Overhaul federal departments and agencies, firing all of the corrupt actors in our National Security and Intelligence apparatus.” In an accompanying video, Trump said: “We will clean out all of the corrupt actors in our National Security and Intelligence apparatus, and there are plenty of them. The departments and agencies that have been weaponized will be completely overhauled so that faceless bureaucrats will never again be able to target and persecute conservatives, Christians, or the left’s political enemies.”
- “If I was giving him [Trump] one piece of advice” for a second term, Vance said on a 2021 podcast: “Fire every single mid level bureaucrat, every civil servant in the administrative state, replace them with our people.” “Then when the courts stop you, stand before the country like Andrew Jackson did and say, ‘The chief justice has made his ruling. Now let him enforce it’,” Vance claimed.
- As noted by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, “Trump, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and various prominent Republicans have all endorsed reviving the Schedule F initiative if elected in 2024, and in their recently released Project 2025 report, the Heritage Foundation identified Schedule F as a key piece of a future presidential transition effort.”
- While, as above, Trump’s Schedule F executive order was rescinded before it could impact employees, records show that Russell Vought, as Trump’s former director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), sought to stretch the executive order’s target beyond a policy-related position to instead “cover the vast majority of the OMB workforce, from attorneys to GS-09 assistants and specialists who have nothing to do with setting government policy.” On Sept. 23, 2022, Vought told *The Charlie Kirk Show* that he had reclassified 90% of the employees in his office under that job category.
    - During that same Sept. 23 interview with Charlie Kirk, Vought was asked about the number of career employees he might aim to dismiss using Schedule F. Vought indicated a minimum of 10% of the current workforce—which he viewed as “the roots of the problem” that hindered the full implementation of Trump’s agenda while last in office—but hinted that he views up to 80% of the federal employees as ideological adversaries.
    - Vought is reported as a key figure in renewing Schedule F, and in a video last year for The Heritage Foundation said: “Well, I think one that’s gotten a lot of press is Schedule F. And Schedule F was something that materialized at the end of the administration that the president did to be able to say that if you’re working on policy for the president, you’re an at

> will employee. And we implemented it or we're on the cusp of implementing it. And it was like, the level of discord within our agency was high, but it's going to be groundbreaking. And to basically put this with the imprimatur of Heritage, say, 'This is an expectation that we have,' is going to be big." "We are consciously bringing on the toughest and most courageous fighters with the know-how and credibility to crush the deep state," Vought told *Axios*.

- Vought, who is leading a team of staffers drafting regulations, executive orders, and secretarial memos for Project 2025's "180-Day Transition Playbook," said in July 2024 that "80% of my time is working on the plans of what's necessary to take control of these bureaucracies, and we are working doggedly on that, whether it's destroying their agency's notion of independence," which includes the notion that they "are independent from the president." The month prior, he said, "The whole notion of independent agencies is anathema from the standpoint of the Constitution."

- As part of the Agenda47 plan against the "deep state," Trump has promised to create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission "to shed sunlight on every dark and rotten corner of Washington DC," which will entail the declassification of documents.
    - The 2024 GOP platform states: "We will declassify Government records, root out wrongdoers, and fire corrupt employees.
    - Oct. 29, 2023, Sioux City, Iowa, Trump said that he will be establishing a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission to shed sunlight on every dark and rotten corner of Washington DC, starting with crooked Joe Biden."
    - March 21, 2023, Agenda47, states that as part of it's 10-point plan to "clean out the deep state," Trump will "[e]stablish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to declassify and publish all documents on Deep State spying, censorship, and abuses of power. In an accompanying video, Trumps said: "Fourth, to expose the hoaxes and abuses of power that have been tearing our country apart, we will establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to declassify and publish all documents on Deep State spying, censorship, and corruption, and there are plenty of them."
    - In December 2023, Center for Renewing America published a piece calling for reforms to a weaponized security system and for classification decisions essentially to be taken out of the hands of deep-state bureaucrats.
- A *New York Times* report on December 7, 2024, revealed that applicants for top government roles in the Trump administration, including positions in the Pentagon and intelligence agencies, have faced questions aimed at assessing their loyalty to Trump. Candidates were asked about their views on the January 6 Capitol attack, the 2020 election, and their voting history in recent elections. Interviews with nine individuals—either applicants or insiders involved in the process—revealed that candidates who expressed dismay towards the violence at the Capitol or acknowledged Biden's 2020 win were passed over for the job. The Trump team also reviewed applicants' past statements about Trump, particularly on or after January 6, with three sources close to the transition

team confirming that these loyalty questions were a standard part of interviews across multiple agencies.

- This is significant not only because it requires allegiance to dubious propositions about the past but also because of what it signals about what government employees may be required to do if a similar test of their loyalty to Trump arises in the future, for example in connection with another disputed future election.
- Moreover, the reported pattern is consistent with other prior demands of loyalty to Trump whether it is merited or not.
    - In 2020, the Presidential Personnel Office, under the leadership of Trump aide John McEntee, began conducting "loyalty tests," including one-on-one interviews with "hundreds of ... political appointees across federal agencies" in order to "root out threats of leaks and other potentially subversive acts."
    - In September 2022, Russell Vought spoke with right-wing activist Charlie Kirk, who suggested that a future Republican president should implement "ideological purity tests" for civil servants.
    - John McEntee was tasked with serving as the head of vetting for "Project 2025," pre-reviewing potential political appointees.
    - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Trump was asked whether he would screen job applicants by questioning if they think the 2020 election was stolen, to which he responded, "I wouldn't feel good about it, because I think anybody that doesn't see that that election was stolen. It just—you look at the proof. It's so vast, state legislatures where they didn't go through the legislature. They had to go through the legislature. You look at it, it's so vast, all of the different things. I could give you report after report on state after state of all of the fraud that was committed in the election, and if you had a really open mind, you would say I was right."

- Installing temporary "acting" officials in senior government roles to avoid Senate confirmation. During Trump's presidency, he made unprecedented use of the "acting" designation, and has made at least one statement that indicates he may do so again.
    - Jan. 6, 2019, "I have acting, and my actings are doing really great. ... I sort of like acting. It gives me more flexibility, do you understand that?"

- Trump plans to reclaim presidential "impoundment authority," withholding congressionally appropriated funds without Congress' approval, supposedly to reduce budget deficits, rolling back impoundment provisions of the 1974 Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act (the Impoundment Act).
    - Agenda47, June 20, 2023 promised to "restore executive branch impoundment authority to cut waste, stop inflation, and crush the Deep State." Agenda47 states that "impoundment is an inherent power of the president" that allows the president to impound funds "to enforce the law more effectively and efficiently." As such, on Day One, Trump would "direct federal agencies to identify portions of their budgets where massive savings are possible through the Impoundment Power, while maintaining the same level of funding for defense, Social Security, and

Medicare." Trump would also take "action to challenge the constitutionality of limits placed on the" Impoundment Act, "the source of Congress's usurpation of Executive Branch powers." In an accompanying video, Trump said:

- "When I return to the White House, I will do everything I can to challenge the Impoundment Control Act in court, and if necessary, get Congress to overturn it. We will overturn it."
- "I will then use the president's long-recognized Impoundment Power to squeeze the bloated federal bureaucracy for massive savings. This will be in the form of tax reductions for you. This will help quickly to stop inflation and slash the deficit."
- "To prepare for this eventuality, on Day One, I will order every federal agency to begin identifying large chunks of their budgets that can be saved through efficiencies and waste reduction using Impoundment."

- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: "To further crack down on rampant waste in the federal government, we're going to bring back presidential impoundment authority, which nobody knows what it is. But it allows the president to go out and cut things and save a fortune for our country, things that make no sense. And there's so many of them. We have so much waste."
- Trump spokesman Jason Miller said in a statement to *The Washington Post*: "As many legal and constitutional scholars have argued, executive impoundment authority is an important tool that American presidents used throughout history to rein in unnecessary and wasteful spending." "President Trump agrees with the experts that this power has been wrongly curtailed in recent decades. As he works to curb Joe Biden's colossal spending binge that triggered uncontrolled inflation, President Trump will seek to reassert impoundment authority to cut waste and restore the proper balance to spending negotiations with Congress."
- Russell Vought has also openly criticized the Impoundment Act, and his think tank, the Center for Renewing America (CRA), is working on plans to limit the Act and give the president more power to unilaterally halt congressionally mandated funding. *The New York Times* later reported that an early 2023 email from a CRA employee outlined 10 agenda topics for papers on legal and policy frameworks. "The third category was 'day one' ideas, meaning those whose legal frameworks were already well established, and which could be put into effect by a president unilaterally." Impoundment is "No. 1 on the list".
  - In June 2024, CRA staff wrote an op-ed and extended paper on reforms to the Act.
  - "Presidents had the ability to impound funds for 200 years until a bad law got passed that we think is unconstitutional under President Nixon," Vought said on Stephen Bannon's podcast in 2023, adding, "We want to go back in a different direction."
  - In a June 20, 2023, Twitter post, Vought wrote: "Making Impoundment Great Again!"
  - In a letter dated the day before Trump left office in 2021, Russell Vought, then Trump's budget director, criticized the "onerous" Impoundment Act as

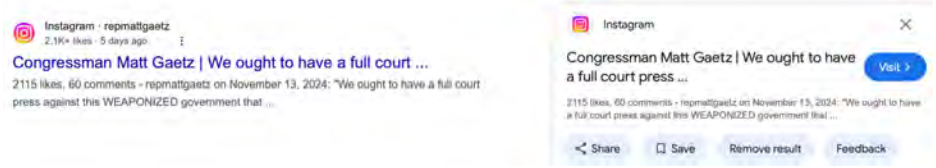
promoting “the very opposite of what good government should be” and fostering a culture of “wasteful and inefficient spending.”

- Mark Paoletta, recently nominated to return as General Counsel at OMB, during his first tenure in 2019, delayed security assistance to Ukraine, despite objections from both OMB and Pentagon staff, which was later determined to be unlawful by the Government Accountability Office. Former Counsel to Vice President Mike Pence and current figure in Trump's transition team, Paoletta is focused on restructuring the Department of Justice (see further below)— and has argued that the Impoundment Control Act “violates the Constitution and breaks with longstanding practice.” In a June 2024 paper written in his capacity as a senior fellow at the Center for Renewing America, he argued that the Act "cannot be reconciled with the text and structure of the Constitution, the original understanding of the Executive’s impoundment power, and Congress’s power of the purse," which he asserted historically functioned as a ceiling on spending, not a mandate to exhaust appropriations.
- *POLITICO* reported that Trump’s former chief of staff at the Environmental Protection Agency, Mandy Gunasekara, warned that on day one Trump would likely halt all pending grant approvals and applications until his administration reviewed them. “Anything that has not yet left the door is going to be paused and then reviewed and then acted upon,” Gunasekara said.

- Trump has long pledged to purge the military ranks, and most recently, reports suggest the transition team is preparing an executive order to remove top military leaders through a "warrior board" while creating a list for potential dismissal, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff and current Chairman Air Force General C.Q. Brown. His pick for defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, has endorsed the plan to carry out such purges. See *Section XVII* below for further details.

- Trump has signaled he would curtail the independence of the Department of Justice and the FBI. He has promised a “top to bottom overhaul to clean out the festering rot[,] corruption” and “sickness that has taken over our Justice Department, our FBI.” Reports suggest that significant steps toward overhauling the DOJ could be put into effect on Trump’s first day in office. Notably, however, Trump and his campaign have yet to publicly offer specific proposals and measures on how they plan to do this. That said, Trump and his team are reported to be “in frequent contact with outside groups” on issues including overhauling the Justice Department..
  - Trump’s and his allies’ attacks on the “deep state” has frequently been directed at the Justice Department and FBI.
    - Nov. 13, 2024, X post, just hours before Trump announced his initial pick to lead the Department of Justice, Matt Gaetz posted across his social media platforms: “We ought to have a full-court press against this WEAPONIZED government that has been turned against our people. And if that means ABOLISHING every one of the three letter agencies, from the FBI to the ATF, I’m ready to get going!” He deleted the posts shortly after

Trump announced him as his DOJ nominee.



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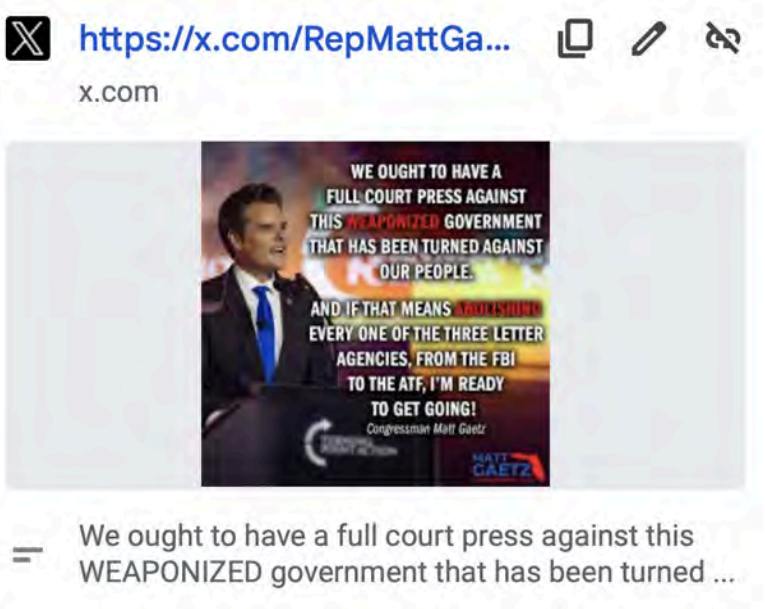

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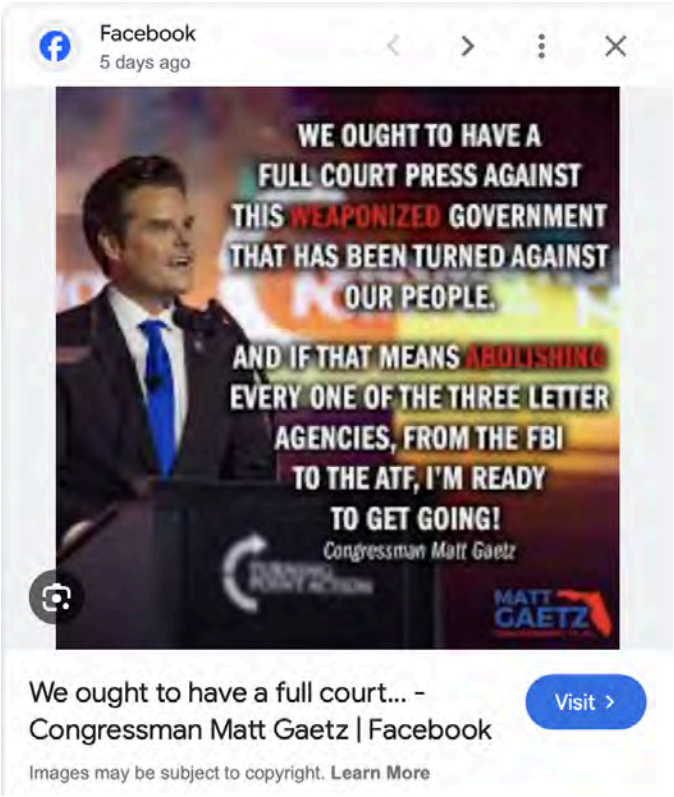

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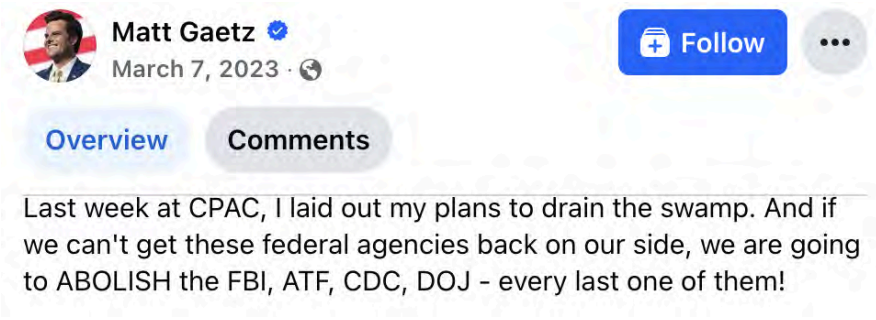
- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: “We will completely overhaul Kamala’s corrupt department of injustice and turn the injustice department back into the best law enforcement agency on the planet.”
- May 25, 2024, Libertarian Party National Convention, Washington DC, Trump vowed to “root out the sickness that has taken over our Justice Department, our FBI, and other agencies.”
- Aug. 7, 2023, Alabama GOP dinner, Trump said: “We are a nation in decline. And now these radical left lunatics want to interfere with our elections by using law enforcement, the DOJ and the FBI. It’s totally corrupt, and we can’t let it happen to our country. 2024 is our final battle. It’s our final and biggest battle ever. With you at my side, we will demolish that horrible deep state.”
- Nov. 15, 2022, Mar-a-Lago, in reference to the FBI and DOJ, Trump said while announcing his campaign: “We must conduct a top to bottom overhaul to clean out the festering rot and corruption of Washington DC.”
- In December 2023, at an event by the Claremont Institute's Center for the American Way, which is on Project 2025’s advisory board, JD Vance suggested that Republicans should stack the Department of Justice with appointees who “actually take a side in the culture war, the side of the

people who elected us, and not just pretend we don't have to take sides at all."

- March 7, 2023, Matt Gaetz wrote on Facebook, "Last week at CPAC, I laid out my plans to drain the swamp. And if we can't get these federal agencies back on our side, we are going to ABOLISH the FBI, ATF, CDC, DOJ - every last one of them!"



- CPAC 2023, Matt Gaetz, Trump's initial pick to lead DOJ, said, "I don't care if it takes every second of our time and every ounce of our energy, we either get this government back on our side or we defund and get rid of, abolish the FBI, CDC, ATF, DOJ, every last one of them, if they do not come to heel"
- February 2023, on the House floor Gaetz said, "There is no timeline in which the ATF, under any administration, would become an ally. It needs to go," adding, "We need to abolish the ATF before they abolish our Second Amendment rights."
- June 2021, Gaetz wrote on Twitter before quickly deleting, "If Democrats want to defund the police, they should start with the FBI."

- *Reuters* reported in May 2024 that, according to nine people involved in the plans, Trump allies, many linked to Project 2025, are drafting proposals to curb the Department of Justice's independence and weaponize the FBI.
  - The plan to curtail DOJ independence is twofold. "First: flood the Justice Department with stalwart conservatives unlikely to say 'no' to controversial orders from the White House. Second: restructure the department so key decisions are concentrated in the hands of administration loyalists rather than career bureaucrats."
  - The FBI, in summary, "would have new constraints on its authority, with many of its responsibilities shifted to other law enforcement agencies."
- At least three key figures driving efforts to restructure the DOJ and FBI—Russell Vought, Mark Paoletta, and Jeffrey Clark—are affiliated with the Center for Renewing America. They advocate for a legal framework designed to fundamentally reshape how presidents interact with the Justice Department.
  - Russell Vought is Founder and President of the Center for Renewing America. He was viewed as a potential White House chief of staff in a second Trump administration and was recently appointed as policy director for the 2024 Republican National Convention's Committee on the Platform.

- Vought has a long history of supporting Trump and his objectives, and he is expected to remain a key figure if Trump wins the election. Top of Vought's agenda is to implement "Radical Constitutionalism" to upend current unconstitutional federal bureaucratic practices.
    - In addition to helping implement "Schedule F" (see above), as *The Washington Post* neatly captures, "When Congress blocked additional funding for Trump's border wall, the budget office in early 2020 redirected billions of dollars from the Pentagon to what became one of the most expensive federal infrastructure projects in U.S. history. And it was Vought's office that held up military aid to Ukraine as Trump pressed the government to dig up dirt on Joe Biden, prompting the president's first impeachment. Vought defied a congressional subpoena during the impeachment inquiry, which he mocked as a '#shamprocess.' The Government Accountability Office concluded that his office broke the law, a claim Vought disputed…After the 2020 election, as Trump refused to concede, Biden officials complained that Vought was impeding the transition. Vought rejected that accusation — but wrote that his office would not 'dismantle this Administration's work.' He was already planning ahead; bylaws for what would become the Center for Renewing America were adopted on the day of Biden's inauguration, records show."
    - In a 2022 essay, Vought wrote, "we are living in a post-Constitutional time," which necessitates his political strategy of "Radical Constitutionalism." As the left has upended the Constitution, Vought argues, conservatives must fight every day to take power from the federal bureaucracy and centralize authority in the Oval Office. "Our need is not just to win congressional majorities that blame the other side or fill seats on court benches to meddle at the margins." "It is to cast ourselves as dissidents of the current regime and to put on our shoulders the full weight of envisioning, articulating, and defending what a Radical Constitutionalism requires in the late hour that our country finds itself in, and then to do it."
    - Vought drafted a key chapter of the Heritage Foundation's "Project 2025" mandate, titled "Executive Office of the President of the United States," which advances a case for unleashing unchecked presidential power. According to Vought, a "sprawling federal bureaucracy," contrary to the intent of the Constitution, "is carrying out its own policy

plans and preferences—or, worse yet, the policy plans and preferences of a radical, supposedly 'woke' faction of the country." "The modern conservative President's task is to limit, control, and direct the executive branch on behalf of the American people." Accordingly, "it is the President's agenda that should matter to the departments and agencies," not their own.

    - *The New York Times* later reported that an early 2023 email from a CRA employee outlined 10 agenda topics for papers on legal and policy frameworks. "The third category was 'day one' ideas, meaning those whose legal frameworks were already well established, and which could be put into effect by a president unilaterally." "[A]dvocating for the elimination of the post-Watergate norm of Justice Department investigative independence from the White House" is "No. 5" on that list of day one plans.
    - In June 2024, Vought said he believes that "The whole notion of independent agencies is anathema from the standpoint of the Constitution." In a July 2024 interview, Vought admitted to leading a team of staffers drafting regulations, executive orders, and secretarial memos for Project 2025's "180-Day Transition Playbook." He estimated that around 80% of his time is currently "working on the plans of what's necessary to take control of these bureaucracies, and we are working doggedly on that, whether it's destroying their agency's notion of independence," which includes the notion that they "are independent from the president."

- *The Washington Post* reported in June 2024 that, based on "interviews with people involved in the planning, a review of Vought's public remarks and writings, and Center for Renewing America correspondence obtained by The Post," Vought has helped draft proposals to seize more control over the Justice Department (giving the president more oversight) and "gut the FBI." Vought wrote in a 2023 statement to *The New York Times* that the Justice Department was "ground zero for the weaponization of the government against the American people." He added, "Conservatives are waking up to the fact that federal law enforcement is weaponized against them and as a result are embracing paradigm-shifting policies to reverse that trend."
- At a Heritage Foundation event in 2023, Vought is reported to have said: "The Department of Justice is not an independent agency. Anyone who brings that up in the White House, I want them out of the meeting," adding, "That is something you have to do on the

outside. You can have the best personnel, you can have the best policy. At the paradigm level, if you haven't adopted what I would call radical constitutionalism to get out of the precedents of the last 100 years and get back to what would Thomas Jefferson or James Madison do in this meeting. How would he approach the issue, not just from what the Constitution says, but how it was devised to have separation of powers and competition between the branches. If we can't have that conversation, we are not saving the country and the Department of Justice is the lead dog in that conversation. It's why the attorney general is such a vital pick. It's why the [Justice Department's] Office of Legal Counsel is such an important job. Everything we do has to go through the Office of Legal Counsel."

- Note that Vought also supports prosecuting those who investigated or prosecuted Trump or his allies. He told Charlie Kirk on his podcast that "it can't just be hearings." "It has to be investigations, an army of investigators that lead to firm convictions."

- CRA senior fellow Mark Paoletta was Counsel to Vice President Mike Pence, the former General Counsel at OMB under President Trump, and was recently nominated to serve again as General Counsel at OMB in the upcoming administration. Paoletta is reportedly a leading figure helping Trump's transition team craft its DOJ "policy playbook" focused on restructuring the Department of Justice. Paoletta and Vought helped craft the national emergency plan to fund the border wall under the Trump administration, and he was reported back in 2023 by *The New York Times* as likely to serve in a second Trump administration. Paoletta also believes in strong presidential control over the Justice Department, arguing that the president should directly command its focus.
  - Nov. 13, 2024, Mark Paoletta, X post, "Career DOJ lawyers must be fully committed to implementing President Trump's policies or they should leave or be fired. … I hope DOJ attorneys will embrace their responsibility to implement President Trump's agenda. That is their constitutional duty. If the president wants to deport illegal aliens, secure the border, ban race-based "affirmative action" and DEI, investigate antisemitism, halt Big Tech censorship, grant pardons and commutations to Jan 6th defendants, he has every right to expect that these perfectly lawful policies are implemented, and it is absolutely unacceptable for career employees to seek to thwart this policy agenda. … Any civil servant who claims their actions to resist these policy initiatives will be doing so to uphold the rule of law is being dishonest. They are undermining the rule of law and subverting democracy and should be fired. … Career attorneys who refuse to carry out the policies of the President because they disagree with him are not protecting the rule of law

and democracy; they are subverting it. The American people elected President Trump to implement his agenda, and the career staff took it upon themselves to thwart it, not because it was a threat to democracy but because they disagreed with the policies. … The Deep State should not be allowed to subvert the will of the American people. As I stated in my prior post, those DOJ career staff who refuse to implement in good faith President Trump's agenda should leave. Those who resist by trying to sabotage the duly-elected President's agenda should be terminated for failing to do their jobs."

    - Nov. 13, 2024, responding to Paoletta's post, Cleta Mitchell wrote, "Every lawyer in the Voting Section and likely in the Civil Rights Division needs to be terminated. They are not supportive of Pres Trump or MAGA. There has to be a reckoning. These are leftwing activists who have come from and should return to their leftwing organizations."

- Nov. 11, 2024, post on X, stated that DOJ lawyers and career employees are "required" to "help implement" the Trump "agenda" and could be terminated if they "resist[ ]." His comment was in response to a *POLITICO* report detailing widespread concerns among DOJ lawyers about being asked to support or defend policies they consider "unethical or illegal." Part of his post read, "If these career DOJ employees won't implement President Trump's program in good faith, they should leave. Those employees who engage in so-called 'resistance' against the duly-elected President's lawful agenda would be subverting American democracy. Finally, those that take such actions would be subject to disciplinary measures, including termination."
- Nov. 7, 2024, X post: "The President has a duty to supervise the types of cases DOJ should focus on and can intervene to direct DOJ on specific cases. He is the duly elected chief executive and he has every right to make sure the executive branch, including the DOJ, is implementing his agenda. For example, the President could direct DOJ to significantly increase resources to prosecute criminals at the highest charging level and to seek maximum sentences, devote maximum resources to deporting illegal aliens, act against sanctuary cities who defy and obstruct federal law enforcement efforts, and seek restoration of death penalty in all possible cases for horrific crimes, including for drug trafficking and child molestation and rape. … The President should supervise and direct the DOJ to implement his agenda."
- July 30, 2024, *Daily Caller* op-ed, Paoletta wrote, "One of the most important tasks for a newly-elected President Trump is to assert operational control over the Department of Justice's (DOJ) agenda

and decision-making, including on specific prosecutions. … The long history of direct presidential control over DOJ work, including directing specific prosecutions, proves that assertions of DOJ independence are false, ahistorical and anti-democratic. … A newly-elected President Trump should appoint an Attorney General who shares the same goals and agenda and one who the President can rely on to implement his agenda, including with respect to specific cases. But to the extent that President Trump believes he must directly exercise control over the Department's actions, he has every right to do this. In fact, it is his constitutional responsibility. If the Attorney General refuses to carry out the President's orders, he is obligated to resign or be fired by the President. … No president should ever use the awesome prosecutorial powers of the United States government to pursue someone simply because they are a political opponent or for personal vendetta reasons. President Trump would never do that. That's not to say that being a political adversary of a President gives you protection from prosecution if you do in fact violate the law. Whether friend or foe, no one is above the law.

    - Nov. 1, 2023, *The New York Times*, reported Paoletta as saying, "I believe a president doesn't need to be so hands-off with the D.O.J.," and adding, "It's not an independent agency, and he is the head of the executive branch. A president has every right to direct D.O.J. to look at items that are his policy priorities and other matters of national importance."

- Jeffrey Clark is a CRA senior fellow and director of litigation. He oversaw the DOJ's civil and environmental divisions and, alongside Trump, sought to overturn the 2020 election. *The New York Times* reported in August 2024 that Clark co-leads "Project 2025's Justice Department policy efforts."
    - In a May 2023 paper for the Center for Renewing America, titled, "The U.S. Justice Department is not independent," Clark offered a detailed preview of potential plans to undermine DOJ independence, which *The New York Times* said, "will most likely serve as a blueprint for a second Trump administration."
    - In July 2023, Clark joined Steve Bannon's *War Room* podcast and criticized the idea that the Justice Department must remain free from White House pressure, arguing that the separation, established after Nixon's Watergate scandal, is "very pernicious." Past administrations put in "post-Watergate 'norms' that say the president actually can't make decisions about law enforcement," Clark said. "It's ridiculous, it's unconstitutional, and the reason why they're having a meltdown, Steve, is that the queen position in the administrative state is the Justice Department." "To say that the Justice Department is not independent is sort of the ultimate

heresy," Clark added. "This is all just post-Watergate 'norms.' Who cares about post-Watergate norms?" Clark called the DOJ a "meta agency," capturing the "commanding heights of the administrative state."

- Clark told *The New York Times*, "Biden and D.O.J. are baying for Trump's blood so they can put fear into America." "The Constitution and our Article IV 'Republican Form of Government' cannot survive like this."
- "I think that the supposedly independent DOJ is an illusion," Clark told *The Washington Post*.

- *Additionally, Reuters* reported that two Trump allies linked to "Project 2025"—Steve Bradbury, former Principal Deputy and Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel at DOJ, who briefly served as Trump's acting Transportation Secretary and is a current fellow at The Heritage Foundation, and Gene Hamilton, a senior Justice Department official under Trump and current Vice President and General Counsel of America First Legal—said that "they support eliminating the FBI's general counsel," a decision that would "force the bureau to receive legal guidance from people closer to Trump's attorney general in the chain-of-command and limit the FBI's ability to conduct investigations without close political oversight, according to several Trump supporters and legal professionals with knowledge of the department's workings."
  - Bradbury wrote a memo in July 2023 setting out proposals to "fix the FBI."
  - Hamilton wrote "Project 2025's" chapter on the Justice Department. "DOJ has become a bloated bureaucracy with a critical core of personnel who are infatuated with the perpetuation of a radical liberal agenda and the defeat of perceived political enemies," Hamilton wrote, concluding that "[a]nything other than a top-to-bottom overhaul will only further erode the trust of significant portions of the American people and, in turn, harm the very fabric that holds together our constitutional republic."
  - Bradbury and Hamilton also support changes to the DOJ's chain of command so the FBI director reports to a pair of politically-appointed assistant attorneys general, instead of the deputy attorney general.
- According to *Reuters*, many Trump allies linked to Project 2025 "are also combing through federal regulations for novel ways to bring stalwart conservatives into the Justice Department at the start of a potential Trump term." Some of those allies "also want to expand the use of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, an obscure statute that allows departments to bring in outside experts with the help of non-profits."
  - Steve Bannon made similar comments after *Reuters* reporting.

- Trump's attack on federal agencies may well include the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which has the second-largest employee workforce and third-largest budget of any U.S. federal agency.
    - Over the past year of campaigning Trump has directed particular criticism at the VA. In fact, as a day one promise he has vowed to renew his no longer used Trump-era law—Section 714 of the Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 (VA Accountability Act)—that allowed officials to suspend, demote, or fire employees without first allowing them the opportunity to improve their performance "by weakening their civil service protections." Thousands were let go, mainly impacting "lower-level VA employees such as housekeepers, food service workers, and nursing assistants." Many of his plans align with Project 2025, with a chapter of its mandate focused on dismantling the VA (pp. 641-655), authored by Brooks Tucker, who served as chief of staff for former VA secretary Robert Wilkie under the Trump administration. *The Washington Examiner* reported in May 2021 that Wilkie, a visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation's Center for National Defense, celebrated Trump-era mass firings of VA employees as one of his greatest achievements, and Trump has recently been referring to those firings.
    - Indeed, as we note in *Section XVII*, Hegseth served as Executive Director of the Koch-funded Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) from 2012 to 2016, which *The Washington Post* described in 2016 as "one of the most vocal critics of the [Department of Veterans Affair] since the wait time scandal that unfolded in 2014." Under his tenure, the group advocated for reducing the independence of the Department of Veterans Affair—including privatizing the VA into an "independent, government-chartered nonprofit corporation"—and making it easier to fire VA employees as part of an effort to, in Hegseth's words, "overhaul[ ] a dysfunctional and bureaucratic culture that has infected VA at all levels."
    - August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, speaking on the VA Accountability Act, Trump said: "The veterans had some horrible, horrible people in there, sadists, bad people. They treated our veterans very badly because they weren't in prime time … and they were sadists and a lot of other things, thousands, 9000 of them. And it was a shocking act of betrayal, we had to fire. We fired 9000 people that were bad, and we replaced them with good people." He added: "Upon my inauguration, we will take the sadists that Kamala Harris let in and escort them from the VA hospitals and get them the hell out of our federal buildings and away from our great men and women, because those who mistreat our veterans will not be protected. They will be terminated. We're going to terminate them. We're going to get them out."
    - May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, speaking on his disapproval of medical protections for veterans, Trump said: "And then also with the veterans…You know, it's not primetime, necessarily for them. And they were getting beat up. We had, we have sadists, we have thieves, sadists, but we had sadists that did bad things to our people, to our heroes, bad, bad things. And we couldn't fire them because of civil service laws and various other reasons, unions a little bit, but civil service, you

couldn't fire them. No matter what they did, they could kill somebody, you couldn't fire them. And they'd beat the hell out of our people. And I was able to fire 9,000 sadists and bad people. Get them out and replace them with people that loved our veterans. And it was a whole different place. But it's, it's fairly rapidly morphing back into what it's, I've seen it…"

- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "For our great veterans we passed VA Accountability and VA Choice. That was a big deal. On accountability, as you know, you, you had 9,000 people in the Veterans Administration that were sadists and thieves and bad guys, bullies. And you couldn't fire them because of civil service. I had it passed through Congress. We fired 9,000" and replaced them with "great people, with heart, that love our veterans."
- Aug. 8, 2023, Windham, NH, Trump outlined his plans for veterans, promising to bring back his VA Accountability Act on his first day in office, as well as fire "every corrupt VA bureaucrat," referring to some "sadists." "Crooked Joe Biden has been a disaster for American veterans," Trump said. "As one of his first acts in office, Biden gutted my historic VA reforms. He gutted them out, making it [harder] to remove bad VA employees from the job in a shocking act of betrayal of America's veterans, as well as the tens of thousands of dedicated professionals." He said on his first day in office, he will bring the VA Accountability Act "back in full force" and "we already have the legislation passed. So, I don't have to go through Congress." "All we have to do is make it work," he said, adding, "The hardest part is done and [I will] direct my Secretary of Veterans Affairs to fire every corrupt VA bureaucrat who Joe Biden has outrageously refused to remove from the job or put back in the job."
- June 10, 2023, North Carolina Republican Convention, Trump claimed that, when he entered the White House, there were "sadists" and "thieves" working at the VA who "would beat up old wonderful soldiers. Beat the hell out of them…and we weren't allowed to fire them."
- Sept. 12, 2019, remarks to the House GOP conference retreat, Trump said: "Together, we enacted the VA Accountability Act, so that anyone who mistreats or abuses our great veterans can be promptly fired. There was a time you couldn't fire anyone, no matter how they treated our veterans, whether they stole or they were sadists. And we had some of them, too. You couldn't fire them, and now we can do it very, very quickly and easily. They don't treat our veterans well. We get them out. Since then, we've removed more than 7,600 employees who failed to give our vets the care they so richly deserve."

- Trump has vowed to clamp down on federal regulations and subject independent agency action to presidential review.
  - Nov. 6, 2024, *NPR* interview, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said President Trump instructed him to get "the corruption and the conflicts out of the regulatory agencies."

        - *POLITICO* reported that Kennedy Jr. initiated a movement to "make America healthy again" by replacing officials in agencies he claims are beholden to the industries they oversee,
    - April 14, 2023, Truth Social: Trump said, "Next, I will bring the independent regulatory agencies, such as the FCC and the FTC, back under Presidential authority, as the Constitution demands. These agencies do not get to become a fourth branch of government, issuing rules and edicts all by themselves. And that's what they've been doing. We will require that they submit any regulations they are considering for White House review."
        - April 16, 2023, Agenda47, Trump repeated the same promise.

- Trump has suggested that the president should have a "say" in setting interest rates, a move that would significantly erode the Federal Reserve's independence.
    - Aug. 8, 2024, Mar-a-Lago, FL, Trump said at a news conference: "I feel that the president should have at least say in there, yeah, I feel that strongly." "I think I have a better instinct than, in many cases, people that would be on the Federal Reserve, or the chairman."
    - The *Wall Street Journal* reported on April 23, 2024, that a small group of Trump allies has produced a nearly 10-page document outlining proposals that would attempt to significantly erode the Federal Reserve's independence and give the president new powers to affect monetary policies. The proposals argue that the central bank should first consult with Trump as president on setting interest rates, and would give Trump the power to remove Jerome Powell as Chair of the Federal Reserve before his term ends in 2026. The Journal said it could not confirm whether Trump was aware of or signed off on the proposals, but some people close to the efforts said they believe the work received Trump's blessing.

- "[M]ove parts of the federal bureaucracy outside of the Washington Swamp … Up to 100,000 government positions could be moved out of Washington."
    - Note that in 2019 the Trump administration moved the headquarters of the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management to Grand Junction, Colorado, and two agencies within the Department of Agriculture—Economic Research Service (ERS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)—to Kansas City. The moves impacted diversity, led to swathes of employees leaving their positions, reduced productivity and, unlike promised, cost the taxpayers millions of dollars.

- Trump plans to install lawyers who will bless his radical agenda.

- Trump has wrongly claimed that the Constitution gives the president the power to do whatever he wants.
    - June 19, 2019, Trump said: "I had absolutely Article II powers. I could've done anything I wanted. I don't even bring it up because we don't even get there. Absolutely, I have Article II. We could have used that instead. I wouldn't even

have to bother talking to you about all the other things. I wouldn't have to talk to you about conflicts. I could have fired [Special Counsel Robert] Mueller for conflicts. I could have fired anybody."

- July 23, 2019, Trump said: "Then I have an Article 2, where I have the right to do whatever I want as President. But I don't even talk about that."

- Russell Vought has endorsed readopting the Holman Rule, which would allow members of Congress to target existing funding for agencies or individual federal employees.
  - In a September 26, 2023, Twitter post, Vought wrote: "The House should use its Holman rule this week to defund the specific positions of these individuals currently in government when it considers the DOD and foreign operations bills later this week."
  - On January 12, 2023, while on Steve Bannon's War Room podcast, guest-hosted by Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL), Vought advocated for using the Holman Rule to target and remove the anonymity of individual bureaucrats and to fight against the deep state. He commented, "The Holman Rule guarantees that career bureaucrats are no longer anonymous and are placed in the crosshairs, in the arena, just like you are. Just like I am. So that is a game changer in having the appropriations debate. Also, not just what the message it sends, but the extent to which it itself focuses the appropriations process on the deep state, on the administrative state that exists, that is now woke, and it's weaponized. And that has to be the biggest fiscal priority that we have, to go after the woke and weaponized bureaucracy."

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II. Trump's Transition Tactics: Bypassing Ethics and Precedent

- Trump and his transition team have broadly disregarded established norms of the transition process, missing key deadlines and failing to meet requirements under the Presidential Transition Act (PTA), which include signing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that include ethics statements and secrecy agreements, and disclosing donors to the transition. This approach has heightened concerns about a chaotic transfer of power, undermining national security and increasing the likelihood of members of the administration prioritizing personal gain over public service, with ethics potentially taking a backseat to consolidating White House control.
  - The PTA sets out expectations for the transition process, but most of its elements–like the series of MOUs–are not enforceable legal obligations. Indeed, the PTA states that the MOUs are to be established "to the maximum extent practicable".
  - First, the General Services Administration (GSA) MOU grants both candidates' potential transition teams access to government resources such as office space, IT services, and staff support. The PTA sets a deadline of September 1 for the MOU to be agreed. The transition team appears unlikely to sign the GSA MOU, according to incoming Chief of Staff Susie Wiles. Instead, the team plans to fund

the transition privately, operate out of private facilities, and rely on its own "existing security and information protections" for handling sensitive data. Wiles described the team as a "self-sufficient organization" and claimed that forgoing government funding would "save taxpayers' hard-earned money."

- Second, the White House MOU provides access to federal agency employees, documents, and other essential information, and lays the groundwork for candidates potential transition teams to receive necessary security clearances for classified information. The PTA sets a deadline of October 1 for the MOU to be agreed. The GSA and White House MOUs require robust ethics plans, including a commitment by the transition team to avoid conflicts of interest, alongside compliance with transparency rules mandating the disclosure of private donors funding the transition, capped at $5,000 per donor. The ethics plan must also address how Trump will avoid conflicts during his term.
- Trump's transition team eventually signed the White House MOU, on November 26, 2024. However, although the signed memo largely adhered to standard guidelines—such as commitments by transition team members to avoid conflicts of interest and protect sensitive information—it notably excluded a pledge from Trump addressing his own conflicts of interest, as required by the PTA.
- By avoiding the GSA agreement, Trump sidesteps transparency requirements, including donor disclosure rules that typically cap contributions to the transition at $5,000, and bypasses ethics commitments expected of incoming administrations. This allows him to fund the transition privately while avoiding scrutiny of his extensive business interests—including cryptocurrency ventures, Truth Social, and real estate holdings—without committing to divestment. "The current Trump transition … is set up as a 'dark money' nonprofit," *The New York Times* wrote.
    - In his Nov. 25, 2024 Interview with *Time*, Trump said he has "no problem disclosing anything," and Taylor Budowich, one of his incoming deputy chiefs of staff, told *Time* that there would be an announcement that week.
- Transition experts warn that the delays and lack of cooperation could undermine government continuity and preparedness on critical issues, including national security. Trump's apparent reluctance to disengage from his business holdings has raised additional concerns about diminished ethics oversight in the new administration, heightened risks of conflicts of interest, prioritized personal gain over public good, and increased opportunities for foreign and corporate influence over policy through financial ties to his enterprises.
    - In his previous administration, Trump accumulated over 3,400 conflicts of interest, as documented by CREW, stemming from his refusal to separate his business interests from his presidential duties. These conflicts included frequent visits to his own properties—503 times, accounting for a third of his presidency—where he hosted public officials, foreign dignitaries, and political events. Over 2,000 visits by public officials, including 145 foreign officials from 75 governments, underscored concerns about access and influence. Trump properties were venues for 231 events by special interests, political groups, and foreign governments, funneling millions into

his businesses, with political groups alone spending over $23 million since his 2015 presidential bid. Additionally, Trump promoted his properties 426 times in official capacities and secured 67 foreign trademarks, including 46 from China during critical trade negotiations. These actions exemplify the persistent overlap of his public office and private financial interests. This concern is heightened by his growing ties to tech moguls, foreign governments, and new ventures like Truth Social, all of which present pathways for influence and potential ethical violations.

- Trump's transition team reportedly considered bypassing traditional FBI background checks for appointees, including Cabinet-level positions. Although the transition announced on Dec. 3 that they had agreed to the checks, the full extent to which they will be relied upon is still unknown. According to the *New York Times*, "Despite the signing of the agreement, it remains unclear whether Mr. Trump's team plans to send the names of all officials requiring a security clearance or Senate confirmation to the F.B.I. for vetting. The announcement did not say whether Mr. Trump would require his appointees to undergo the process or was simply allowing the F.B.I. to begin looking at those who are willing to submit to its scrutiny."
    - On October 27, 2024, the *Times* revealed that a group of Trump advisers, including Boris Epshteyn, had circulated a memo urging Trump to skip FBI background checks and promptly authorize security clearances for "a large number" of appointees if he won reelection.The proposal suggested using private firms to conduct these checks during the transition, replacing the FBI's traditional role. Upon taking the oath on Inauguration Day, Trump would promptly grant an extensive group access to classified secrets. Sources later confirmed the memo's existence to CNN.
    - On November 15, 2024, CNN reported that Trump's transition team was bypassing the traditional FBI background check process for at least some Cabinet-level appointments, "bucking a long-established norm in Washington." Instead, the team is reportedly conducting its own internal vetting of candidates for top roles using private companies, CNN said.
    - According to *The Washington Post*, the transition team has relied on "internal campaign aides, allied groups, and outside law firms" for vetting Cabinet nominees. This includes Stanley Woodward, a D.C. attorney and Trump campaign lawyer who has represented January 6 rioters, Steve Bannon, and Trump associates involved in the classified documents case.
    - On November 26, 2024, *The Guardian* had said Trump's transition team plans to grant immediate security clearances to all political appointees on January 20, bypassing the standard FBI background checks that typically precede such clearances.
    - As CNN rightly noted, Trump has the authority to override vetting concerns and grant security clearances once he is inaugurated on January 20. However, until that point, individuals tapped for key positions would ordinarily be unable to receive classified briefings if the formal vetting process continues to be bypassed.

The Senate conducts its own checks, but they are more limited in scope and depend on consent to access certain information.

- These possibilities mirror tactics from Trump's first term.
  - In 2018, Trump bypassed the standard vetting process and instructed his chief of staff, John Kelly, to grant Jared Kushner a security clearance after months of facing questions about his background check (for reasons publicly unknown). The decision prompted internal memos from senior officials expressing serious concerns, including from Kelly and White House Counsel Donald McGahn.
  - In March 2019, a White House Personnel Security Office manager testified before the House Committee on Oversight and Reform in a private interview that senior officials in the Trump administration had overridden career staff recommendations to deny clearances for at least 25 officials and contractors due to "disqualifying issues" that posed potential risks to national security—one of whom appeared to be Kushner.
- Project 2025 and others have also called for significant changes to the security clearance protocols.
  - Chapter 2 of Project 2025's "Mandate," authored by Russ Vought, states: "The accountable senior officials should be empowered to identify, recruit, clear, and hire staff who are aligned with and willing to shepherd the President's national security priorities. NSC staff leads, under the direction of the NSA, should have the discretion to reduce the number of positions that need high-level clearances, and the NSC should be adequately resourced and authorized to adjudicate and hold security clearances internally with investigators who work directly for the NSC and whose sole task is to clear NSC officials. If certain staff are determined not to need high-level clearances, the question becomes whether they should be part of the NSC at all." pp. 51-52.
  - A December 2023 policy paper by Vought's think tank, the Center for Renewing America (CRA), called for giving the president and and top appointees direct control over granting clearances. The author of the paper, CRA employee Scott Glabe, recommended issuing "day-one guidance to make crystal clear that agency heads may grant, suspend, or revoke security clearances—notwithstanding the recommendations of subordinates—if they determine that doing so is clearly consistent with the interests of national security." NB: Glabe is the current General Counsel at Trump Media & Technology Group Corp., the company behind Truth Social. He also served under the Trump administration, first as the President's special assistant and then as a Homeland Security official.

- In an unprecedented move, Trump reportedly has considered plans to circumvent Senate approval and install top-level Cabinet officials by orchestrating intrasession recess appointments while the chambers of Congress are adjourned. If he fails to have the chambers agree on adjourning, Trump, likely backed by the GOP-led House, reportedly is

considering a never-before-used constitutional authority under Article II, Section 3 to force Congress into recess for at least 10 days but "to such Time as he shall think proper," paving the way for a legal and constitutional showdown. (*New York Times*; *The Washington Post*; *The Atlantic*; *Forbes*; *USA Today*; *Axios*)

- What Trump has said:
  - Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: Asked whether he would use recess appointments, Trump said, "I really don't care how they get them approved, as long as they get them approved." Adding, "It's up to the Senate. But I think I have a very good relationship with Senator Thune and the others, all of them."
  - Nov. 10, 2024, post on X by Trump stated, "Any Republican Senator seeking the coveted LEADERSHIP position in the United States Senate must agree to Recess Appointments (in the Senate!), without which we will not be able to get people confirmed in a timely manner. Sometimes the votes can take two years, or more. This is what they did four years ago, and we cannot let it happen again. We need positions filled IMMEDIATELY! Additionally, no Judges should be approved during this period of time because the Democrats are looking to ram through their Judges as the Republicans fight over Leadership. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. THANK YOU!"
- What GOP leadership have said:
  - Nov. 17, 2024, *Fox News Sunday* interview, House Speaker Mike Johnson addressed the possibility of supporting recess appointments, saying, "We'll evaluate that at the appropriate time, and we'll make the appropriate decision. There may be a function for that; we'll have to see how it plays out.".
    - Johnson emphasized the president's authority to select his Cabinet. "Listen, I believe in the principle of the president being able to choose his team, and that used to not be a controversial notion," he said.
    - Highlighting the challenges of a divided government and partisan tensions, he added, "I wish it were not. I wish the Senate would simply do its job of advice and consent, and allow the president to put the persons in his Cabinet of his choosing. But if this thing bogs down, it would be a great detriment to the country, to the American people. Remember, they just delivered a mandate to the president, an overwhelming popular vote victory, and of course Electoral College victory, and they have sent the message that 'America First' policies are — should be the rule of the day."
    - When questioned about criticism of recess appointments as potentially "anti-constitutional" and undermining the Senate's role as a check on executive power, Johnson expressed understanding for those concerns. "I'm sympathetic to all these arguments," he said, adding, in a purported reaffirmation of his commitment to

constitutional principles, “I’ve demonstrated over and over that we will have fidelity to our oath, which is to uphold the Constitution. So we evaluate all these things very carefully.”

- Nov. 10, 2024, post on X, Republican Senate Leader John Thune took to X to affirm his commitment to fulfilling Trump’s demand: “We must act quickly and decisively to get the president’s nominees in place as soon as possible, & all options are on the table to make that happen, including recess appointments. We cannot let Schumer and Senate Dems block the will of the American people.”

- Key MAGA advocates and Trump allies are backing recess appointments:
  - Nov. 17, 2024, Trump ally Jeff Clark and Anthony Licata, fellows at Russ Vought’s Center for Renewing America, have published a piece asserting that President-elect Donald Trump would be justified in using recess appointments to fill key positions in his administration.“Given the extensive delays experienced during his first administration in getting the Senate to approve his nominees expeditiously, President-elect Donald Trump recently proposed the use of recess appointments, if necessary, to briskly stand up his new administration early next year. The question is whether the law and our history confirms the President’s belief that he should be allowed to assemble his Cabinet quickly via recess appointments? The answer is ‘yes.’”
  - Nov. 18, 2024, Jeff Clark, during an appearance on Steve Bannon’s *War Room* podcast, urged Trump to invoke the recess appointment power, saying, “there are many of us who think that he [Trump] should” use this authority to “set right the boundaries between the branches of the government.” During the same show, Mike Davis—who has been described to be among Trump “chief legal” defenders, and to be advising the transition team on DOJ matters—said, “Every option should be on the table.”
  - Nov. 17, 2024, right-wing media personality Mike Crispi wrote on X: “Recess appointments solves all. It’s time to WIN!”
  - Nov. 15, 2024, Ric Grenell, a former Trump administration official, urged Senate Republicans during an interview with Newsmax’s Greg Kelly to “at the very minimum, give him [Trump] a recess appointment and let the reform start.”
  - Nov. 14, 2024, responding to a video of John Thune, Fox News host Laura Ingraham remarked, “I certainly hope that as they carry out their advise-and-consent role, Republican senators remember that Donald Trump is the reason they even have a majority.”
  - Nov. 15, 2024, far-right activist and Trump ally Laura Loomer lashed out at Senate Majority Leader-elect John Thune (R-SD) after he indicated the Senate might have difficulty gathering enough votes for a recess. Loomer wrote: “The joke is on everyone who fell for the unity nonsense this

election season. Senate Republicans are about to screw President Trump…"

- Nov. 11, 2024, Steve Bannon urged his audience on *War Room* to call their senators and push for a 15-day recess to allow Trump to appoint his cabinet. Bannon emphasized that "we need you, when you call," to tell your senator "the president needs 15 days recess — recess days in the first hundred."

- Trump's Move To Orchestrate A Congressional Intrasession Recess:
  - Trump has publicly expressed his intent to use intrassession (not intersession) recess appointments in his return to office, despite legal and procedural constraints. Senate Majority Leader John Thune and House Speaker Mike Johnson have expressed support for the proposed policy. However, some Republicans in both chambers have voiced opposition.
  - The move has been criticized by many from across the political spectrum as a scheme to circumvent Senate and constitutional protections. *The Wall Street Journal*'s editorial board called the move "anti-constitutional."
  - Intersession recess appointments happen when the Senate is on break between two sessions of Congress, like at the end of one year and before the next starts, while intrasession appointments happen during breaks within a session, like summer or holiday recesses. The main difference is timing, and intrasession appointments are more controversial because the Senate is technically still in session and could reconvene quickly. (*CRS*; *CRS*) A 2014 Supreme Court case, *NLRB v. Canning*, clarified that the Senate must be on a break of at least 10 days for either type of appointment to be valid. The majority left open both options, but some have suggested that Justice Scalia's concurrence, joined by Chief Justice Roberts, Justice Thomas, and Justice Alito, could lead to challenges that limit appointments to "intersession recesses" and only for vacancies that arise during those recesses, with Scalia condemning the broader use as a "tragedy" undermining "separation-of-powers jurisprudence."
  - The recess period would need to be for at least 10 days and would take place on or shortly after January 20, 2025. The Constitution requires that neither chamber of Congress may adjourn for more than three days without the approval of the other. As *The Hill* noted, this provision gives the House, and by extension its Speaker, influence over whether Trump could create the conditions necessary for recess appointments to his Cabinet.
  - During Trump's first term. Congress used "pro forma" sessions—brief, ceremonial meetings held every three days to comply with constitutional requirements—to block the possibility of recess appointments and prevent actions like pocket vetoes.
  - Trump's suggestion that he faced significant delay in installing his Cabinet roles during his first term is false. During his first term, Trump's nominees faced an average 115-day confirmation delay across all appointee levels. But it took on average just under 31 days to confirm his Cabinet-level

picks. As *Reuters* noted, “Most of Trump's Cabinet picks easily won confirmation during his first 2017-2021 term in office.” For example, his Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Homeland Security were confirmed by the Senate on January 20, 2017; his Secretary of State on February 1; Attorney General on February 8; and Secretary of the Treasury on February 13.

- While past presidents have used recess appointments—Bill Clinton made 139, George W. Bush made 171, and Barack Obama made 32—none have utilized the maneuver to fill top-level Cabinet positions as Trump plans to do, marking a significant departure from precedent. Alexander Hamilton, in Federalist No. 67, makes plain that this “auxiliary method of appointment” is “nothing more than a supplement” to the “general mode of appointing officers of the United States” and is to be used “in cases to which the general method was inadequate.”

- Trump May Attempt to Unilaterally Adjourn Congress:
  - While Trump has not publicly confirmed the plan, some reports have suggested he is considering forcing Congress to adjourn with the support of House Speaker Mike Johnson and the GOP-led House, a move many have said could face robust legal challenge before the U.S. Supreme Court. Trump reportedly considered forcing a congressional recess in April 2020 during the COVID-19 crisis.
  - Article II, Section 3 reads, in relevant part: “On extraordinary Occasions ... in Case of Disagreement” between the chambers of Congress “with respect to the Time of Adjournment,” the President “may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper.”
  - As *The Atlantic* describes, “Trump could not wave away Congress on his own. The Constitution says the president can adjourn Congress only ‘in case of disagreement’ between the House and the Senate on when the chambers should recess, and for how long. One of the chambers would first have to pass a resolution to adjourn for at least 10 days. If the other agrees to the measure, Trump gets his recess appointments. But even if one refuses—most likely the Senate, in this case—Trump could essentially play the role of tiebreaker and declare Congress adjourned.” “The move would surely prompt a legal challenge, which the Supreme Court might have to decide, setting up a confrontation that would reveal how much power both Republican lawmakers and the Court’s conservative majority will allow Trump to seize.”
  - The move has been historically dismissed as unfit and crisis-inducing:
    - Responding to news that Trump could use the power in 2025, conservative scholar Edward Whelan described the scenario as a “cockamamie scheme” in a recent *Washington Post* opinion piece, urging Speaker Mike Johnson to denounce it and refuse its implementation.

- Amid 2020 reports of Trump contemplating using the power, Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) warned it would "provoke a true constitutional crisis" and called a tactic straight out of "a dictator's handbook."
- In 1788, Hamilton warned in Federalist No. 76 that the power "would tend greatly to prevent the appointment of unfit characters," including those "who had no other merit than that … of possessing the necessary insignificance and pliancy to render them the obsequious instruments of [the president's] pleasure."

III. Day 1 Dictatorship Promise: Immigration

- Dec. 6, 2023, Davenport, Iowa: Sean Hannity asked Trump whether Trump intended to abuse power or break the law, to which Trump answered, "Except for day one. I want to close the border, and I want to drill, drill, drill." Trump then immediately doubled down on the exchange, describing it for the audience using the word "dictator" – "He [Hannity] says, 'You're not going to be a dictator, are you?' I said: 'No, no, no, other than day one. We're closing the border, and we're drilling, drilling, drilling. After that, I'm not a dictator.'"
    - Dec. 11, 2023, New York: Less than one week later, Trump tripled down on his dictator comment. "I said I want to be a dictator for one day. You know why I wanted to be a dictator? Because I want a wall, and I want to drill, drill, drill."
    - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Trump said his dictator-for-a-day remarks were a joke, "That was said sarcastically as a joke on Sean Hannity. He said, 'Do you want to be a dictator?' I said, 'Only for one day. I want to close up the border and I want to drill, baby, drill.' Then I said, 'After that, then I never want to be a dictator.' That was done. That was said sarcastically. That was meant as a joke. Everybody knows that."
        - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: "No, no, wait. If you read it, it was a joke. I wanted to be for one day. You know why? Because we have an incompetent fool that's allowing people to come into our country. We have an incompetent fool that drove energy prices so high over such a short period of time. And by the way, you know, he's gone to a lot of my policies now. But the day after the election, if they win, there won't be any more oil."

- Key former figures in the Trump administration who Trump has announced will have positions in the new administration have given glimpses into their immigration-related plans.
    - Stephen Miller, Trump's former immigration adviser who he has named as deputy chief of staff for policy and the President's homeland security advisor, is pushing ahead on reinvigorating the administration's previous hard-line stance on immigration and asylum issues. Miller wielded great influence over Trump's previous immigration policies. Only days after Trump took office in 2017, Miller began gathering a group of bureaucrats perceived to be loyal to Trump to start

drafting executive orders; and in recent interviews he has essentially boasted that he would move even faster and more forcefully, again recruiting swathes of loyalist lawyers. Miller has predicted that congressional Republicans could move a reconciliation package with "the most significant border security investment in American history" to Trump's desk as soon as January or early February. Note that Miller also leads the conservative legal group "America First Legal," which "has a board seat with Project 2025."

- *Mediaite*, Dec. 8, 2024, Miller discussed a border funding package on Fox News, saying: "That would mean a historic increase in border agents, a pay raise for both full funding for military operations, full funding for ice [*sic*] beds, full funding for air marine operations, full funding for all of the barriers and technology that you need to ensure there's never another got away entering this country. Now, President Trump, regardless on day one, is going to issue a series of executive orders that seal the border shut and begin the largest deportation operation in American history."
- *NYT*, Nov. 1, 2023, Miller said: "Any activists who doubt President Trump's resolve in the slightest are making a drastic error: Trump will unleash the vast arsenal of federal powers to implement the most spectacular migration crackdown…The immigration legal activists won't know what's happening."
- *NYT*, Nov. 1, 2023, Miller said: "Mass deportation will be a labor-market disruption celebrated by American workers, who will now be offered higher wages with better benefits to fill these jobs." "Americans will also celebrate the fact that our nation's laws are now being applied equally, and that one select group is no longer magically exempt."
- *Axios, Aug. 21, 2023*, Miller said: "The first 100 days of the Trump administration will be pure bliss — followed by another four years of the most hard-hitting action conceivable."
- *Axios, Aug. 21, 2023*, Miller said: Being in lockstep with Trump's immigration goals would be "non-negotiable priority" for any applicant hoping to secure a spot in Trump's administration.

- Tom Homan, former Acting Director of ICE under the Trump administration has been announced by Trump to serve as "Border Czar."
  - During his December 8th, 2024, *Meet the Press* interview, Trump endorsed his appointed "border czar", Tom Homan's, extreme immigration stance, suggesting that families with mixed immigration status could be deported together to avoid being separated.
  - During the 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump suggested Homan would be "put in charge" of stopping "the invasion" at the border. Homan, who delivered a speech the previous day, said: "As a guy who spent 34 years deporting illegal aliens, I got a message to the millions of illegal aliens that Joe Biden released into our country in violation of federal law: you better start packing now!"

        - July 15, 2024, Trump told Fox News' Harris Faulkner that he has Homan "lined up" for immigration and border issues.
        - Homan also recounted to the New York Times a meeting he had with Trump soon after he announced his 2024 campaign. He "agreed to come back" in a second Trump term and would "help to organize and run the largest deportation operation this country's ever seen," Homan told the Times.
        - Fox News, Dec. 17, 2023, Homan said in an interview with Fox News, "People say, 'How are you going to remove millions?' The answer is: One at a time." "No one's off the table. If you're in the country illegally in violation of immigration law, you are a target." "It's going to have to result in a historic — the biggest ever — deportation operation in the history of this country. That's what happens. When you've got historic illegal immigration, well, that means you've got a historic removal program. That's just the way it is. If we're going to enforce our laws, that's the way it is." "We're not going to turn a blind eye to them if they're in the country illegally. We take them into custody. That's our job. So, it isn't like we walk through a neighborhood looking for people who look different from us. These are targeted enforcement operations."

- Pete Hegseth, Trump's nomination to serve as defense secretary—likely a critical role in Trump's immigration crackdown—has a deep history of anti-Muslim rhetoric and support for hardline immigration policies. For example, in his 2020 book American Crusade, he praised "Christian crusaders who pushed back the Muslim hordes in the twelfth century" and called for similar courage to confront Islamists today. He endorsed Trump's proposed "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" and warned about "Muslims' birth rates" and growing political influence in states like Minnesota, Michigan, and New York, framing these trends as a cultural and demographic threat to the U.S. Hegseth also criticized "leftists" for enabling Muslim immigration and non-assimilation policies, advocating restrictive measures in alignment with Trump's agenda. "Our present moment is much like the 11th Century. We don't want to fight, but, like our fellow Christians one thousand years ago, we must," Hegseth wrote. "Arm yourself — metaphorically, intellectually, physically. Our fight is not with guns. Yet."

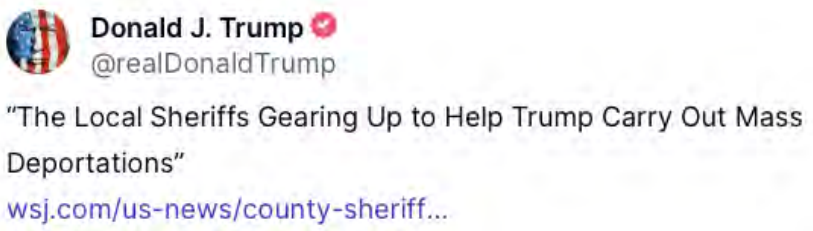
- Kash Patel, Trump's nominee for FBI Director—another potentially critical role in Trump's immigration crackdown and plans for mass deportation—is a conspiracy theorist who has been a fierce critic of the so-called "deep state." As detailed in *Section I*, he has advocated a "comprehensive housecleaning" of the DOJ and a radical reorganization of the FBI to purge those who don't support Trump's agenda

- Below are some of the latest developments in the Trump transition team's plans for an anticipated immigration crackdown.
    - The incoming Trump administration has vowed to crack down on those who disrupt or counter federal immigration enforcement, specifically targeting

sanctuary cities and alerting state and local officials and entities that harboring undocumented immigrants or impeding federal officers may lead to prosecution.

- Incoming "border czar" Tom Homan signaled his willingness to prosecute individuals like Denver Mayor Mike Johnston, who openly opposes mass deportation efforts. "Me and the Denver mayor, we agree on one thing — he's willing to go to jail, I'm willing to put him in jail," Homan told Fox News' Hannity on November 25, 2024, citing Title 8 U.S. Code § 1324, which criminalizes harboring undocumented immigrants and impeding federal law enforcement. Homan's threats weren't limited to Johnston. A week earlier, he also warned sanctuary city leaders against "harboring illegal aliens," a felony under the same statute. "Don't cross that line," Homan cautioned, underscoring the administration's intent to enforce immigration law to their fullest extent.
- Doubling down on his warning, Homan has said he will ask Trump's next attorney general – currently former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi has been announced – for a formal opinion on whether a county or city jail's refusal to turn over an illegal alien in custody to ICE constitutes a federal crime. "I'll leave it up to the attorney general, but I think it needs to be fully reviewed. And I hope they agree with me."
- In a December 19, 2024 interview, CNN's Kaitlan Collins asked Homan whether the Trump administration would direct immigration officials to stop providing citizenship documents like passports or social security cards to children born on U.S. soil to undocumented immigrants. Homan answered by challenging the constitutionality of birthright citizenship. He said, "I don't think it's enshrined in the Constitution at all—not the way I read it. But then again I'm not a constitutional scholar. We'll let the courts decide that on the birthright citizenship. I'll say this: it's a major driver, a major magnet for illegal immigration."

- Trump's transition team reportedly intends a "historical" revival and expansion of the controversial use of 287(g) agreements, empowering local sheriffs—including "constitutional sheriffs"—to act as frontline enforcers of federal immigration policy. Trump has also confirmed sheriffs will support deportation efforts, a stance he has reiterated since his election victory.



- Building on earlier reports of plans to deputize local law enforcement, the *Wall Street Journal* revealed on November 28, 2024, that the administration intends to reintroduce the dormant "task force model," allowing deputized authorities to identify and detain suspected noncitizens

during community patrols—a practice discontinued in 2012. To incentivize participation, the administration plans to reward cooperating jurisdictions while financially penalizing resistant blue states and cities. Pro-Trump sheriffs, particularly "constitutional sheriffs," are expected and ready to play a key role, with their authority potentially expanding from jails to broader community enforcement.

- Trump later shared the *Journal's* story on Truth Social.
- Tom Homan, the incoming "border czar," is said to supports the "task force model" for its potential to increase visible arrests and deter migration. This plan reflects Trump's broader strategy to mobilize his sheriffs' network, reallocate federal resources, and reshape federal-local dynamics in immigration enforcement.
- The strategy includes redirecting billions of dollars from nonprofits and cities aiding new migrants to local law enforcement agencies collaborating with ICE.

■ MAGA allies have increasingly backed the "constitutional sheriffs" movement, which claims sheriffs have ultimate authority in their jurisdictions, even above federal and state powers.

- Michael Flynn, Patrick Byrne, and Mike Lindell have all voiced support for the Constitutional Sheriffs movement, with each taking the stage at a CSPOA conference in April 2024 to advocate for its agenda. Adding fuel to the fire, Boone Cutler, a collaborator with Flynn, escalated the rhetoric, describing immigrants as "weaponized diaspora communities" and announcing plans to provide "irregular warfare training" to CSPOA officers ahead of the election.
- Ivan Raiklin, an ally of Michael Flynn, revealed plans with Richard Mack, founder of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA), to use deputized arrests as part of broader enforcement strategies. The CSPOA, linked to extremist rhetoric, has allegedly collaborated with militia groups, as we detail in *Chapter VII* below.
- The Claremont Institute's *The American Mind* blog has amplified calls to militarize local law enforcement by cross-deputizing constitutional sheriffs as immigration enforcers.

■ In 2022, an *ACLU* report found that many sheriffs participating in the 287(g) program have histories of anti-immigrant rhetoric (59%), inhumane policy advocacy (55%), and patterns of racial profiling and civil rights violations (65%). Additionally, 77% of participating agencies operated detention facilities with severely inhumane conditions, effectively sanctioned by the program's partnerships.

○ Border militias are preparing to support Trump's mass deportation initiatives, expressing enthusiasm for his election and positioning themselves as a valuable

resource for the incoming administration, irrespective of official requests, *WIRED* reported on November 21, 2024.

- Once Trump assumes office, some militia members anticipate implicit government approval to engage in vigilante activities along the U.S.-Mexico border. Tim Foley, head of Arizona Border Recon, a civilian patrol group based in Altar Valley, claims to have been in contact with the incoming Trump administration. Historically, many militias have operated with growing tacit approval from local authorities, including so-called "constitutional sheriffs." Indeed, Richard Mack, founder of CSPOA, has also served as a founding member of the Oath Keepers' board of directors. During Trump's first term, these groups thrived, bolstered by heightened immigration enforcement policies and harmful nativist rhetoric.
- Though Donald Trump has not explicitly called on private citizens or paramilitary groups to participate in his immigration enforcement efforts, experts on U.S. militias caution that his hard-line immigration policies and rhetoric often embolden such groups. According to one analyst, the mere association of Trump's administration with a strict immigration agenda could lend perceived legitimacy to vigilante actions, even without explicit orders.
- Signals from Trump's team suggest a willingness to consider civilian involvement in border operations.
    - Tom Homan, the incoming "border czar," acknowledged during a November 2024 appearance on Fox & Friends that he has been inundated with thousands of offers of assistance from veterans and former agents eager to contribute. "There's a lot of good patriots," Homan stated. "I shut my phone off Friday night because I couldn't handle the phone calls, and texts and emails from thousands of ICE agents and border patrol agents excited about the rumor I'm coming back," adding, "But more important than that, thousands of retired agents, retired border patrol agents, [and] retired military [want] to come in and volunteer to help this president secure the border and do the deportation operation."
- MAGA allies are also backing militia groups and sheriffs joining forces.
    - Patrick Byrne, former CEO of Overstock.com and a prominent figure in the election denial movement, has advocated that the "solution" to "illegal immigrants and federal tyrants" is "armed militia" groups forming as "auxiliary forces" so that they "can umbrella-out and force multiply" local "Constitutional Sheriffs." Byrne, alongside Michael Flynn, Sidney Powell, and others, took part in the infamous December 18, 2020, Oval Office meeting to present to Trump strategies for contesting the 2020 election, a meeting he claimed to be the "probabl[e] genesis" of through his outreach to White House contacts.

- Byrne has admitted to financing private jets to transport Trump supporters, including individuals later identified as members of the Proud Boys, to rallies aimed at challenging the election results."
    - In October 2024, Byrne posted on X (formerly Twitter) that he and the America Project—a nonprofit he co-founded with Michael Flynn in 2021—had been "seeding the Constitutional Sheriff movement" and encouraging "armed militias to form auxiliary forces" to "umbrella-out and force multiply for sheriffs."
    - During a speech at a CSPOA conference in Las Vegas in April 2024, Byrne is reported to have underscored the role of Constitutional Sheriffs in addressing what he described as an influx of "15 million…military-age men." He urged sheriffs to "build some kind of surge capacity through auxiliary forces, or alliances with the militias," though he did not specify which militias he meant. Byrne also defended the concept of a "well regulated militia," stating it is "not a dirty phrase."
        - Prominent speakers headlining the event included Michael Flynn, Richard Mack of the CSPOA, and MyPillow CEO-turned-election-denial Mike Lindell, who has funded the movement. According to *WIRED*, "Steve Bannon was scheduled to appear but canceled at the last minute. The presence of nationally prominent figures far more recognizable than Richard Mack was a significant boost for him, giving his movement renewed momentum that it has continued to leverage."
        - Other speakers included Constitutional Sheriffs, January 6 rioters, right-wing media figures, alternative health practitioners promoting debunked treatments, border entrepreneurs, and GOP candidates for November elections.
- Trump's team is considering withholding federal police grants from law enforcement agencies that refuse to cooperate with deportation efforts, NBC News reported on November 28, 2024.
    - Days earlier, Homan revealed in an interview with *Just the News* that he hopes Trump and a GOP-led Congress will collaborate to ban federal funding for state and local jurisdictions providing sanctuary to illegal aliens, stating, "We've got to pull federal funding. We got to take the money away."
- The Trump administration plans to issue up to five executive orders on Day One focused on illegal immigration, *NBC News* reported on November 21, 2024. These orders include proposals to expedite deportations—with a possible initial focus on

individuals deemed threats, such as Chinese men of military age living illegally in the U.S., although returning them to China may involve complex diplomatic negotiations—and send deportees to third party countries.

- Trump's transition team is planning an "aggressive strategy" toward Latin America to facilitate large-scale migrant deportations and curb migration, relying on both incentives and pressure points to secure cooperation from regional allies, CNN reported on November 21, 2024. One source described the approach as using "every tool in our arsenal," emphasizing creativity in its implementation.[1] The strategy will prioritize three key areas, CNN reported. First, it focuses on Mexico, with plans to revive the "Remain in Mexico" policy, requiring asylum seekers to remain in Mexico while their U.S. cases are processed. Second, it aims to reinstate bilateral and multilateral agreements such as "Asylum Cooperative Agreements" (ACAs), which redirect asylum-seekers to countries like Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.[2] El Salvador is expected to play a key role in renewing these deals. Third, Panama will be engaged to block migrant flows through the Darien Gap, a crucial transit point. Additionally, Venezuela may face renewed sanctions if it fails to comply with deportation or migration-related demands.
- On November 19, 2024, the Texas General Land Office proposed leasing a 1,402-acre ranch in Starr County to the incoming Trump administration for the development of facilities aimed at processing and detaining undocumented immigrants as part of a large-scale deportation initiative. Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham emphasized in a letter to Trump on Nov. 19 the state's readiness to support what she described as "the largest deportation of violent criminals in the nation's history." "My office is fully prepared to enter into an agreement ... to allow a facility to be built for the processing, detention, and coordination of the largest deportation of violent criminals in the nation's history," In a Nov. 19 interview with *Fox News*, Buckingham stated that she was "100% on board with the Trump administration's pledge to get these criminals out of our country."
- Nov. 18, 2024, Truth Social post, Trump confirmed it is "TRUE!!!" that his administration is "prepared to declare a national emergency and will use military

[1] Trump reinforced this position in December 2023, stating, "either we will get the full cooperation of other governments...or we will expose every bribe, every pay off, every kick back, and every bit of corruption that is allowing the cartel to preserve their brutal reign."

[2] In August 2023, *The New York Times* was the first to report on Trump's plan to use coercive diplomacy to secure international cooperation on immigration enforcement. This included engaging with Mexico through the Remain in Mexico policy and negotiating bilateral and multilateral agreements with other nations. According to the report, Stephen Miller indicated that Trump would aim to reinstate and expand agreements resembling Safe Third Country Agreements (STCAs), initially implemented in Central America, to include nations in Africa, Asia, and South America.

assets to reverse the Biden invasion through a mass deportation program."

- *CNN* reported fresh details on November 16, 2024, about Trump's immigration plans, with people close to him and his aides actively laying the groundwork for significant measures aimed at fulfilling his mass deportation campaign promise. This includes reviewing metropolitan areas with existing detention capabilities and exploring the construction of new detention facilities. Specific executive actions under consideration, which could be started on day one, include reinstating the "Remain in Mexico" program, revising asylum restrictions, revoking protections under Biden's humanitarian parole programs, and dismantling ICE's current enforcement priorities. Additionally, an executive order is being considered to mandate detention and end the practice of releasing migrants, a move seen as key to enabling large-scale detention and deportation. Trump's team is also evaluating a national emergency declaration to access Pentagon resources and expand detention space, a strategy used during his first term that led to legal challenges. Discussions involve former U.S. Border Patrol Chief Rodney Scott and Michael Banks, a special adviser to Texas Gov. Greg Abbott on border matters. Meanwhile, the private sector, heavily relied upon for detention facilities, is preparing to expand capacity, including adding more beds. Plans also include reinstating family detention policies.

- Trump has promised to "seal the border" and carry out "the largest domestic deportation operation in the history of our country." He has also warned that "getting them out will be a bloody story." "It's a pledge not just of the cruelty of ostracism or subjugation," *The Washington Post* wrote. "It's a promise that the purported dangers of immigrants will be met with force, with cracked skulls or — as Trump reportedly suggested while serving as president — gunfire."
  - Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: When asked about his first priorities in Congress, Trump replied, "Well, my first priorities are, I don't really need Congress for it, frankly, securing the border and drilling for oil."
  - Dec. 8, 2024, *Meet the Press*: Trump made clear that his hardline immigration agenda remains central to his platform. Doubling down on his plans for mass deportation, he stated, "you have to do it… they came in illegally." He further

escalated his rhetoric, falsely claiming immigrants in Colorado are operating as violent gangs, an assertion directly contradicted by local law enforcement.

- Nov. 6, 2024, Fox News, Trump national press secretary Karoline Leavitt described the president-elect's "resounding" win over Kamala Harris as giving him a "mandate" to enact his "day one" plans, which include "launching the largest mass deportation operation of illegal immigrants."
- Nov. 6, 2024, NBC's *Today show*, Jason Miller, senior adviser to the president-elect, said that one of Trump's top priorities upon taking office would be to issue executive actions and utilize presidential powers to reinstate Trump-era border policies "right away." "All of the secure border policies that we had in place with President Trump, he can simply flip the switch and put those back in place just like they were before. They didn't need an act of Congress to break the border," Miller stated.
- Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said: "On day one, I will launch the largest deportation program in American history."
- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said, "Starting on day one, I will seal the border and stop the 'migrant invasion' of our country. We will carry out the largest deportation operation of criminals in the history of America." He also said, "I mean, in Colorado, they're so brazen, they're taking over sections of the state, and you know, getting them out will be a bloody story."
- August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump said: **"**And on day one, I will begin the largest deportation operation in the history of our country."
- August 3, 2024, Atlanta, GA, Trump said: "If I win, on day one we will begin the largest deportation operation in American history." "On day one, we will seal the border, stop the invasion and send the illegal aliens back home, and we'll do it very quickly," Trump added.
- July 26, 2024, Turning Point Action summit, FL, Trump said: "On day one, I will seal the border and stop the invasion of our country."
- 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump said: "At the heart of the Republican platform is our pledge to end this border nightmare, and fully restore the sacred and sovereign borders of the United States of America. And we're going to do that on day one. That means two things on day one, right? Drill, baby, drill, and close our borders." He also said: "I will end the illegal immigration crisis by closing our border and finishing the wall, most of which I've already built." He went on to celebrate using military funds, bypassing Congress, to build a wall. "That's why, to keep our family safe, the Republican platform promises to launch the largest deportation operation in the history of our country. Even larger than that of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, from many years ago. You know, he was a moderate but he believed very strongly in borders. He had the largest deportation operation we've ever had," Trump further added.
- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "[O]n day one, we will begin the largest domestic deportation operation in American history." He also said that "On day one of my new administration, I will seal the border, stop the invasion of people

pouring through our border and send Joe Biden's illegal aliens back home where they belong."

- April 2, 2024, Grand Rapids, MI: "On day one I will seal the border and we'll begin the largest domestic deportation operation in the history of our country."
- April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: "On day one, we will terminate every open borders policy of the Biden administration and begin the largest domestic deportation operation in American history, starting with all of the criminals that are pouring in the criminals and the terrorists."
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "And among my first actions upon taking office will be to … seal the border and stop the invasion of our country." He later said: "On day one of my administration, I will terminate every open border policy of the Biden administration and we will begin the largest domestic deportation operation in American history."
- April 19, 2024, Trump campaign website states that "President Trump will secure the border on Day One and allow our brave Border Patrol agents to do their jobs," according to Steven Cheung, Trump Campaign Communications Director.
- On May 20, 2024, a 30-second video was posted onto Trump's Truth Social page featuring hypothetical newspaper articles celebrating a purported 2024 presidential election victory, headlined, "What's next for America?" and heralding "the creation of a unified Reich." The articles were styled like early 20th-century newspapers, apparently recycling text from World War I reports, and included headlines such as, the "Border Is Closed" and "15 Million Illegal Aliens Deported," as well as
    - The Trump campaign eventually deleted the post and insisted the video was created by a "random account" and posted by an unnamed campaign staffer.

- Trump's proposed immigration policies go far beyond securing the border and limiting illegal immigration. He has embraced ordering unlawful immigration roundups and travel bans, using the military domestically to purge undocumented immigrants, violating the Constitution's guarantee of birthright citizenship, and prosecuting American officials and organizations who don't comply with his policies.

- Trump has repeated his promise to "carry out the largest domestic deportation operation in American history" many times. His plan will significantly restrict both legal and illegal immigration by expanding and toughening draconian immigration and asylum measures introduced by his previous administration, causing millions of undocumented immigrants to be kicked out of the country even after years or decades of having lived here. His proposed policies will see individuals rushed "through the system, stripping due process protections from them, eliminating any access to legal services, and really transforming this into an assembly line deportation machine," according to the American Immigration Council's policy director.
    - Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: Trump said he would do "[w]hatever it takes to get them out. I don't care. Honestly, whatever it takes to get them out. Again, I'll

do it absolutely within the confines of the law, but if it needs new [detainment] camps, but I hope we're not going to need too many because I want to get them out, and I don't want them sitting in camp for the next 20 years."

- Trump and team seek to broadly abuse existing statutes to avoid congressional scrutiny. Despite acknowledging the array of lawsuits that would arise from his planned immigration policies, Stephen Miller, the former White House advisor who oversaw Trump's border efforts during the first administration, expressed defiance. He said that Trump's second term would utilize a "blitz" of tactics to overwhelm immigration lawyers that sought to challenge the lawfulness of policies. To ensure deportations are "radically more quick and efficient," Miller said, the Trump team would bring in "the right kinds of attorneys and the right kinds of policy thinkers" willing to carry out Trump's ideas.
    - Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: Identifying his top two legislative priorities as securing the border and drilling for oil, Trump said "I don't really need Congress for it."

- In November 2023, Stephen Miller, outlining the Trump team's plans for mass deportations, suggested to Charlie Kirk on *The Charlie Kirk Show* that another Trump administration would seek to deport as many as 10 million "foreign-national invaders."
    - *The Atlantic* reported that Miller's touted plans to achieve mass removals "understate the magnitude of the effort that mass deportations would require, Jason Houser, a former chief of staff at ICE under Biden, told me. Removing 500,000 to 1 million migrants a year could require as many as 100,000–150,000 deputized enforcement officers, Houser believes. Staffing the internment camps and constant flights that Miller is contemplating could require 50,000 more people, Houser said. 'If you want to deport a million a year—and I'm a Navy officer—you are talking a mobilization the size of a military deployment.' Houser [said.]"

- Trump plans to invoke the Insurrection Act to use the National Guard and military to act as domestic immigration law enforcement. Further, Trump's proposed immigration policies rely heavily on National Guard troops and military resources to assist law enforcement to purge undocumented immigrants, including via raids. Additionally, a Trump administration would seek to reassign federal agents and deputize local law enforcement to play key roles in deportation operations, adding that he would offer officers immunity to be able to carry out their jobs effectively. The 2024 GOP platform also states, "shift massive portions of Federal Law Enforcement to Immigration Enforcement, and use advanced technology to monitor and secure the Border. We will use all resources needed to stop the Invasion—including moving thousands of Troops currently stationed overseas to our own Southern Border."
    - Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: Trump was asked about his prior comments stating he would use the military to deport migrants and that the Posse Comitatus Act prohibits using the military for domestic law enforcement. Trump responded, "Well it doesn't, it doesn't stop the military if it's an invasion of our country, and I consider it an invasion of our country." He continued, "I'll only do what the law

allows, but I will go up the maximum level of what the law allows. And I think in many cases, the sheriffs and law enforcement is going to need help. We'll also get National Guard. We'll get National Guard, and we'll go as far as I'm allowed to go, according to the laws of our country."

- Nov. 18, 2024, Truth Social post, Trump confirmed it is "TRUE!!!" that his administration is "prepared to declare a national emergency and will use military assets to reverse the Biden invasion through a mass deportation program."
- Trump has previously sought to use the Insurrection Act to enforce his immigration policies.
  - In May 2019, multiple senior Trump administration officials confirmed the president's intent to use "tremendous powers" under the Act to remove immigrants.
  - In February 2019, Trump was reportedly "a few sentences away" from using the military to "forcibly expel" migrants from a caravan heading toward the southern border, according to a book by Miles Taylor, Trump's then chief of staff at the Department of Homeland Security.
- Confirming in late 2023 Trump's plan to invoke the Act, Stephen Miller said, "Bottom line…President Trump will do whatever it takes."
- Russell Vought, who is leading Project 2025's efforts drafting regulations, executive orders, and secretarial memos, supports presidential use of the Insurrection Act to address immigration. In July 2024, he said: "George Floyd obviously was not about race. It was about destabilizing the Trump administration. We put out, for instance, a 50-page paper designed for lawyers to know that the President has, you know, the ability, both along the border and elsewhere, to maintain law and order with the military. And that's something that, you know, it's going to be important for him [Trump] to remember and his lawyers to affirm, but we've given them the case for that."
- As reported by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Axios*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Hill*, Trump's policies call for using military funds to hold undocumented detainees in newly built military-style camps, to get around any refusal by Congress to appropriate the funds (as he did in his first term to spend more on the wall than Congress had authorized). Trump's proposal calls for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to be sent into the streets to arrest millions, assisted by: (1) agents reassigned from the federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Agency, Homeland Security, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosive; (2) deputized local police officers and sheriffs; and (3) National Guard soldiers voluntarily provided by Republican-run states.
  - Note that under the previous Trump administration, ICE's controversial 287(g) program grew rapidly. It gives state and local enforcement officers, primarily sheriffs, federal powers to question, arrest and detain suspected undocumented immigrants.

- April 27, 2023, Manchester, NH, Trump said: “We will use all necessary state, local, federal, ***and military*** resources to carry out the largest domestic deportation operation in American history.” (emphasis added)
- Oct. 2, 2024, *NewsNation* interview, to counter cartels and keep the border safe, Trump said “we need a military operation. … Whatever you need, if it’s gonna be military. … We’re going to have to get in some military action.”
- In an April 12, 2024, *Time Magazine* interview, Trump said he was open to using the National Guard and even the military at the border and to address “migrant crime” in Democrat-run states, saying he did not think the Posse Comitatus Act was applicable as “these aren’t civilians.”
    - “It would. When we talk military, generally speaking, I talk National Guard. I've used the National Guard in Minneapolis. And if I didn't use it, I don't think you'd have Minneapolis standing right now, because it was really bad. But I think in terms of the National Guard. But if I thought things were getting out of control, I would have no problem using the military, per se.”
    - “I can see myself using the National Guard and, if necessary, I'd have to go a step further. We have to do whatever we have to do to stop the problem we have.”
    - “I don’t think I’d have to do that. I think the National Guard would be able to do that. If they weren’t able to, then I’d use the military. You know, we have a different situation. We have millions of people now that we didn't have two years ago.”
    - “I can see myself using the National Guard and, if necessary, I'd have to go a step further. We have to do whatever we have to do to stop the problem we have. Again, we have a major force that’s forming in our country, when you see that over the last three weeks, 29,000 people came in from China, and they're all fighting age, and they're mostly males. Yeah, you have to do what you have to do to stop crime and to stop what's taking place at the border.”
- Stephen Miller told *The Charlie Kirk Show* in November 2023 that the Trump administration would dispatch forces to “go around the country arresting illegal immigrants in large-scale raids.” To assist ICE in the large-scale, highly complex task ahead, which Miller compared to “building the Panama Canal,” he said agents would be reassigned from other other federal law-enforcement agencies, local police and sheriffs would be deputized, and the National Guard troops would participate.
    - For National Guard troop involvement, one scenario would be where Republican governors want to cooperate. “You go to the red-state governors and you say, ‘Give us your National Guard,’” Miller said. “We will deputize them as immigration-enforcement officers.” The second scenario, Miller said, would involve sending troops from nearby Republican-controlled states into what he described as an “unfriendly state” whose governor would not willingly join the removal program. “The Alabama National Guard is going to arrest illegal aliens in Alabama and

the Virginia National Guard in Virginia," Miller said, adding, "And if you're going to go into an unfriendly state like Maryland, well, they would just be Virginia doing the arrests in Maryland, right? Very close, very nearby."
        - (*See* further reporting on Miller's podcast interview, including some of the impracticalities of his touted plans, by *The Atlantic* and *The Washington Post*.)
    - Speaking to *The New York Times*, Stephen Miller described the camps as "vast holding facilities that would function as staging centers" for immigrants as their cases progress through the system. The camps would be built "on open land in Texas near the border." "He said the military would construct them under the authority and control of the Department of Homeland Security. While he cautioned that there were no specific blueprints yet, he said the camps would look professional and similar to other facilities for migrants that have been built near the border." Miller confirmed a very similar plan in his podcast interview with Charlie Kirk.
        - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: When asked about building new migrant detention camps as suggested by Stephen Miller, Trump said: "It's possible that we'll do it to an extent but we shouldn't have to do very much of it, because we're going to be moving them out as soon as we get to it. And we'll be obviously starting with the criminal element."
    - Stephen Miller said in November 2023 that military aircraft and Homeland Security assets will be used in the Trump administration's plan to implement near-constant flights to return migrants home. "So you create this efficiency by having these standing facilities where planes are moving off the runway constantly, probably military aircraft, some existing DHS assets."
    - Jan. 25, 2024, via Truth Social, Trump called for states to send their National Guards to the border in Texas to assist Gov. Greg Abbott in what the governor calls a continuing effort to enforce "Trump's Historic Border Security Legacy." "We encourage all willing States to deploy their guards to Texas to prevent the entry of Illegals, and to remove them back across the Border. All Americans should support the commonsense measures by Texas authorities to protect the Safety, Security, and Sovereignty of Texas, and of the American people. When I am President, on Day One, instead of fighting Texas, I will work hand in hand with Governor Abbott and other Border States to Stop the Invasion, Seal the Border, and Rapidly Begin the Largest Domestic Deportation Operation in History. Those Biden has let in should not get comfortable because they will be going home," the statement read.
    - Feb. 29, 2024, Eagle Pass, TX, speaking at a press conference attended by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and Texas and border patrol officials near the U.S.-Mexico border during a campaign visit, Trump embraced efforts by the head of the Texas Military Department Maj. Gen. Thomas Suelzer and the Gov. Abbott to combat the "war" at the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas, including expanding military camps which involves establishing a "Forward Operating Base" to house Texas National Guard soldiers.

        - Gov. Abbott "really stepped it up. It's been amazing ….This is an incredible operation." Trump told the press conference, adding, "I want to thank the governor and the entire group of people behind me. I would call them 'staff' and I would call them 'representatives and generals.' They are unbelievable people. The job they've done so quickly and so effectively. Congratulations. Congratulations."
    - April 2, 2024, Grand Rapids, MI, Trump said: "Somebody said 'how will you get these criminals out?' I say, 'the sheriffs, the police, the police officers, the police, law enforcement.'" "And we're gonna work out a federal immunity for police so they're allowed to do their job without losing their house and their pension and everything else when the…liberal governors and mayors don't back them." He later added, "I will shift massive portions of federal law enforcement to immigration enforcement."
    - April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: "Local police" will be used "to tell us who" the "criminals and the terrorists" are "pouring" into our country. "Our local police know their names and middle names and phone numbers. They know everything about them." He later added, "I will shift massive portions of federal law enforcement to immigration enforcement. We're gonna do immigration enforcement, not paperwork, we're doing all paperwork."
    - Feb. 29, 2024, Fox News interview in Texas, Trump, referring to what he calls "Biden migrant crime," reaffirmed his plan to use local police officers to implement his intended mass deportation of undocumented migrants. He also said he would give officers "immunity" for them to carry out their jobs. "And the way you do it is your local police. We have the greatest police. They don't get the respect they have to get. They are treated so badly. They do something and they end up losing their pension, even if it's a good thing. If they stop crime nowadays they lose their pension, their family, their house. And we're gonna give immunity to police. And we're gonna let the police do the job they have to do … they understand who these migrants are. They know them by their first name, their last name, they know where they come from. It's going to be the local police who are going to turn them over and we are gonna have to move them back to their country," Trump told *Fox News*' Sean Hannity.
        - Trump's interview was given the same day that a federal judge in Texas temporarily paused a state law, known as Senate Bill 4 (SB 4), from taking effect on March 5 that would have granted local authorities and judges powers to arrest and undocumented persons suspected of illegally crossing the U.S. border. Gov. Abbott has vowed to appeal the decision made in favor of the plaintiffs (civil rights groups and the DOJ).
    - March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "If Joe Biden's illegal alien migrants do not go back to their countries, we will never get our country back. But we're gonna take them back because they're not going to go back. We're gonna take them back. Fast. It's gonna happen quickly. Local police. You know, the local police know every one of them. Somebody said, 'How are you going to do that?' It's not a Washington thing, it's the local police." He later added: "Our law

enforcement is great. And as I told you, when we do deportation, they know the real bad ones. They know all the local. They know them by their first name, their second name, and their middle name, wouldn't you say? They know the good ones and the bad ones. And they're gonna to be working with the federal government on getting them the hell out of here."

- April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Trump said, "We will be using local law enforcement. And we will absolutely start with the criminals that are coming in." "And we're going to be using local police because local police know them by name, by first name, second name, and third name. I mean, they know them very well."
- Trump has said that undocumented immigrants are not civilians and that he would not be violating the Posse Comitatus Act's ban on military enforcement of civil laws by using the military to deport these immigrants.
  - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview, Trump said: "Well, these aren't civilians. These are people that aren't legally in our country. This is an invasion of our country. An invasion like probably no country has ever seen before."
- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "I will shift massive portions of federal law enforcement to immigration enforcement."

- Those close to Trump have signaled plans to challenge the *Flores* Settlement, which prohibits the government from indefinitely detaining children. Trump unsuccessfully sought to end the settlement in August 2019.
  - Stephen Miller said that the Trump administration would again try to overturn the *Flores* settlement, which forbids the government from indefinitely holding children.
  - Gene Hamilton—a senior Justice Department official under Trump and current Vice President and general Counsel of Stephen Miller's America First Legal—writing in Project 2025's Mandate for Leadership, called for the Department of Justice to "[p]ursue proactive litigation to advance the federal government's interests in areas where erroneous precedent curtails authorities provided by Congress (for example, by pursuing the overturning of the Flores Settlement Agreement)."

- Trump has promised to "end all migrant flights into" the United States.
  - Oct. 29, 2024, Allentown, PA, Trump said, "I will end all migrant flights into our country with planes loaded up with criminal migrants."
  - Oct. 28, 2024, Atlanta, GA, Trump said, "I will end all migrant flights."
  - Oct. 26, 2024, State College, PA, Trump said, "I will end all migrant flights. They fly them in here by the hundreds of thousands. They fly right over the borders. It's not even believable."
  - Oct. 25, 2024, Austin, TX, Trump said, "And I'm going to end all migrant flights immediately."

- Trump has pledged to invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, which applies only where there is a declared war with or a threat of invasion by a foreign nation, to speedily and unilaterally deport from the United States all suspected gang members, drug dealers or cartel members, circumventing ICE deportation processes and due process.[3] The 2024 GOP platform states: "We will also invoke the Alien Enemies Act to remove all known or suspected gang members, drug dealers, or cartel members from the United States, ending the scourge of Illegal Alien gang violence once and for all."
    - Nov. 3, 2024, Macon GA, Trump said, "I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798."
    - Oct. 31, 2024, Henderson, NV, Trump said, "To expedite removals of the Tren de Aragua savage gangs, I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to target and dismantle every migrant criminal network operating on American soil.
    - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said: "To expedite removals of Tren de Aragua and other savage gangs like MS-13, which is equally vicious, I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798. … [G]et ready to target and dismantle every migrant criminal network operating on American soil, and there are lots of them."
    - Oct. 26, 2024, State College, PA, Trump said: "I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798."
    - Oct. 24, 2024, Tempe, AZ, Trump said: "I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798."
    - Oct. 23, 2024, Duluth, GA: Trump said, "And to expedite removals of the Tren de Aragua and MS-13 gangs from our country and many others, by the way, I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to target and dismantle every migrant criminal network operating on American soil. Think of that. We had to go back to 1798."
    - Oct. 21, 2024, Greenville, NC: Trump said, "And to expedite removals of Tren de Aragua and other savage gangs like MS-13, equally violent, I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 18 -- no, of 1798. Think of that, 1798. That's when we had real politicians that said, "We're not going to play games." We have to go back to 1798. To target and dismantle every migrant criminal network operating on American soil.
    - Nov. 4, 2023, Florida Freedom Summit: Trump said, "This is a bomb that's waiting to happen…And I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act to remove all known and

[3] A *Just Security* essay on "What Should Courts do if a Future President Invokes the Alien Enemies Act to Deport Immigrants?" notes that the courts would likely be hesitant to weigh in on critical questions regarding the Act's language, including "presence or absence of an invasion or predatory incursion, and they are even less likely to probe whether the perpetrator of the supposed invasion or incursion is a foreign nation or government." This further "heightens" Trump's risk of abusing the law, "despite its clear inapplicability." The courts may however be more open to striking down "an invocation of the … Act under modern due process and equal protection law, justiciable grounds for checking abusive presidential action." And of course, Congress could also tighten the law, which would be the "most certain safeguard."

suspected gang members, like MS-13, drug dealers and Cartel members from the United States."

- Sept. 20, 2023, Dubuque, IA: Trump said: "I'll...invoke immediately the Alien Enemies Act to remove all known or suspected gang members…the drug dealers, the cartel members from the United States, ending the scourge of illegal alien gang violence once and for all."
- June 25, 2023, Twitter: The Trump campaign posted, "Invoke the Alien Enemies Act to remove all known or suspected Gang Members, drug dealers, or Cartel Members from the U.S." The post was reposted by Stephen Miller, who added, "Huge. Trump pledging to invoke Alien Enemies Act to remove the cartel invaders from the United States."
- June 24, 2023, Washington, DC: Trump said, "I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act...to remove all known and suspected gang members, drug dealers, or cartel members from the United States."

- "In his first term in office, Trump aggressively pursued policies that sought to limit legal immigration — and his 2024 platform signals that he would do it again," *The Washington Post* reported.

- Trump has stated his intent to implement "remigration" policies, echoing a racist concept rooted in "Identitarianism" and the need to reverse the "Great Replacement," and effectively amounting to a form of ethnic cleansing. Trump allies Stephen Miller and Laura Loomber—as well as Austrian identitarian activist Martin Sellner—approved of Trump's remigration plan. "Remigration," a "chilling notion" tied to white supremacist movements across Europe, promotes the forced repatriation of non-white immigrants, asserting that preserving cultural identity and national security requires ethnic homogeneity—essentially, "a soft-style ethnic cleansing," according to *AP*.
  - Sept. 14, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "As President I will immediately end the migrant invasion of America. We will stop all migrant flights, end all illegal entries, terminate the Kamala phone app for smuggling illegals (CBP One App), revoke deportation immunity, suspend refugee resettlement, and return Kamala's illegal migrants to their home countries (also known as remigration). I will save our cities and towns in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and all across America. MAGA2024!"
    - Later that day, Miller reshared to his X account Trump's Truth Social post, adding, "THE TRUMP PLAN TO END THE INVASION OF SMALL TOWN AMERICA: REMIGRATION!"

- Trump posted the same pledge on his X account the following day, which Laura Loomer embraced.

- Trump has said he plans to reimpose and expand his administration's previous predominantly Muslim country travel ban. (The 2024 GOP platform also states, "We will bring back the Travel Ban.") Alongside the travel ban, Trump has pledged to clamp down on refugees and those under Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or humanitarian parole programs. First, he has said he will freeze the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program

(USRAP) for countries he deems "terror-infested." In 2017 in tandem with his travel ban, Trump suspended USRAP. He went on to do so again around the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and later cut the number of admissions to a "record low." He has also said he will revoke TPS[4] for, and then deport, Haitians in Springfield, Ohio. But, according to experts, Trump is expected to terminate a majority, if not all, of the new TPS designations and decline to renew existing ones. Further, he has pledged to target humanitarian parole programs by deporting migrant "criminals," many of whom may fall under the Biden administration's humanitarian parole program for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans; and eliminate the CBP One smartphone app, which allows individuals to schedule appointments at official U.S. border crossings to seek asylum. *The New York Times* reported in November 2023 that plans could include tens of thousands of the Afghans evacuated during the 2021 Taliban takeover and granted entry to the United States. Also, Afghans who hold special visas granted for their help to U.S. forces would be revetted to check if they really did offer support.

- Throughout September and October 2024, Trump and JD Vance have falsely claimed that Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, were in the country illegally, despite the majority being legal residents. Many Haitians have been included in the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) since January 2010, following an earthquake that killed around 220,000 people. In June 2024, the Biden administration extended their legal protection through February 3, 2026, with the possibility of renewal. (Note, TPS will continue for Haitians already enrolled in the program, allowing them to maintain their status. Additionally, the redesignation will enable Haitians who have been in the United States since the beginning of June 2024 to apply for initial TPS.) As highlighted by Prof. Ryan Goodman, "The racist smears of Haitians in Springfield, Ohio shows how easily these influencers' position against 'illegal immigrants' slides into being against legal immigrants (of color)"
  - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said: "You take a look at Springfield, Ohio. … where 30,000 illegal migrants were put into a town of 50,000 people. No, no place can withstand that."
  - Oct. 2, 2024, *NewsNation* interview, responding to whether he considers Haitians in Springfield, Ohio, legal or illegal immigrants and whether he would revoke their TPS, Trump said: "In Springfield, what's happening there is horrible. … About 30,000 people were put into that community rapidly. … You have to remove the people. We cannot destroy our country. … It doesn't work. It can't work. It has nothing to do with Haiti or anything else. It doesn't work. You have to remove the people, and you have to

[4] As of October 17, 2024, the United States granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to nationals from 16 countries: Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), Cameroon, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen. Lebanon is forthcoming. See also *Congressional Research Service*. TPS will expire in 2025 for 13 of the 16 countries, while the designations for Haiti, Somalia, and Yemen will end in 2026 (unless extended).

bring them back to their own country. They are, in my opinion, it's not legal, it's not legal for anybody to do. It's not even on a human basis, it's not acceptable to the people that are there and certainly to the people that are in Springfield. Springfield is such a beautiful place. Have you seen what's happened to it? It's been overrun. You can't do that to people. They have to be removed." He continued, "Absolutely I'd revoke" TPS for Haitians "and I'd bring them back to their country."

- Sept. 23, 2024, Trump said: "The fact is, and I'll say it now, you have to get them the hell out. You have to get them out. I'm sorry. Get them out. Can't have it. Can't have it. They've destroyed it."
- Sept. 13, 2024, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, Trump falsely claimed that Haitian immigrants in Springfield were in the country illegally and "destroying" the town's "way of life." His reference to "illegal Haitian migrants" appeared to be "carefully scripted," as he read directly from his prepared remarks.
- Sept. 13, 2024, Las Vegas, NV, Trump said: "I'm angry about illegal Haitian migrants taking over Springfield."
- Sept. 13, 2024, Twitter post, JD Vance acknowledged that the Haitian migrants were legal immigrants but quickly pivoted to promoting additional baseless conspiracy theories, including the "Great Replacement" narrative. The post read, in part: "'They are here legally,' they tell us. Yes, they are here legally because Kamala Harris granted Temporary Protective Status to 100,000 Haitians. But Kamala Harris waving the magic amnesty wand is not a justification for the presence of 20,000 newcomers in Springfield. It is an indictment of her despicable open border. … Yet it is Kamala Harris who is a threat to democracy. It is Kamala Harris who would rather import new voters than persuade the ones who are already here."

- Late-September 2024, Fox News: Trump said: "I would revoke it and they get out. And, the [CBP One] app is bad, but the worst is is the flights (parole) because they tried to say 'we are going to toughen up the border a little bit,' they have planes flying over the border loaded up with illegal migrants, people that shouldn't be in our country, going to the Midwest, going to all places because everything now is a border state." He added, "Get ready to leave, especially quickly if they're criminals. Get ready to leave because you're going to be going out real fast."
- Sept. 19, 2024, *Fighting Anti-Semitism in America* event with Dr. Miriam Adelson in Washington, D.C., Trump said: "I will ban refugee resettlement from terror-infested areas like the Gaza Strip, and we will seal our border and bring back the travel ban. You remember the famous travel ban? We didn't take people from certain areas of the world because I didn't want to have people ripping down and burning our shopping centers and killing people, but we're not taking them from infested countries."
- Sept. 19, 2024, Israeli American Council Summit, Washington, Trump said, "I will ban refugee resettlement from terror-infested areas like the Gaza Strip. We will restore the travel ban, some people call it the Trump travel ban, and keep the

radical Islamic terrorists out of our country that was upheld by the Supreme Court."

- Trump has often said he will deport Venezuelans who are invading the United States, despite many of them falling under TPS. For example, on September 18, 2024, Uniondale, New York, Trump accused Venezuelan migrants of "taking over," being "violent people," and promised to "ship them back to their country." "These are violent people that they're allowing into our country. It is truly an invasion, and we're not going to let it happen. We're going to take those violent people and we're going to ship them back to their country. And if they return, they're going to pay one hell of a price."
- Sept. 14, 2024, Truth Social: "As President I will immediately end the migrant invasion of America. We will stop all migrant flights, end all illegal entries, terminate the Kamala phone app for smuggling illegals (CBP One App), revoke deportation immunity, suspend refugee resettlement, and return Kamala's illegal migrants to their home countries (also known as remigration). I will save our cities and towns in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and all across America. MAGA2024!"

  - Later that day, Miller reshared to his X account Trump's Truth Social post, adding, "THE TRUMP PLAN TO END THE INVASION OF SMALL TOWN AMERICA: REMIGRATION!"

- Sept. 5, 2024, Republican Jewish Coalition Summit: Trump said, "I will ban refugee settlements from terror-infested areas like the Gaza Strip."
- Aug. 15, 2024, Bedminster, New Jersey: Trump said: "I will ban refugee settlements from terror-infested areas like the Gaza Strip."
- July 27, 2024, St. Cloud, MN: Trump said, "On Day 1 of the Trump presidency, I will restore the travel ban, suspend refugee admission, stop the resettlement, and keep the terrorists the hell out of our country."
- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: "On day one of the Trump presidency I'm restoring the travel ban, suspending refugee admissions, and keeping terrorists the hell out of our country." He also said, "Under no circumstances shall we bring thousands of refugees from Hamas-controlled terrorist epicenters, like Gaza, to America. We just can't do it.
- Nov. 1, 2023, Agenda47: Trump said, "I will stop the outrageous abuse of parole authority."
- Oct. 17, 2023, Newsweek op-ed: Trump said: "we are going to expand each and every ban to keep America safe. We aren't bringing in anyone from Gaza or Syria or Somalia or Yemen, or Libya, or anywhere else that threatens our security."
- Oct. 16, 2023, Clive, Iowa: Trump said, "As I've already said many, many times before, I will immediately reinstate and expand the wildly successful Trump travel ban…We aren't bringing in anyone from Gaza, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, or Libya, or anywhere else that threatens our security."

- Oct. 28, 2023, annual summit of the Republican Jewish Coalition, LV, Trump said: "You remember the travel ban? On day one I will restore our travel ban."
- Sept. 20, 2023, Iowa: Trump said he would "expand" the ban "even further to keep Radical Islamic Terrorists out of our country."
- July 7, 2023, Iowa: Trump said, "When I return to office, the travel ban is coming back even bigger than before and much stronger than before. We don't want people blowing up our shopping centers. We don't want people blowing up our cities. And we don't want people stealing our farms."

- Trump may renew efforts to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which currently protects over 500,000 individuals who came to the U.S. illegally as children, granting them the right to work, study, and live legally. In June 2020, in a 5-4 opinion, the Supreme Court blocked Trump's attempt to end DACA on procedural grounds.
  - Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: When asked about separating families for deportation, Trump said he "would much rather deport them together."
  - Oct. 27, 2024, during an interview on *60 Minutes*, Tom Homan, Trump's "border czar", was asked whether mass deportations could be carried out without separating families. He responded, "Of course there is. Families can be deported together." When questioned about why an American citizen child should be forced to relocate to an unfamiliar country, he responded, "Because their parent absolutely entered the country illegally, had a child knowing they were in the country illegally. So they created that crisis."

- Trump plans to use ideological purity tests for immigrant applicants and to deport resident aliens–foreign nationals who are in the U.S. legally. In pledging to disqualify immigrants who sympathize with Islamic terrorists, Trump has lumped in groups he characterizes as communists, Marxists, and fascists. Trump's "strong ideological screening" reportedly will be led by U.S. consular officials, with screening to include searching social media accounts (a practice that began under the Trump administration). The 2024 GOP platform pledges that "Republicans will use existing Federal Law to keep foreign Christian-hating Communists, Marxists, and Socialists out of America. Those who join our Country must love our Country. We will use extreme vetting to ensure that jihadists and jihadist sympathizers are not admitted." Note that ICE and top White House lawyers under the former Trump administration concluded that ideological screenings on foreign nationals would be illegal to implement.
  - July 26, 2024, Turning Point Action summit, West Palm Beach, FL: Trump said, "And instead of pandering to the jihad sympathizer and America-hating radicals, we will deport them, we will deport them very quickly."
  - Oct. 17, 2023, *Newsweek* op-ed, Trump said: "Next, we will implement strong ideological screening for all immigrants to the United States. No longer will we allow dangerous lunatics, haters, bigots, and maniacs to get residency in our country. If you empathize with Radical Islamic terrorists and extremists, you're

disqualified. If you want to abolish the state of Israel, you're disqualified. If you support Hamas or the ideology behind Hamas, you're disqualified. And if you're a Communist, Marxist, or Fascist, you are disqualified."

- Oct. 17, 2023, *Newsweek* op-ed, Trump said: "Under my administration, we will proactively send ICE to pro-jihadist demonstrations to enforce our immigration laws and remove the violators from our country."
- Oct. 16, 2023, Iowa: Trump said, "Next we will implement strong ideological screening of all immigrants to the United States. No longer will we allow dangerous lunatics, haters, bigots, and maniacs to get residency in our country. We're not gonna let them stay here. We're...gonna have the largest deportation effort in history."
- Oct. 16, 2023, Iowa: Trump said, "If you empathize with Radical Islamic terrorists and extremists, you're disqualified. You're just disqualified. If you want to abolish the state of Israel, you're disqualified. If you support Hamas or the ideology that's having to do with that, or any of the other really sick thoughts that go through people's minds, very dangerous thoughts. You're disqualified if you're a Communist, a Marxist, or a Fascist, other than the people that are already here you are, of which many are in the Biden administration, you're disqualified. We'd like to get them out too. Maybe we'll work on that."
- Oct. 16, 2023, Iowa: Trump said, "We'll aggressively deport resident aliens with jihadist sympathies. We have to."
- Sept. 20, 2023, Iowa: Trump said he would use existing law to "expand" his travel ban and "deny entry" into the U.S. for "communists and Marxists."
- June 24, 2023, Washington, DC: Trump said he would use Section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to "order my government to deny entry to all communists and all Marxists." "Those who come to enjoy our country must love our country." "We're going to keep foreign, Christian-hating communists, Marxists and socialists out of America." Trump also said that there was a need for a "new law" to address Americans he characterizes as communists and Marxists but didn't elaborate any further.
- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "And if you come here from another country and try to bring jihadism or anti-Americanism or anti-Semitism to our campuses, we will immediately deport you, you'll be out of that school."

- Trump again said he plans to end birthright citizenship for babies born in the United States to undocumented parents, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. Trump's Agenda47 platform states, "On Day One, President Trump will sign an Executive Order to stop federal agencies from granting automatic U.S. citizenship to the children of illegal aliens. It will explain the clear meaning of the 14th Amendment, that U.S. Citizenship extends only to those both born in AND "subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States. It will make clear that going forward, the children of illegal aliens will not be granted automatic citizenship, and should not be issued passports, Social Security numbers, or be eligible for certain taxpayer funded welfare benefits. It will direct federal agencies to

require that at least one parent be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident for their future children to become automatic U.S. citizens."

- Dec. 8, 2024, *Meet the Press*: In an interview with Kristin Welker, Trump doubled down on his promise to end birthright citizenship. When asked about his plans to implement this policy on day one, he responded unequivocally "Yes, absolutely." Shrugging off constitutional precedent afforded under the 14th Amendment, he added, "We're going to have to get it changed. We'll maybe have to go back to the people. But we have to end it."

  WELKER: You promised to end birthright citizenship on day one.

  TRUMP: Correct.

  WELKER: Is that still your plan?

  TRUMP: Yeah. Absolutely.

  WELKER: The 14th Amendment, though, says that, quote, "All persons born in the United States are citizens."

  TRUMP: Yeah.

  WELKER: Can you get around the 14th Amendment with an executive action?

  TRUMP: Well, we're going to have to get it changed. We'll maybe have to go back to the people. But we have to end it. We're the only country that has it, you know.

  WELKER: Through an executive action? You're going to —

  TRUMP: You know we're the only country that has it. Do you know if somebody sets a foot, just a foot, one foot, you don't need two, on our land, "Congratulations you are now a citizen of the United States of America." Yes, we're going to end that because it's ridiculous.

  WELKER: Through executive action?

  TRUMP: Do you know — well, if we can, through executive action. I was going to do it through executive action but then we had to fix COVID first, to be honest with you. We have to end it. It's ridiculous. Do you know we're

the only country in the world that has it? Do you know that? There's not one other country.

WELKER: Well, what about the legal challenge, the inevitable legal challenges that will come?

TRUMP: Well, that's the other thing. Do you know we have thousands of judges? Somebody walks onto our land and we have to now say, "Welcome to the United States." They could be a criminal or not a criminal. We release them into our country. It's called catch and release. We release them into our country. Wait, just one second. And now they get them lawyers. And the lawyers are good lawyers. And everybody has a lawyer. And do you know how many judges we have? Thousands. Thousands. Now, here's what other countries do. They come onto the land and they say, "I'm sorry, you have to go." And they take them out. Okay, with us, once they touch our land, we're into litigation that lasts for years. Costs us hundreds of billions of dollars. We have judges, and I'm sure they're all honest but I don't know that for a fact, you can imagine what's going on with the judges. But just so you — because I have a lot of judges, I tell you what, I know more about judges than any human being in history. Look, we have judges. Every time somebody puts two feet or even one foot on a piece of our land, it's welcome to long-term litigation. Other countries, every other country, when somebody walks on and they see that they're here illegally, they walk them off, they take them back to where they came from. We have to get rid of this system. It's killing our country.

- Dec. 19, 2024: In an interview with CNN's Kaitlan Collins in response to a question about ending birthright citizenship, Trump's announced "Border Czar" Tom Homan said, "I don't think it's enshrined in the Constitution at all—not the way I read it. But then again I'm not a constitutional scholar. We'll let the courts decide that on the birthright citizenship. I'll say this: it's a major driver, a major magnet for illegal immigration."
- Nov. 11, 2024, posted on X: Mark Paoletta, who was recently nominated to serve again as General Counsel at OMB and is working on Trump's transition team, wrote Trump will "end[] automatic citizenship for children of illegal aliens."
- July 30, 2024, 2 News Nevada, JD Vance said he "really do[es]" agree with Trump's plan to end birthright citizenship. "I don't think that's what the Founders of the country envision[ed] … By definition a lot of them have broken the laws to come into the country – I don't think we should reward that."
- June 10, 2023, Georgia GOP Convention: "We're going to do an Executive Order Day One, so important, ending automatic citizenship for children of illegal aliens."
- May 30, 2023, video posted on X: "As part of my plan to secure the border on Day 1…I will sign an executive order making clear to federal agencies that under the

correct interpretation of the law, going forward, the future children of illegal aliens will not receive automatic U.S. citizenship."

- Oct. 29, 2018, *Axios* interview: "It was always told to me that you needed a constitutional amendment. Guess what? You don't." "You can definitely do it with an Act of Congress. But now they're saying I can do it just with an executive order." "We're the only country in the world where a person comes in and has a baby, and the baby is essentially a citizen of the United States ... with all of those benefits." "It's ridiculous. It's ridiculous. And it has to end." "It's in the process. It'll happen...with an executive order."

- If Trump returns to office, a renewed crackdown on naturalized citizens appears likely, with close allies and Project 2025 signaling strong support for such measures. Indeed, the surge in voter purges in the 2024 election, as well as broader voter intimidation efforts, have had unsettling consequences for naturalized citizens across the country, a group that could sway the 2024 election. Under his prior administration, Trump's policies scrutinized naturalized citizens with intensified enforcement, including expanded denaturalization efforts that often focused on minor application inconsistencies or past legal issues. As *The Washington Post* reported, "the Trump administration's policies that kept citizenship out of reach even for millions of green-card holders. Under Trump's watch, the fee to naturalize jumped 80 percent, from $640 to $1,170. The average time between filing an application and naturalization nearly doubled, from five to 10 months, creating a backlog of over 700,000 — and that was before the additional delays brought about by covid-19. Immigration officials crafted new grounds for denying applications for citizenship, launched a denaturalization campaign to take citizenship away from some naturalized citizens and rolled out a longer and more complex citizenship test (which Biden has already ended). Taken together, these barriers kept hundreds of thousands of legal immigrants from naturalizing in 2020."
  - Project 2025's chapter on the Department of Homeland Security, written by Ken Cuccinelli, states, "structural changes should include reimplementation of the USCIS denaturalization unit." p. 143.
  - Oct. 11, 2023, Twitter post, Stephen Miller said: "Yes. We started a new denaturalization project under Trump. In 2025, expect it to be turbocharged."

- Trump could significantly expand "expedited removals" in order to fast track deportations of those in the United States without authorization. Instead of using such removals for those picked up within 100 miles to the border and soon after crossing, Trump is reported to want to use the sped-up process for those who have been in the country for extended periods of time as he did previously.

- Trump's Agenda47 platform pledges to "again end catch-and-release" and "restore Remain in Mexico." The "Remain in Mexico" policy, formally known as the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), required asylum seekers to wait in Mexico for U.S. immigration court hearings, often limiting their access to due process. This policy aimed

to address the controversial practice of “catch and release”—a term itself criticized for misrepresenting the legal process—where DHS released detained asylum seekers into the U.S. to await hearings. Under Trump’s MPP, at least 70,000 people were sent back to Mexico from January 2019 to December 2020, though DHS did not disclose an exact count. Facing similar constraints, the Biden administration returned an additional 7,505 people to Mexico under court order between December 2021 and October 2022.

- Oct. 24, 2024, Tempe, AZ, Trump said: “I will end catch and release. You know we had a policy called Remain in Mexico. People think that was easier to get. That was so good. They ended it immediately.”
- Oct. 21, 2024, Greenville, NC, Trump said, “We’ll have catch and release into Mexico if that's OK.”
- Oct. 11, 2024, Aurora, CO, Trump said at a rally, “I will restore Remain in Mexico. Remember, I got it done with the Mexican government.”
- Oct. 23, 2024, Duluth, GA, Trump said, “And I will end catch and release. They'll be released into Mexico. We will have catch and release but not into America. It'll be catch and release into Mexico.”
- Sept. 26, 2024, New York press conference, Trump said, “I will restore ‘Remain in Mexico.’ I'm going to tell Mexico, "Thank you very much. You're putting it back right away. You're putting it back." And they will do it, too, when I tell them.

- Trump intends an aggressive (even coercive) approach to Latin America to achieve his goals of curbing migration and facilitating large-scale deportations through revived agreements and economic pressure.
  - CNN reported in November 2024 that his team plans a strategy combining incentives and sanctions, including relying heavily on Mexico and reviving “Remain in Mexico,” renewing Asylum Cooperative Agreements with support from El Salvador, engaging Panama to block migrants through the Darien Gap, and threatening Venezuela with sanctions for noncompliance.
  - In August 2023, *The New York Times* was the first to report on Trump’s plan to use coercive diplomacy to secure international cooperation on immigration enforcement, including making cooperation on immigration enforcement a condition for other bilateral agreements. The report detailed plans to revive the Remain in Mexico policy, which requires asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their claims are processed in the United States, and to negotiate new bilateral and multilateral agreements with foreign nations. According to Stephen Miller, Trump would aim to reinstate and expand agreements similar to those implemented during his first term, which redirected migrants to countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.[5]

[5] The previous Trump administration’s Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs) with Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador diverged significantly from the U.S.-Canada Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) in both purpose and operation. While the STCA was designed to promote shared responsibility and deter “venue shopping” between two nations, the ACAs imposed a unilateral transfer model aimed at blocking access to the U.S. asylum process by swiftly

- Trump underscored his coercive stance in an Agenda47 video, saying, “either we will get the full cooperation of other governments...or we will expose every bribe, every pay off, every kick back, and every bit of corruption that is allowing the cartel to preserve their brutal reign.”

- Trump has promised to impose severe penalties for deportees who return to the United States as well as immigrants that kill U.S. citizens or law enforcement.
  - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said:
    - “If they come back into our country, it's an automatic 10 years in jail with no possibility of parole.” He added,
    - “And I'm here by calling for the death penalty for any migrant that kills an American citizen or law enforcement officer.”
  - October 26, 2024, State College, PA:
    - “And if they come back into our country, it's an automatic 10 years in jail with no possibility of parole, zero possibility.”
    - “And I am hereby calling for the death penalty for any migrant that kills an American citizen or a law enforcement officer.”
  - Oct. 24, 2024, Tempe, AZ, Trump said:
    - “And if they come back into our country, it's an automatic 10 years in jail with no possibility of parole.”
    - “And I'm hereby calling for the death penalty for any migrant that kills an American citizen or a law enforcement officer.”
  - Oct. 23, 2024, Duluth, GA, Trump said:
    - “And if they come back into our country, it's an automatic 10 years in jail with no possibility of parole. Automatic, if they come back into our country.”
    - “And I'm hereby calling for the death penalty for any migrant that kills an American citizen or a law enforcement officer.”
  - Oct. 21, 2024, Greenville, NC, Trump said:
    - “And if they come back into our country, it's an automatic 10 years in jail with no possibility of parole.”

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deporting migrants to third countries. Unlike the STCA, which was negotiated over several years and includes mutual obligations, independent oversight, and procedural safeguards, the ACAs were rushed into effect through executive agreements that bypassed these protections. Broad in scope, these agreements apply to migrants arriving at or between ports of entry, offering no mechanism to appeal removal decisions or avoid formal removal orders. Although both agreements share a legal basis under § 208(a)(2)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the ACAs expanded this framework far beyond its intended scope. They authorized the deportation of asylum-seekers to countries with minimal asylum infrastructure, often with no connection to the migrant, raising concerns about adherence with the non-refoulement principle. The ACA’s reflect a punitive shift in U.S. asylum policy, prioritizing deterrence over protection and gutting access to fair and full asylum procedures. This approach not only undermines international obligations but is in contrast with the collaborative spirit of the STCA, creating additional barriers for those seeking refuge.

        - "And I am hereby calling for the death penalty for any migrant that kills an American citizen or law enforcement officer."

- Trump has pledged to terminate all work permits and housing benefits for undocumented immigrants, as well as clamp down on other "tax-payer giveaways" to purportedly save Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: "You know, a lot of these migrants that are coming in are going onto Social Security and Medicare. Your programs are going to be destroyed. You're not going to be able to get in[to] your hospitals. You see the lines of people you can no longer get in your hospitals. You feel sick, you want to go to your hospital. You have hundreds and even thousands of people trying to get into hospitals."
    - 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump said: "I am going to protect Social Security and Medicare. Democrats are going to destroy Social Security and Medicare because all of these people, by the millions, they're coming in. They're going to be on Social Security and Medicare and other things and you're not able to afford it. They are destroying your Social Security and your Medicare."
    - Nov. 4, 2023, Florida Freedom Summit: Trump said, "On day one I will shut down this travesty and terminate all work permits for illegal aliens and demand that Congress send me a bill outlawing all welfare payments to illegal migrants of any kind."
    - Nov. 1, 2023, campaign video: Trump said, "I will reinstate my action making illegals ineligible for public housing."
    - Nov. 1, 2023, campaign video: Trump said, "We will terminate all work permits for illegal aliens, and I will demand that Congress send me a bill blocking any future president from abusing his power to distribute welfare benefits in this manner."
    - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, speaking on the purported impact of immigration is having on healthcare and Social Security, Trump said: "Day one of the Trump administration, we will cut off all of Biden's taxpayer giveaways to illegal aliens." He later added: "We will rescue our healthcare system from Joe Biden's migrant invasion. It was recently announced that crooked Joe is now giving Obamacare and all free government health care to illegal aliens."

- Trump has vowed to prosecute charities, nonprofits and aid organizations that support immigration and asylum (note: the autocratic playbook of cracking down on nongovernmental organizations as "foreign agents").
    - Nov. 4, 2023, Florida Freedom Summit, Trump said: "And for any radical left charity, non-profit or so called aid organizations supporting these caravans and illegal aliens, we will prosecute them for their participation in human trafficking, child smuggling and every other crime we can find."

- Trump said he intends to use criminal penalties for bureaucrats who do not comply with his "total ban on … using taxpayer dollars to free illegal aliens."

    - Dec. 21, 2022, Truth Social: Trump posted, “NO AMNESTY! Our border is open because Joe Biden has ordered it to be open and because Biden has broken the law and torn it into shreds. He has shredded our system, and he is destroying our Country. We need a total ban on Biden using taxpayer dollars to free illegal aliens — and criminal penalties for administrative noncompliance, which happens every single minute of every single day.”

- Trump has refused to rule out bringing back his controversial “family separation” policy, which forcibly separated migrant children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border as a deterrent against illegal immigration. With Tom Homan, the “father” and “architect” of the family separation policy, now picked as Trump’s proposed border czar, the push to reinstate the policy appears increasingly likely. This policy, part of the administration's “zero tolerance” approach, resulted in the separation of over 5,500 children, causing significant emotional and psychological trauma for many families.As of December 2023, the government, however, had yet to locate 68 children separated under the original policy, raising ongoing humanitarian concerns.
    - In August 2023, a settlement agreement prohibited the reinstatement of such policies until December 2031. But Trump allies, like Gene Hamilton—a former senior Justice Department official and now Vice President and General Counsel of Stephen Miller’s America First Legal—writing in Project 2025’s Mandate for Leadership, have called for the Department of Justice to “[p]ursue proactive litigation to advance the federal government’s interests in areas where erroneous precedent curtails authorities provided by Congress,” citing the *Flores* Settlement Agreement as an example. While distinct from family separation, this reflects a broader strategy of challenging court settlements that constrain executive actions. The ACLU, which led the litigation against the policy, warned in June 2024, “An attempt to reinstate the policy would not only be morally repugnant; critically, it would also violate the legally binding, court-ordered settlement agreement ... If Trump endeavors to reinstitute his failed and flawed family separation policy, we would immediately bring the issue to court.”
    - May 11, 2023, Goffstown, NH: During a CNN town hall, Trump said, “Well, when you have that policy, people don’t come. If a family hears they’re going to be separated, they love their family, they don’t come. So I know it sounds harsh,” Pressed further by the moderator, Trump resisted giving a firm answer. “We have to save our country,” he said. “When you say to a family that if you come we’re going to break you up, they don’t come.”

- Trump wants to refuse asylum claims by reimposing Title 42, a policy he used during Covid-19 by claiming that migrants carry infectious diseases like tuberculosis and other communicable diseases.
    - Oct. 11, 2024, Aurora, CO, Trump pledge, “I will bring back Title 42, medical rejections. People come in, they’re very sick. Very sick. They're coming into our country. They're very, very, very sick with highly contagious disease, and they're

let into our country to infect our country. And they're coming in at numbers that nobody's ever seen before."
    - Sept. 28, 2024, Prairie du Chien, WI, Trump said, "I will bring back Title 42."
    - Sept. 26, 2024, New York press conference, Trump said, "I will bring back Title 42."
    - June 30, 2023, Moms for Liberty Event, Trump said, "And I will use Title 42...to end the child trafficking crisis by returning all trafficked children to their families in their home countries immediately."

- Trump has said he plans to end sanctuary cities that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities, renewing his previous administration's attacks on the policy. The 2024 GOP platform states, "Republicans will cut federal Funding to sanctuary jurisdictions that release dangerous Illegal Alien criminals onto our streets, rather than handing them over to ICE. We will require local cooperation with Federal Immigration Enforcement." *The Marshall Project's* October 2024 review of Trump's public statements found he claimed that unauthorized immigrants contribute to crime in sanctuary cities more than 185 times.
    - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said: "America is a sanctuary for criminals and for illegal aliens that are in our country illegally. I will immediately ban all sanctuary cities in the United States."
    - October 26, 2024, State College, PA, Trump said: "I will outlaw sanctuary cities."
    - April 2, 2024, Grand Rapids, MI: "We will end deadly sanctuary cities immediately."
    - April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: "And we will end deadly sanctuary cities."
    - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "We will shut down deadly sanctuary cities, such as Newark and Philadelphia. We will not let criminals come into those cities."

- Trump has continued to use inflammatory and xenophobic rhetoric against immigrants whom he has likened to "animals" and says seek to "invade" and "poison the blood" of the United States. "Trump, through his speeches, tweets and campaign ads, has elevated the idea of an 'invasion,' once a fringe view often espoused by white nationalists, into the public discourse," *The New York Times* wrote. The 2024 GOP platform pledges to "STOP THE MIGRANT INVASION" and end "the open-border policies that have opened the floodgates to a tidal wave of illegal Aliens." "Republicans offer an aggressive plan to stop the open-border policies that have opened the floodgates to a tidal wave of illegal Aliens … We will end the Invasion at the Southern Border … We will end the Invasion at the Southern Border."
    - The inflammatory language used by Trump and Republicans concerning immigration is well-documented:
        - A *USA TODAY* analysis in August 2019 found that during the 64 rallies Trump had held since taking office, he used the words "predator," "invasion," "alien," "killer," "criminal" and "animal" more than 500 times in

total. He said “invasion” at least 19 times, “animal” 34 times, and “killer” over 30 times.

- Between January and May 2019, Trump’s campaign used the word “invasion” in at least 2,000 Facebook ads, according to CNN and *Media Matters* analyses.
- Between May 2018 and May 2019, at least nine other Republican lawmakers and candidates for office ran similar ads on Facebooks referring to an immigration “invasion.”
- As of May 1, 2024, *America’s Voice* (AV) had documented 165 Members of the 118th Congress using “invasion” rhetoric in their official capacities 1,259 times. Twelve bills invoking the “invasion” conspiracy theory have been introduced, with 47 different members co-sponsoring at least one of these bills. Further, AV analysis of AdImpact data found that “Republican-aligned campaigns have spent more than $472M on ads with negative immigration mentions so far this year – more than twice as much as 2022 and 11 times as much as 2020 over the same period. At least $40.7M has been spent on 83 unique ads that peddle the white nationalist ‘invasion’ rhetoric.”
- The courts are now grappling with invasion rhetoric by state officials. In two major cases before the Fifth Circuit, Texas argues that illegal immigration and drug trafficking constitute an "invasion," justifying state war powers under Article I of the Constitution. While courts have so far rejected this claim, acceptance could empower border states to initiate hostilities against foreign nations and permit federal suspension of habeas corpus in response to perceived “invasions” without congressional approval. See further *Lawfare* & *Just Security*.

- Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said:
  - “I will stop invasion of criminals coming into our country,”
  - “On day one, I will launch the largest deportation program in American history to get the criminals out. I will rescue every city and town that has been invaded and conquered, and we will put these vicious and bloodthirsty criminals in jail. Kick them the hell out of our country as fast as possible.”
  - “We will stop the illegal immigration that's taking place at levels never seen before. We will stop it cold and once and for all. We will not be invaded. We will not be occupied. We will not be overrun. We will not be conquered.”
- October 26, 2024, State College, PA, Trump said: “We’ve become like a garbage can for the rest of the world. They’re throwing all their garbage into our country. And we’re not taking it. And they know we're not taking it. They don’t want me to win this election, that I can tell you, because we live with these people and we’ll get killed by these people. … I will rescue every town across America that's been invaded and conquered.”

- Oct. 11, 2024, Aurora, CO, Trump said, “Thereby guaranteeing unfettered access for Venezuelan gangs and thugs and criminals. And, you know, we're talking a lot about Venezuela because Aurora is really infected by Venezuela, but they're coming from all countries, all countries.” Pledging to bring back Title 42, Trump continued: “People come in, they’re very sick. Very sick. They're coming into our country. They're very, very, very sick with highly contagious disease, and they're let into our country to infect our country. And they're coming in at numbers that nobody's ever seen before.” “We will stop the invasion of illegals into our country.”
- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said:
  - “We have millions of people come. I mean, they're they've poured in. They’re here, they're here. … The fact is, these people, these 20, 25 million people, are already in our country. What they've done to us, it’s suicidal. It is suicidal. What they've done to this country, nothing like that has ever, it's an invasion of our country.”
  - “Starting on day one, I will seal the border and stop the ‘migrant invasion’ of our country.”
  - “We will stop the invasion [and] end ‘migrant crime.’”
  - “They're ruining your life. They're ruining your lifestyle. They're ruining your way of life.”
- August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump made several references to a migrant invasion.
  - “Our country is being destroyed by a radical political class that sends our guardsmen and women to defend the borders of distant foreign nations while they surrender our own borders to an invasion right here at home, the likes of which we've never seen before.”
  - “On day one, I will seal the border, and I will stop the invasion of millions of people into our country.”
  - “I called it an invasion. You know, I got the wall built by using military funds. I said, ‘our country is being invaded.’ And I was able to do it.”
  - “As you know, Kamala’s border invasion has directly impacted thousands of National Guard families.”
  - “I want to salute every Guard member who has deployed as part of Operation Lone Star to defend America from her [Kamala Harris’s] migrant invasion.”
- August 3, 2024, Atlanta, GA, during a campaign rally, JD Vance stated that “10 million illegal aliens have invaded this country … It’s probably more than that.” He had previously suggested that 20 million “illegal aliens” had entered. Trump said that “40 or 50 million illegal aliens will invade our country during the next four years.” “On day one, we will seal the border, stop the invasion and send the illegal aliens back home, and we'll do it very quickly,” Trump added.
- July 31, 2024, National Association of Black Journalists Convention, Trump said: “My message is to stop people from invading our country that are taking, frankly, a lot of problems with it … I will tell you that coming from the border are millions and millions of people that happen to be taking black jobs … They’re coming in, and

they're coming in, they're invading. It's an invasion of millions of people, probably 15, 16, 17 million people. I have a feeling it's much more than that.

- July 26, 2024, Turning Point Action summit, FL, Trump said: "On day one, I will seal the border and stop the invasion of our country."
- During the 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump made several warnings about an "invasion" of illegal immigrants flooding the cities, spreading "misery, crime, poverty, disease." He mentioned an "invasion" by immigrants 12 times.
  - He said the United States has "an illegal immigration crisis...It's a massive invasion at our southern border that has spread misery, crime, poverty, disease, and destruction to communities all across our land. Nobody's ever seen anything like it." He later said "We have to stop the invasion into our country that's killing hundreds of thousands of people a year. We're not going to let that happen."
  - "Today, our cities are flooded with illegal aliens."
  - Trump claimed that "[t]he greatest invasion in history is taking place right here in our country. They are coming in from every corner of the earth, not just from South America, but from Africa, Asia, the Middle East. They're coming from everywhere. They're coming at levels that we've never seen before. It is an invasion indeed, and this administration does absolutely nothing to stop them."
  - "But no hope or dream we have for America can succeed unless we stop the illegal immigrant invasion. The worst that's ever been seen anywhere in the world. There's never been an invasion anywhere. Third world countries would fight with sticks and stones not to let this happen. The invasion at our southern border, we will stop it and we will stop it quickly."
- March 17, 2024, Fox News interview, confronted on his use of words like "animals," "vermin," and "poisoning of the blood," which echo the language of Hitler and Mussolini, Trump defended his statements that "our country is being poisoned." "We can be nice about it, we can talk about, 'Oh, I want to be politically correct,' but we have people coming in from prisons and jails, long-term murderers, people with sentences that the rest of their lives they're going to spend in some jail in some country that many people have never even heard of. They're all being released into our country." He continued: "These are people at the highest level of crime, and then you have mental institutions and insane asylums — I always say the difference is one is 'Silence of the Lambs,' you know, it's a mental institution on steroids, OK? — and those mental institutions and insane asylums are being emptied out into the United States, and then you have terrorists pouring in at levels we have never seen before."
- March 16, 2024, Daytona, OH, again promising to carry out the "largest domestic deportation operation in American history," Trump said, "Young people, they're in jail for years, if you call them people, I don't know if you call them people. In some cases they are not people, in my opinion, but I'm not allowed to say that because the radical left say, 'that's a terrible thing'." "These are animals, okay, and we have to stop it," he said.

        - Trump said, “We’re gonna get them out fast. We’re gonna have the largest deportation operation in history,” before proceeding to read the lyrics of the song “The Snake,” as he often has since 2016, which he called a “very accurate metaphor” for the U.S.-Mexico border and those “people we have coming in.” “We’re taking in snakes, we’re taking in snakes,” Trump said after ending the poem. “These are tougher than anyone we’ve got in the country. These are hardened criminals and we’ve got hundreds of thousands of them.” He referred to one person as an “illegal monster.”
    - April 2, 2024, Grand Rapids, MI, Trump described immigrants as “animals” and “not humans.” According to *POLITICO*, Trump likened undocumented immigrants to “animals” nearly half a dozen times. As the crowd waited for Trump, “a short video featuring grisly clips of news reports documenting crimes allegedly committed by immigrants played over dramatic music.” Speaking on the death of Laken Riley, Trump referred to her suspected killer as “an illegal alien animal.” “The Democrats say, ‘Please don’t call them animals. They’re humans.’ I said, ‘No, they're not humans, they’re not humans, they’re animals.” He went on to say, “I’ll tell you that the illegal alien trespassers, they must go back to their homes, they have to go back because no country, no country can stand this invasion.” “It’s wrecking our civilization.”
    - April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: “With your vote, I will seal the border, I will stop the invasion, I will end the carnage, bloodshed and killing, and we will crush the human traffickers. You know, they traffic in women, mostly in women. We will vanquish the child smugglers. And we will liberate this nation from crooked Joe and his migrant armies of dangerous criminals once and for all. This is an invasion of our country. And by the way, hundreds of thousands of people between the drugs that come in the border and all of the death that’s brought into the border in so many different ways. Hundreds of thousands of people are being killed in our country every year. If we had a war with a country like Mexico, we wouldn’t lose people like that. This is bigger than a war.” “We are being invaded and invaded by a lot of people that are people we don’t want in our country. I will never, ever let that happen,” Trump said, later adding, “And think of it, the legions and legions of Biden migrants pouring into the [country,] it’s really becoming a third world country, we are actually becoming if you think about it a third world country, and we're not going to let that happen.”
    - March 9, 2024 Rome, GA, Trump said: “I will seal the border … and I will stop this invasion … I will end … the conquest of our country. They’re conquered our country. These people are conquering our country. They’re horrible people.”
    - Feb. 29, 2024, Fox News interview, Trump said to Sean Hannity, “So it’s a very terrible thing what’s — our country is being poisoned. We’re really being poisoned.”
    - Jan. 25, 2024, Truth Social, Trump said: “When I was President, we had the most secure Border in History. Joe Biden has surrendered our Border, and is aiding and abetting a massive Invasion of millions of Illegal Migrants into the United States. Instead of fighting to protect our Country from this onslaught, Biden is,

unbelievably, fighting to tie the hands of Governor Abbott and the State of Texas, so that the Invasion continues unchecked. In the face of this National Security, Public Safety, and Public Health Catastrophe, Texas has rightly invoked the Invasion Clause of the Constitution, and must be given full support to repel the Invasion."

- Jan. 5, 2024, Sioux Center, IA: Trump said: "But a vote for Donald Trump in these caucuses is a vote to secure our border. It's a vote to stop the invasion of millions of people from parts unknown. We don't even know where the hell they come from. They come from parts unknown."
- Dec. 16, 2023, Durham, NH, Trump said: "They're poisoning the blood of our country," adding, "all over the world they are pouring into our country."
- Nov. 8, 2023, Hialeah, FL: Trump said: "Anybody ever hear of Hannibal Lecter? "He was a nice fellow. But that's what's coming into our country right now."
- Sept. 2023 interview with *The National Pulse*, Trump said that immigration into the United States is "poisoning the blood of our country." "Nobody has any idea where these people are coming from, and we know they come from prisons. We know they come from mental institutions and insane asylums. We know they're terrorists. Nobody has ever seen anything like we're witnessing right now. It is a very sad thing for our country. It's poisoning the blood of our country. It's so bad, and people are coming in with disease. People are coming in with every possible thing that you could have."
- March 13, 2023, Davenport, IA, Trump said: "And I said, 'This is an invasion of our country.' And it is, by the way. This is an invasion of our country, what's coming across our border. It's no different than soldiers. And they're bringing a lot of different problems than soldiers would bring. They're not bringing merely bullets. They're bringing plenty of them, but they're causing tremendous problems for our country. And it's a problem that we may have a very, very long…Unless we do something quickly, and we have to do it smart, and we have to work with law enforcement to do it properly, it's not going to be easy, but they're hurting our country. They're killing the blood, the lifestream of our country, and we're going to do something about it."
- March 5, 2023, CPAC, Trump said: "Other countries are emptying out their prisons, insane asylums and mental institutions and sending all of their problems right into their dumping ground: the U.S.A…We have complete chaos. Fentanyl is pouring in. Families are being wiped out, destroyed, and there's death everywhere, all caused by incompetence."
- Nov. 14, 2022, Mar-a-Lago, Trump said: "Our Southern border has been erased, and our country is being invaded by millions and millions of unknown people…We're being poisoned."
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "And among my first actions upon taking office will be to…seal the border and stop the invasion of our country."
- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump spoke about the "border invasion," which he also called the "Biden invasion." He said, "on day one, we will begin the largest domestic deportation operation in American history." He also said, "On day one of

my new administration, I will seal the border, stop the invasion of people pouring through our border and send Joe Biden's illegal aliens back home where they belong." He warned, "Millions and millions of people are taking over our cities or suburbs. It cannot be sustained by any country." After reading the lyrics of the song "The Snake," as he often does when criticizing immigrants during his campaign rallies, Trump went on to say: "When I return to the White House, we will stop the plunder, rape, slaughter, and destruction of the American suburbs, cities and towns. They're destroying your cities. They're destroying your towns and suburbs."

- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: "But we're going to immediately seal the border, we're going to stop the invasion, we're going to send Joe Biden's illegal aliens back home, where they belong, we're going to send them back home where they belong. In addition to criminals, drugs, terrorists, mental patients, Joe Biden's border catastrophe is also bringing colossal costs, unbelievable costs of being brought in by this catastrophe on our border. Crooked Joe is flooding our country, with millions and millions of low wage migrants from crime ridden countries all over the world. This isn't just South America, they're come from all over the world. Last week, 22 from the Congo in Africa. They're coming from Africa, they're coming from Asia, they're coming from the Middle East." Trump later said: "But it should be no surprise that in addition to the millions and millions of people invading our country from the border, crooked Joe is now reportedly planning…to bring massive numbers of Gazans from the Middle East…to your American towns, your towns and villages. Your towns and villages will now be accepting people from Gaza. Lots of people from Gaza and, and various other places, Yemen, lots of other places…He's now delivering thousands. He just announced last night he's going to deliver thousands of people to a town near you. Joe Biden seems…determined to create the conditions for an October 7 style attack right here in America. It's gonna happen. with all of these people coming in from the southern border, you know." And add "That for a year and a half they've been actually flying planes in and landing in towns all over the country. And they're flying them in by the thousands. They're flying them in, going over the border, they are flying them in."
- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: "Under no circumstances shall we bring thousands of refugees from Hamas-controlled terrorist epicenters, like Gaza, to America. We just can't do it. You know, we also have to run our country. It's nice to be nice. It's nice to be good. We got to run our country, our country's in trouble. Our country might not survive. I'll tell you what, if we don't win this election, I don't think our country is going to survive. I will say it and I've never said that publicly, I don't think. But I felt it for a long time. I actually think our country is not going to survive. There are plenty of neighboring Muslim countries to take them, they should take them. They don't want them by the way. They don't want them, they don't want them. We do not need a Jihad in the United States of America. We do not need our once great cities to become hotbeds of terrorism."

- April 6, 2024, Palm Beach, FL, speaking at a multimillion-dollar fund-raiser, Trump said, “These are people coming in from prisons and jails. They’re coming in from just unbelievable places and countries, countries that are a disaster,” the *New York Times* reported. Seemingly referring to an instance during his presidency when he called Haiti and some African nations “shithole countries,” compared to some European countries, Trump went on to say: “And when I said, you know,’ Why can’t we allow people to come in from nice countries,’ I’m trying to be nice,” adding, “Nice countries, you know like Denmark, Switzerland? Do we have any people coming in from Denmark? How about Switzerland? How about Norway?” He continued, “And you know, they took that as a very terrible comment, but I felt it was fine.”
- Dec. 16, 2023, New Hampshire, Trump said: “They’re poisoning the blood of our country … “They’ve poisoned mental institutions and prisons all over the world. Not just in South America, not just the three or four countries that we think about, but all over the world they’re coming into our country from Africa, from Asia.” Three days later he doubled down on his comments but denied he had read Hitler’s “Mein Kampf.” “They’re ruining our country. And it’s true, they’re destroying the blood of our country,” he said, adding, “They’re destroying the blood of our country. They’re destroying the fabric of our country.”

- Trump has echoed the white supremacist conspiracy theory known as the “Great Replacement.” This ideology—which has garnered support from MAGA Republicans, MAGA media, and beyond—alleges that Democrats and elites intend to dilute the white American population and improve electoral gains by bringing non-white migrants into the country. The claim is false, with reports having shown the occurrence is rare. “During the 2010s replacement theory became popular in the United States among white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and right-wing militias, among other extremists, whose racist rhetoric and ideas were more freely expressed during the presidency of Donald Trump,” according to *Britannica*. More recently, the Trump Campaign has been embracing the racist theory. Indeed,the 2024 GOP platform states, “we must deport the millions of illegal Migrants who Joe Biden has deliberately encouraged to invade our Country. … We must not allow Biden’s Migrant Invasion to alter our Country.” It continues, “We will implement measures to secure our Elections, including … proof of Citizenship … . We will not allow the Democrats to give Voting Rights to illegal Aliens.” A *Washington Post* analysis of Trump’s Truth Social media posts found that between Nov. 15, 2022, and March 15, 2024, “[s]ome of his posts about immigration also echo the ‘great replacement theory.’” A *USA TODAY* review found, “At least three contributors to Project 2025 have supported the racist ‘Great Replacement’ theory.”
  - For further details on false claims of noncitizen voting in U.S. elections see *Section X* below.
  - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said:
    - “That's who we're allowing into our country. We're not going to have a country any longer. That's who we're allowing. The United States is now an occupied country, but it will soon be an occupied country no longer.”

        - “We will stop the illegal immigration that's taking place at levels never seen before. We will stop it cold and once and for all. We will not be invaded. We will not be occupied. We will not be overrun. We will not be conquered.”
    - October 26, 2024, State College, PA, Trump said: “And the United States has now become essentially an occupied country. We're an occupied country. … We’ve become like a garbage can for the rest of the world. They’re throwing all their garbage into our country. And we’re not taking it. And they know we're not taking it. They don’t want me to win this election, that I can tell you, because we live with these people and we’ll get killed by these people. … I will rescue every town across America that's been invaded and conquered. They've been conquered. These towns have been conquered.”
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said:
        - “You’re being overrun by people. They’re not being checked, they’re not being vetted. They’re taking over our country. They’re forming armies in our country.”
        - “In Aurora, Colorado, entire apartment complexes are being taken over by armed Venezuela gangs with weapons the likes of which even the military doesn’t see. … This is like a military force, and they’re vicious, violent people.”
        - “They're ruining your life. They're ruining your lifestyle. They're ruining your way of life.”
    - August 13, 2024, Twitter: The official Trump War Room Twitter campaign account shared a post featuring contrasting images: a peaceful residential neighborhood labeled “Your Neighborhood Under Trump,” and a chaotic scene of Black and Hispanic migrants in New York, captioned “Your Neighborhood Under Kamala.” The post carried the message: “Import the third world. Become the third world,” implying a decline in American neighborhoods due to immigration policies under a potential Kamala Harris administration.

- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: “Why would somebody want to have people pouring into our country, unvetted unchecked, we know nothing about them? Even from a health standpoint, they're coming and they have problems. It’s sad. But those problems are contagious, other people will get those problems. Why would, why would anybody want this?” Trump went on to give three explanations. First, “They hate our country.” Second, “They're stupid.” Finally, he added, “And the other thing is that they want those votes, you know, and you wouldn't think they could do them that quickly. But they're trying to sign people up that just got here that don't speak a word of English, that have lived in prisons and lived in mental institutions, they want the vote.”
- April 2, 2024, Grand Rapids, MI, Trump said: “Many of them are military age, which is very strange. You don’t see very many women coming in and you see a lot of them coming in, they’re about 19 to 25, 26 years old. Especially from China. We have 29,000 over the last few months. 29,000 from China, and they all seem to be perfectly fit for military service, ready for military service. It’s crazy.”
- Feb. 29, 2024, Eagle Pass, TX, Trump told Texas state officials that Biden is “allowing thousands and thousands of people to come in from China, Iran, Yemen, the Congo, Syria and a lot of other nations. Many nations are not very friendly to us. He's transported the entire columns of fighting-age men and they're all at a certain age and you look at them, and I said ‘they look like warriors to me, something's going on.’ It's bad.”

    - Feb. 29, 2024, Fox News interview, “They're coming from numbers and countries that you wouldn’t believe. So you have 28,000 from China, all fighting-age. You don’t see women and you don’t see men much older than that. It’s from 18 to 25, 26 years old.” “Well, China has, as of today, 29,000 young men, for the most part, in our country for the last three or four months. There’s something going on. Look, there’s something going on.” Speaking on those leading current immigration policies, Trump said, “So there’s two things that you think of. Number one, they maybe want the votes. I think they’re gonna get these people registered to vote…Either they’re stupid or they hate our country.”

- Trump has claimed that unnamed South American countries, as well as other countries “all over the world,” are releasing their prisoners, terrorists, and mentally ill patients into the United States—a claim that has been widely rebuffed. Alongside this, Trump often claims “communities are being ravaged” by a new form of crime, “Biden migrant crime.” Most recently, Trump has claimed that over 13,000 murderers have been released into the United States under the Biden administration. (In fact, the Department of Homeland Security and independent experts have clarified that these figures represent individuals who entered the country over several decades, including during Trump’s administration, not solely under Biden and Harris. See CNN reporting.) *The Marshall Project’s* October 2024 review of Trump’s public statements revealed he claimed that unauthorized immigrants are criminals or involved in migrant crime over 575 times, contribute to crime in sanctuary cities more than 185 times, and are arriving from jails and mental institutions over 560 times.
    - Nov. 2, 2024, Gastonia, NC, Trump said, “ But when she allows 13,099 murderers, murderers -- these are people that are incarcerated for murder. … More than 13,000 illegal immigrants convicted of murder have been caught at the border and then released into the United States.”
    - Oct. 29, 2024, Sean Hannity interview, Mar-a-Lago, FL, Trump said that Border Patrol had “announced last week how many of different crimes are coming in. They said 13,099, exact, murderers, people that murdered people that were in jail have been released into our country. They said 16,000 drug lords, drug dealers.”
    - Oct. 28, 2024, Atlanta, GA, Trump said, “They have 13,099 murderers released into our country.”
    - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said:
        - “They're allowing criminals from all over the world to enter our country. Over the past four years, Kamala Harris has … unleashed an army of migrant gangs who are waging a campaign of violence and terror against our citizens. There has never been anything like it anywhere in the world for any country. Kamala has imported criminal migrants from prisons and jails, insane asylums and mental institutions from all around the world, from Venezuela to the Congo, a lot of people are coming from the Congo prisons. They're coming from all over the world. Over the last month, 181 countries violated our laws and she has resettled them into your communities to prey upon innocent American citizens, but the day I take

the oath of office, the migrant invasion of our Country ends, and the restoration of our country begins."

- "One of the deadliest and most vicious migrant gangs that Kamala has imported into our country is the savage Venezuelan prison gang, nice group of people. They got together in prison, the worst prison in the world, they say. It's called, 'Tren de Aragua,' and that is taking over apartment complexes and unleashing a violent killing spree all over America, especially in Aurora, Colorado, where we have a governor who's petrified of them, and maybe he should be. But now they've even taken over Times Square."

- October 26, 2024, State College, PA, Trump said:
  - Kamala Harris "has eradicated our sovereign border and she has unleashed an army of migrant gangs who are waging a campaign of violence and terror against our citizens all over our country. Kamala has imported an invasion of criminal migrants from prisons and jails, insane asylums, and mental institutions from all around the world, from Venezuela to the Congo in Africa. The Congo, they're letting in tremendous numbers. They're letting out all their prisoners from the prisons in the Congo. And they're coming into the United States and they're forcing them into our country. …
  - "One of the deadliest and most vicious migrant gangs that Kamala has imported into our country is the savage Venezuelan prison gang called Tren de Aragua. These are young thugs that's taking over apartment complexes and unleashing a violent terror spree all over America. Towns all over America are petrified that they're going to be coming here."
  - "It is a full-blown invasion. Armed Venezuelan gang members storming an apartment complex in Aurora, Colorado. When people talk about migrant crime, this is what they're talking about."
- Oct. 24, 2024, Tempe, AZ, Trump claimed, "More than 13,000 illegal immigrants convicted of murder have been released into the United States."
- Oct. 18, 2024, Fox & Friends, Trump said, "So, they let 21 million people into our country. Of the 21 million, 13,000 were murderers."
- Oct. 18, 2024, Oakland County, MI, during a roundtable Trump claimed, "I mean, 8,000 -- just the drug dealers, 8,000 drug dealers, 13,099 murderers in jail. They're going to let them out of jail, some with the death -- some with death penalties. … But think of it, 13,000-plus people who murdered people and they're going to be let free in our country."
- Sept. 27, 2024, Walker, MI, Trump first made his reference to data that purportedly indicates over 13,000 convicted murderers have entered the United States under the biden administration. "According to this brand new data, never seen before, over 13,099 convicted murderers have crossed the border and are free to roam and kill in our country. These are convicted murderers. … And these are countries from all over the world, 13,000 -- more than 13,000 convicted murderers have been let out of jail, and they're roaming our streets, our country all

over. … over 13,000 convicted murderers from jails in -- I told you, they're releasing them from jails."

- Sept. 27, 2024, Truth Social, Trump claimed, "Kamala has allowed more than 13,000 convicted "killers" into our Country. She is not fit to be President!
- Sept. 27, 2024, Truth Social, Trump claimed, "Kamala should immediately cancel her News Conference because it was just revealed that 13,000 convicted murderers entered our Country during her three and a half year period as Border Czar - Also currently in our Country because of her are 15,811 migrants convicted of rape and sexual assault. 'We handed this Administration the Most Secure Border of our Lifetime!' Tom Homan, Former Ice Director."
- Sept. 27, 2024, Truth Social, Trump claimed, "JUST OUT: 13,000 people convicted of murder have crossed into our Country through Kamala Harris' Open Border - NON DETAINED, NON CITIZEN, CONVICTED CRIMINALS! I've been saying this from the beginning of the Harris-Biden Administration, as soon as I learned they opened the Borders. Nobody who has allowed this to happen to our Country is fit to be President of the United States! Bad timing for her to show up to the Border today, after not going for four years. Why didn't she release these numbers earlier?"
- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump launched into a tirade during a campaign rally, claiming that millions of migrants are pouring into the U.S., many of whom he alleged to be criminals, terrorists, or individuals from mental asylums.
    - Trump warned of "an influx of crime" into the country.
    - "Under the Harris Biden regime, your government imported murderers, child predators and serial rapists from all over the planet."
    - Heading Wisconsin's way are "numbers of bad people that nobody will ever believe."
    - "Should have never been allowed to come into our country. No one checked them, nobody checked were they criminals, were they from jails. We have 'em pouring out from jails. We have the worst criminals in all of these countries. 168 so far are registered, 168 countries. They're in our country and they said, 'If you come back, you will be executed. You will be killed immediately.'"
    - "You watch those millions and millions of people pour into our country. We have no idea from where, who they are. We know nothing about 'em, and I'll tell you, many of them are bad. Many of them are among the worst in the world."
    - "And these are violent people. These are people that were criminals at the worst level in their cities all over the world. 22 people out of the Congo in Africa. It's not just South America. People think it's Honduras and Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico. It's not. It's countries all over the world. They're coming in. 22 people from the Congo in Africa. 'Where are you from?' 'From the Congo' 'Oh, that's nice.' 'Where? Where do you live?' 'Jail.' 'Oh, what did you do?' 'It's none of your business.' That's what they told the people, 'It's none of your business.' You can imagine what it is. But

from Africa, from the Middle East, from Europe, from Asia, they're coming in from everywhere. They're getting rid of their criminals. They're bringing them into the United States of America. Our beautiful country. Our now failing country, a failing country under these lunatics. And they bring, they're bringing them in at levels that nobody's ever seen before. … You can't live with it because you're gonna be killed. … These are killers. But from all over the world, you take a look at the crime statistics, you take a look at the jail statistics. The jails are being emptied out, the mental institutions are being emptied out, and insane asylums."

- "When I say Doctor Hannibal Lecter, the press says, 'Oh, why did he mention that?'" It is "representative" of the "people that are coming into our country," Trump explained.
- "I will get these monster criminals out of Wisconsin. I will get them out of our country. We're going to get 'em out fast. We're going to get 'em out very fast. They'll soon be back on the streets and jails of Caracas, Venezuela, and other places from where they came. Think of it, though, Venezuela crime is down 72%."
- "Migrants and crime are here in our country at levels never thought possible before. Never even thought possible. You're not safe even sitting here, to be honest with you. … because you're being overrun by criminals, you're being overrun by people. They're not being checked, they're not being vetted. They're taking over our country. They're forming armies in our country."
- "By the way, Venezuela crime is down 72%. Crime is down all over the world because they're sending their criminals. Not just South America, from all over the world they're sending their criminals. They're sending people in jail for murder and drugs and everything else. They're sending 'em into our country. They're getting rid of 'em. Crime's down all over the world. Our crime is through the roof, and you haven't seen the 'migrant crime' yet. It's started, and it's vicious, but you haven't seen the extent of it yet. They're just getting settled in."
- "In Aurora, Colorado, entire apartment complexes are being taken over by armed Venezuela gangs with weapons, the likes of which even the military doesn't see. They're terrorizing residents … they're just menacing the whole state, but they are menacing that community, and the people are petrified. Even the sheriff is trying his best, but he's got a small force by comparison. This is like a military force, and their vicious, violent people."
- "As Border Czar, Kamala Harris let in over 20 million. They're now saying the number could be 25 million illegal aliens from 168 different countries. Most people don't even know that you have that many countries. Coming from prisons and jails, insane asylums and mental institutions, and terrorists at a level that we've never seen before. You know, I told this a few times."

- "Now we have thousands and thousands and thousands of terrorists pouring into our country at record levels, and it's going to end very badly. It's going to end very badly."
- "20 or 25 million people poured in and nobody has any idea where they're coming from."
- Trump said that the United States has "20 or 25 million criminal migrants, in many cases criminals. We have the worst, some of the worst people in the world coming into our country. Some of the worst criminals in the world are coming into our country."
- "They will have a hundred million of these people in here, with another four years, a hundred million people. If you think you have a nice house, have a migrant enjoy your house because a migrant will take it over. A migrant will take it over. It will be Venezuela on steroids."
- "We will stop the invasion and 'migrant crime.'"

- Sept. 6, 2024, Truth Social, Trump "ReTruthed" a meme of his from two days earlier, adding, "Thank you Comrade Kamala Harris for allowing our Country to benefit from these wonderful people you have allowed to cross the Border, make Citizens, and allow them to hop into our Social Security and Medicare program."

- August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump said, "Kamala Harris is letting terrorists come into our country at record numbers, and letting jihadists pour into our homeland by the thousands and thousands and

thousands," adding, "We will find and remove the terrorists and jihadists who have infiltrated our soil." "You have people that came into our country, many from prisons, many from mental institutions, many terrorists, and ... they are treated better than our veterans," he later said, continuing: "They're releasing their prisoners into our country. They're releasing … MS-13, the worst gangs in the world. MS-13. They're collecting them and dropping them into the United States. I moved out thousands and thousands of them. They're moving them into the United States. They're coming back. They're taking their drug dealers, their criminals, their murderers. In Venezuela, crime is down 72% because they've gotten their gang members. They're dropping them all into our country, many countries, and I'm not just talking about South America, all over the world, they're dropping their criminals into our country. They're emptying their jails, and they're emptying their prisons into our country." He added: "They're emptying their prisons. They're taking their worst people. They're taking their real, their murderers, drug dealers. They're dropping them. They're taking them and bussing them into the United States and dropping them. And they're saying, 'If you come back, we're going to kill you.' And these people aren't worried about being killed. They're tough. It's a tough group of people, and we've got them, and nothing good is going to come out of that, and that includes a lot of terrorists. Your choice in this election is between a president who will always have your back and a radical liberal who will never, ever, ever have your back, whether you like it or not."

- August 2024, *The Shawn Ryan Show*, Trump said: "And millions of people poured into our country, and they're from prisons and they're from jails, they're from mental institutions and insane asylums, they're all different, you know, it's like, that's the mental institution on steroids, as you know, and they're … terrorists, and … they're from jails, though, in many countries. Recently, they came in from the Congo in Africa. Where do you come from? I think 22 people, but many more than that. They're emptying their jails into our country. They said, 'Where do you come from?' 'The Congo' 'Where in the Congo?' 'Jail' 'What did you do?' They wouldn't answer. We have the toughest people in the world being dropped into our country, and not from just South America. From South America, yes, Venezuela. Their crime rate's down 72%. Their prison population is way down. Their mental institution population is way down. And this is true with many countries…They're using this as a dumping ground. They're dumping their prisoners. They're dumping their gang members. MS-13. They're dumping everybody into our country. We have a totally open border."
- August 3, 2024, Atlanta, GA, Trump said that if Democratic nominee Kamala Harris wins the election, "a never-ending stream of illegal alien rapists, MS-13 animals, and child predators will flood into your communities." He added, "These are the worst people anywhere in the world coming into our country." Trump further warned, "the suburbs will be overrun with violent crime and savage foreign gangs … [T]hey're sending all their gangs into the United States."
- July 31, 2024, National Association of Black Journalists Convention, Trump said: "[M]any of these people are coming in from mental institutions, from prisons, from

jails. They're gang members in other countries. Other countries are setting loose their prisoners. They're opening up their prisons and their mental institutions. And they're taking their bad people, drug dealers, gang members, and they're bringing them into the United States. And, by the way, their crime rate is going down, and our crime rate is going to be a disaster."

- During the 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump said countries all around the world were emptying into the United States their prison populations, as well as those from mental and insane asylums, and terrorists.
  - "They're coming from prisons. They're coming from jails. They're coming from mental institutions and insane asylums. I, you know the press is always on me because I say this. Has anyone seen "The Silence of the Lambs"? The late, great Hannibal Lecter. He'd love to have you for dinner. That's insane asylums. They're emptying out their insane asylums. And terrorists are coming in at numbers that we've never seen before. Bad things are going to happen. Meanwhile, our crime rate is going up, while crime statistics all over the world are going down. Because they're taking their criminals and they're putting them into our country. A certain country, and I happen to like the president of that country very much, but he's been getting great publicity because he's a wonderful shepherd of the country."
  - Trump said, speaking about the president of a country he did not name: "He says how well the country's doing because their crime rate is down. And he said he's training all of these rough people. They're rough, rough, rough. He's training them. And I've been reading about this for two years. I think, 'Oh that's wonderful, let's take a look at it.' But then I realize he's not training them; he's sending all of his criminals, his drug dealers, his people that are in jails, he's sending them all to the United States. And he's different in that he doesn't say that. He's trying to convince everybody what a wonderful job he does in running the country. Well, he doesn't do a wonderful job. And by the way, if I ran one of the countries, many countries, many, many countries from all over, I would be worse than any of them. I would have had the place totally emptied out already."
  - "[W]e have become a dumping ground for the rest of the world, which is laughing at us."
  - Trump said: "In Venezuela, Caracas, high crime, high crime. Caracas, Venezuela, really a dangerous place. But not anymore, because in Venezuela, crime is down 72 percent. In fact, if they would ever win this election, I hate to even say that, we will have our next Republican convention in Venezuela because it will be safe. Our cities, our cities will be so unsafe we won't be able, we will not be able to have it there. In El Salvador, murders are down 70 percent. Why are they down? Now, he would have you convinced that because he's trained murderers to be wonderful people, no. They're down because they're sending their murderers to the United States of America. This is going to be very bad. And bad things are going to happen."

- March 5, 2023, CPAC, Trump said: “Anybody see Silence of the Lamb[s]? That’s where they come from. Insane asylum. That’s a stronger word than a mental institution. And they’re putting them into our country”
- Nov. 8, 2023, Hialeah, FL: Trump said: “Anybody ever hear of Hannibal Lecter? He was a nice fellow. But that’s what’s coming into our country right now.”
- April 14, 2023, National Rifle Association speech: Trump said: “I read a story not long ago where a man who takes care of a large segment of people in a mental institution in a South American country, a doctor, sounded like a great man actually, he said he no longer has anything to do. He used to work 24 hour days. He said, ‘All of our patients have been released into the United States of America.’ And this is what we have. This is what we’ve allowed to happen. And we can’t allow this to happen because we will not have a country any longer. We can’t allow it to happen.”
- April 27, 2023, NH, Trump said: “Why do you want people from prisons and mental institutions and insane asylums? That’s a step above, that’s Silence of the Lamb type….There was a story recently about a psychologist. Or psychiatrist. But a psychologist who worked in mental wards in South America. And he said, ‘I worked 24…’ – a good man – he worked 24 hours a day taking care of very mentally ill people. And he was sitting there reading a newspaper and they asked him, ‘what – what’s he doing?’ He said, ‘I have no more work. The people have all been let go into the United States.’ Can you believe [it]? This is what we’re doing.”
- March 25, 2023, Waco, TX, Trump said: “Other countries are emptying out their prisons and sane asylums and mental institutions and sending their most heinous criminals to the United States. And who can blame them? Who can blame them? These are very smart people, the presidents and the heads of these countries, presidents, prime ministers, and dictators, I know them all. But they’re very smart, very streetwise, and they’re sending their criminals to live in the United States. We’re talking about mental institutions and prisons. Think of it. And they’re all coming in.” He continued: “I read a story recently, where a doctor in a mental institution, in a certain country in South America is saying, ‘My whole life, I’ve been so busy taking care of people, but now, I have no people to take care of, because they’re all being sent into the United States.’ And I said, ‘How stupid are we? How stupid are we? How stupid are we?’”
- Feb. 29, 2024, Eagle Pass, TX, speaking at the U.S.-Mexico border to border patrol agents on the alleged crimes of “illegal aliens” and referring to the operation at the border as like a “war,” Trump said: “They’re coming from jails, and they’re coming from prisons, and they’re coming from mental institutions, and they’re coming from insane asylums, and they’re terrorists. They’re being led into our country. It’s horrible. It’s horrible.” “They’re sending their people from jails and prisons and mental institutions.”
- Feb. 29, 2024, Fox News interview, “Millions and Millions of people. And they come from jails and prisons. They come from mental institutions and…a step above that, the insane asylums … and you have terrorists coming.” “When you have prisons and jails and mental institutions being emptied out, not just in South

America, all over the world … you can check your prison population throughout the world and it's all coming into our country."

- April 1, 2024, West Michigan Live radio interview with Justin Barclay, Trump repeated his claim that countries were emptying their prisons and "mental institutions" into the United States. "Now they're coming in, they're pouring in the criminals from jails and from mental institutions, and terrorists by the way, and at levels that no country has ever seen before. It's insane what they're doing. Insane," Trump told Barclay. "I guarantee you the real crime rate all over the world is way down," Trump said, adding, "And I'd do the same thing, if I were a dictator or a president, anybody running a country, I would do the exact same thing. First thing I'd do is say wow, I'd empty up every prison and every mental institution, and that's what the countries are doing all over the world." Trump again claimed that Venezuela's crime rate has fallen by 67% because it has released many of its prisoners and former prisoners to the United States, adding that Venezuela doesn't "have gangs anymore in the different cities and outside of the cities. They're all gone, and the people are thrilled." "They've taken all of their gangs, their gang leaders, every one of their gangs is gone now. They dumped them into the United States."
- April 2, 2024, Grand Rapids, MI, Trump titled his real speech, "Biden's border bloodbath," repeating his accusations that President Biden is to blame for the alleged spike in "migrant crime," and that Biden is allowing a "bloodbath" that is "destroying our country." "Under Crooked Joe Biden, every state is now a border state. Every town is now a border town because Joe Biden has brought the carnage and chaos and killing from all over the world and dumped it straight into our backyards. And people are coming in from prisons and mental institutions, and nobody's seen anything like it." "We have a new form of crime, it's called 'migrant crime.'…They're sending prisoners, murderers, drug dealers, mental patients and terrorists—the worst they have in every country, all over the world, this isn't just in South America. They're coming from the Congo, from Yemen, from Somalia, from Syria, they're coming from all over the world." Trump later said that Michigan "communities are being ravaged by a new form of crime and that's that 'migrant crime' that we name. It should be called 'Biden migrant crime.'" And also alleged that the Biden administration is "allowing prisoners and mental institution people and terrorists into our country with no checks, no nothing, no checks, no nothing, by the millions and millions." Toward the end of his rally speech, Trump again repeated that "they send the people…that they want out…That's why they come out of jails and prisons, that's why they come out of the mental institutions and insane asylums."
- April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: "[C]ommunities are being crushed by 'Biden migrant crime,' you know, we have a new category of crime. It's called 'migrant crime.' It was brought to you by the worst president in the history of our country. Joe Biden[.]" He said that Wisconsin's "police force is being diverted from traffic stops to 'migrant crime.' My favorite new term, 'migrant crime.' It's a new category of crime." Trump also repeated that crime in Venezuela had dropped by

67% because they were sending their criminals into the United States: “And the reason is they take their gangs and they're criminals and they brought them into the United States.” Trump also said: “They're sending prisoners, murderers, drug dealers, mental patients, terrorists. The worst of every country is coming into our country. Now, they’re coming from the Congo, Yemen, Somalia, Syria, all over the world. They're coming, they’re country changing, country threatening and they’re country wrecking. They're destroying our country.” He further added, “Joe Biden is so weak on the border that other countries are now publicly taunting and extorting him by pumping migrants across our wide open border. They’re opening their jails and they're opening their mental institutions and they’re bringing them right in and nobody stops him. Nobody. Nobody has any idea what’s going on. Just this week, Mexico’s president declared that they will keep the flood of illegal aliens pouring in. They're going to pour into our country unless Biden hands over $20 billion a year just to sit down.”

- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: “But let there be no doubt this is Joe Biden's invasion.” He said that he would not let Biden turn the United States “into a crime-filled, disease-ridden dumping ground, which is what they're doing, they’re dumping. Everybody is being dumped into the United States of America.” He stated: “Our border is an open and gushing wound, it’s pouring drugs, gangs, terrorists, and millions and millions of illegal aliens into our country…They're actually cutting the wire fences so that thousands and thousands of migrants can pour in.” Later in the rally, Trump told the crowds, “Under Biden, we now have a brand new category of crime. It's called ‘migrant crime.’ We have ‘migrant crime.’ We have criminals that are going around having boxing matches with police officers. Nobody's ever seen it before…We have tough people coming in…And they're coming in from jails and prisons. They're emptying out all over the world. Last night, they had four people coming in from the Congo…They're coming from Africa. They're coming from Asia. They're coming from all over South America. They're coming from the Middle East. They're coming from China.” He also went on to speak about high-profile murders by suspected undocumented migrants, which he referred to as ‘Biden migrant crime,’ before stating: “It's a whole new category of crime. And it's probably going to be more vicious than anything we've seen. These are vicious people. They’re from jails, many of them are from jails. Many of them are for mental institutions. This is what they're dumping into the United States…They want to clean out their jails…jails all over the world. You take a look at their prison population, it's way down, because they've taken people out of those jails, and they've dumped them into our country. They've taken people out of their mental institutions and insane asylums…’insane asylum is like mental institution on steroids.’ That’s ‘Silence of the Lambs.’ Did you ever hear of a fine gentleman named ‘Hannibal Lecter’?...Well, that's what they have in insane asylums, and they’re dumping them into a community near you…Venezuela comes out and said, ‘We’re dumping all our criminals into the United States. But the second part, we’re never taking them back. Don’t ever bring them back.’”

- April 12, 2024, Mar-a-Lago, during a joint press conference with House Speaker Mike Johnson, Trump said: “But I would like to demand that our border be closed because we have millions of people coming into our country, millions and millions of people are pouring in at levels that nobody’s reporting, nobody's going to talk about, but I believe you could have 15 million already in. Some are terrorists. They come from jails and prisons, they come from mental institutions and insane asylums. They come from all over the world, not just South America, they're coming from all over the world, Venezuela announced that their crime is down 67%, because of the fact that they've taken the gang members, the leaders and the members, and they've deposited them very nicely into the United States of America. That’s just Venezuela. It's happening with the Congo. It's happening with countries all over. Africa, Asia, South America. All over the world it's happening. Our country is like a dumping ground. And we're going to have it stopped.” He further said: “But we probably have 15 million people. And they come from places that you don't wanna know about. And they're gonna be big problems. And it's getting worse. It's ‘migrant crime.’ It's a new category of crime, ‘migrant crime.’ And I'm just demanding.” And later stated: “And I think most people are united on the fact that they don't want people pouring in from prisons and jails and mental institutions. They don't want that to happen. They don't want it to take place. And it's not going to happen for long.”
- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: “We got to do something about the fact that 20 million people have come into our country from prisons, from jails, from mental institutions, from insane asylums. And they’re terrorists. Many are terrorists.” He went on to say, “Maybe this is a great political thing. To have millions of prisoners and mental institution people come in. Maybe it's a good thing.” And later added: “The biggest thing we have is we have millions of people here that are criminals. We really, I mean, they're criminals. Think of it, Venezuela, just announced, and they had a new number 67, now it's 72%, 72% they’re down in crime, because they took their gang members, they took a lot of their criminals and they moved them into the United States of America. Jail populations all over the world are way down, and these fools back there, the press, the fake news, they don't want to report it. You know why they're down? Because they're sending people in their jails into the United States, from Africa, from Asia, from all over the world. They're emptying out their jails into the United States. They're emptying out their mental institutions into the United States, our beautiful country, and now, the prison populations all over the world are down. They don't want to report that. The mental institution population is down because they're taking people from insane asylums and from mental institution. You know what the difference is, right? An insane asylum is a mental institution on steroids. ‘Silence of the Lambs.’ has anyone ever seen ‘The Silence of the Lambs?’ The late great Hannibal Lecter is a wonderful man. He oftentimes would have a friend for dinner. Remember the last scene? ‘Excuse me, I'm about to have a friend for dinner,’ as this poor doctor walked by. ‘I'm about to have a friend for dinner.’ But Hannibal Lecter, congratulations, the late great Hannibal Lecter. We have people that are being

released into our country that we don't want in our country. And they're coming in totally unchecked, totally unvetted. And we can't let this happen. They're destroying our country. And we're sitting back, and we better damn well win this election. Because if we don't, our country is going to be doomed. It's going to be doomed."

- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said during a rally: "And that doesn't even include some of the horrible numbers that we're seeing flowing in from the poor and crime-ridden countries all over the world. They have people flowing in from the poorest and heaviest crime countries all over the world. Congratulations. They come out of prisons. They come out of mental institutions, and they're coming in to be a neighbor right near you. So congratulations." He later added said: He went on to say we "now…have thousands of terrorists coming into our country."
- March 16, 2024, Daytona, OH, Trump accused the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Venezuela of emptying their prisons into the United States.
  - "I call it 'Biden migrant crime,' but it's too long. So let's just call it 'migrant crime'. We have a new category. You have vicious crimes, you have violent crimes, you have all these, now we have migrant crimes and they're rough. They're rough and it's going to double up. And you see what's happening. Throughout the world right now, I don't know if you know this, crime is way, way down. You know why? Because they sent us their criminals. That's why. It's true. It's true. They sent, do you know Venezuela is down 66% because they sent us their gang members and their gangsters. They sent us their drug dealers and their murderers. They're all coming into our country and Venezuela now, their crime is down 66%. And all over the world, crime is down because they've sent them to the United States of America because we have a stupid president that allows this to happen."
  - "They're sending from all over the world, not just South America, Latin America. They're sending them from Asia. They're sending them from Africa. The Congo, last night, 22 people arrived from the Congo. Now, the Congo is a very nice place I would imagine, but they arrived from the Congo and they came from prison. Where are you from in the Congo? What's your address? Prison. Now these are rough people. They're coming from Africa, they're coming from Asia, they're coming from the Middle East, they're coming from Yemen. All over the place from Yemen."
  - "And I would do the same thing if I had prisons that were teeming with MS-13 and all sorts of people that they've got to take care of for the next 50 years, right?...We have so many people. We have so many people being hurt so badly and being killed. They're sending their prisoners to see us. And they're bringing them right to the border and they're dropping them off and we're allowing them to come in."
- June 16, 2015, Trump said announcing his presidential; campaign that "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best—they're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems and

they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." He also said: "I can never apologize for the truth. I don't mind apologizing for things. But I can't apologize for the truth. I said tremendous crime is coming across. Everybody knows that's true. And it's happening all the time. So, why, when I mention, all of a sudden I'm a racist. I'm not a racist. I don't have a racist bone in my body."
    - July 5, 2015, Fox News, Trump said: "What can be simpler or more accurately stated? The Mexican Government is forcing their most unwanted people into the United States. They are, in many cases, criminals, drug dealers, rapists, etc."
    - July 6, 2015, commenting on his June 16 campaign announcement comment (see above), Trump said in a three-page statement commenting that "the worst elements in Mexico are being pushed into the United States by the Mexican government." "The largest suppliers of heroin, cocaine and other illicit drugs are Mexican cartels that arrange to have Mexican immigrants trying to cross the borders and smuggle in the drugs. The Border Patrol knows this," Trump wrote. "Likewise, tremendous infectious disease is pouring across the border. The United States has become a dumping ground for Mexico and, in fact, for many other parts of the world."
        - "Shortly before releasing his statement, Trump gave an interview to Business Insider where he described the idea that the Mexican government is deliberately 'pushing the bad ones' to the US as the one element of his position on immigration that hasn't gotten enough attention."

- His campaign has increasingly used, even exploited, high-profile national murders by alleged undocumented immigrants as a way to criticize the Biden administration's immigration policies, stoke fear that waves of criminals are coming into the country, and justify his intended immigration crackdown policies. *The Marshall Project's* October 2024 review found that Trump has publicly asserted over 235 times that unauthorized immigrants are responsible for tragic incidents he claims show they are killing Americans on a massive scale.
    - August 3, 2024, Atlanta, GA, speaking about Laken Riley, the 22-year-old nursing student murdered in February 2024 allegedly by a Venezuelan man who had entered the country illegally, Trump said that Harris "is responsible for the death as though she was standing there watching it herself. She was responsible." He added that Harris was responsible for the deaths of "so many more."
    - During the 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump spoke about the murders of Laken Riley and others, including Jocelyn Nungaray and Rachel Morin.
    - April 2, 2024, the Republican National Committee released its official website for documenting "migrant crime" and "illegal alien crime." "BidenBloodbath.com provides the latest data on Biden's border crisis, as well as providing real-time messaging on the crisis to activists who sign up for email updates via the website. Additionally, there are state-specific BidenBloodbath.com websites with up-to-date facts and figures for battleground states including: Arizona, California, Florida,

Georgia, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin," according to the RNC's website.

- April 2, 2024, during campaign rallies in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Green Bay, Wisconsin, Trump discussed the recent high-profile murder of Ruby Garcia, allegedly by a man who had entered the United States illegally after having been deported to Mexico in 2020, to justify his plans to crack down on immigration and "migrant crime," reportedly falsely claiming that he had met with the victim's family. Trump had discussed the death of Garcia the day prior during his radio interview with West Michigan Live radio interview with Justin Barclay, and extended an invite to the Garcia family to attend his rally in Grand Rapids. He also discussed Laken Riley on April 2, a Georgia college student who was allegedly murdered by a Venezuelan migrant in February 2024. Trump has long used the death of Riley to support his campaign efforts, with Riley's family meeting with Trump backstage before his March 9 rally in Rome, GA. Speaking in Grand Rapids, he said that he had vowed to Laken's family that he would "deliver justice." Now he intends to also "deliver justice" for Ruby.
- April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, after speaking on the "illegal alien criminal" who allegedly killed Ruby Garcia, Trump went on to say: "We have the worst border. Last week another illegal alien criminal was arrested in Alabama for raping a mentally incapacitated 14-year-old girl. And in Chicago, recently, an illegal alien gang member who was released into our country by crooked Joe Biden was arrested for a drive-by shooting that left a 27-year-old woman riddled with bullet holes all over her body—died. I'm here tonight to declare that Joe Biden's 'border bloodbath.' Remember they used the name 'bloodbath,' I was talking about something entirely different, but this is a 'border bloodbath.' Ends the day I take the oath of office."
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, the week after Laken Riley was murdered, Trump told crowds that the suspected killer was a "monster[, an] illegal alien migrant who was led into the country and released into our communities by crooked Joe Biden." He later went on to discuss another two murder cases where he described the suspects as, respectively, an "illegal alien animal" and "a savage Biden migrant criminal."

- Groups on Project 2025's advisory board—the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), the Claremont Institute, and Russ Vought's Center for Renewing America (CRA)—have proposed extreme measures to execute Trump's plan to deport over 10 million undocumented immigrants, as documented by *Media Matters*. CIS, designated by SPLC as an anti-immigrant hate group, advocates offering bounties for reporting undocumented individuals, implementing stricter employment verification systems like G-Verify, and promoting coercive "self-deportation" policies. The Claremont Institute's blog, *The American Mind*, features a piece by Kyle Shideler of the Center for Security Policy—designated as a hate group by the SPLC—that advocates militarizing local law enforcement by cross-deputizing far-right "constitutional sheriffs" to act as immigration

enforcers. CRA defends and normalizes mass deportations, including the controversial "Operation Wetback," while downplaying its human rights abuses.

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IV. Day 1 Dictatorship Promise: Energy and the Environment

- Trump's dictator-for-a-day comments are also tied to his energy and environmental policies. Specifically, he has said that on day one he intends to ramp up oil drilling. In tandem with this disregard for reducing fossil fuel extraction, Trump and his senior campaign officials and advisers have also said that on day one he plans to reverse what he calls the "All Electric Car Lunacy" and the Biden "electric vehicle mandate," which would include undoing recently announced EPA regulations limiting gas-powered vehicle tailpipe emissions and repealing provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act aimed at driving electric vehicle manufacturing. Most recently, Trump has said that he will halt offshore wind energy projects "on day one."
    - Dec. 11, 2023: Trump said: "I said I want to be a dictator for one day. You know why I wanted to be a dictator? Because I want a wall, and I want to drill, drill, drill."
    - Dec. 6, 2023, Iowa: Hannity asked Trump whether Trump intended to abuse power or break the law, to which Trump answered "Except for day one. I want to close the border, and I want to drill, drill, drill." Trump then immediately doubled down on the exchange, describing it for the audience using the word "dictator" – "He [Hannity] says, 'You're not going to be a dictator, are you?' I said: 'No, no, no, other than day one. We're closing the border, and we're drilling, drilling, drilling. After that, I'm not a dictator.'"
    - Nov. 2, 2024, Gastonia, NC, Trump said, "We're going to drill, baby, drill."
    - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said: "We're going to drill a baby drill, and I will terminate the green new scam."
    - Sept. 29, 2024, Erie, PA, Trump said: "I will repeal the insane electric vehicle mandate, and we will drill, baby, drill. Those two things very early. Drill, baby, drill."
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: "We will make America the dominant energy producer in the world, by far. That's called, 'Drill, baby, drill,' right? 'Drill, baby, drill.'"
    - During the 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump repeated his day one promises to "drill, baby, drill," and to end the "Green New Scam" as well as the "crazy electric mandate."
        - Trump said: "At the heart of the Republican platform is our pledge to end this border nightmare, and fully restore the sacred and sovereign borders of the United States of America. And we're going to do that on day one. That means two things on day one right? Drill, baby, drill, and close our borders."
        - "I will end the electric vehicle mandate on day one." He later added again that he would end the "crazy electric mandate" on day one.

        - "And next, we will end the ridiculous and actually incredible waste of taxpayer dollars that is fueling the inflation crisis. They've spent trillions of dollars of things having to do with the Green New Scam. It's a scam. And that has caused tremendous inflationary pressures in addition to the cost of energy. And all of the trillions of dollars that are sitting there not yet spent, we will redirect that money for important projects like roads, bridges, dams and we will not allow it to be spent on the meaningless Green New scam ideas."
        - "So much starts with energy. And remember, we have more liquid gold under our feet than any other country by far. We are a nation that has the opportunity to make an absolute fortune with its energy….We will be energy dominant and supply not only ourselves, but we will supply the rest of the world."
    - March 11, 2024, Truth Social post: "My first acts as your next President will be to Close the Border, DRILL, BABY, DRILL, and Free the January 6 Hostages being wrongfully imprisoned!"
    - Jan. 23, 2024, NH: "In the first year, they're going to be reduced by 50% because we are going to drill, baby drill, drill, baby drill. Inflation is going to come way down, but in the first year, your energy costs are going down by 50%."
    - Feb. 9, 2024, NRA speech, PA: "We're gonna drill, baby, drill. That's what we're gonna do...We're gonna drill, baby, drill. We're gonna get our prices down."
    - Feb. 4, 2024, "Sunday Morning Futures": In response to a question on the other ways he intends to reduce inflation, Trump said, "Well, among other things, it's drill, drill, drill, yes." Responding to "What else?," Trump said: "It's drill, drill, drill…There is no [sic] else. You have to get the oil."
    - Jan. 27, 2024, Las Vegas: Trump said: "[If I had been president] there wouldn't have been an attack on Ukraine, and we wouldn't have had any inflation. Inflation was caused by energy, by fuel, by oil going to $100 and $110 a barrel." "That's what caused inflation, and we're going to bring it down because we're going to go drill, baby, drill. We drill, baby, drill. We're bringing it way down." "His inflation that he [Biden] caused and would've been so easy not to. All it was, is energy. Remember this, gasoline, fuel, oil, natural gas went up to a level that it was impossible."
    - April 2, 2024, Grand Rapids, MI, Trump said: "The first day – I promise you – I will sign where the electric vehicle mandate is gone." "So we're gonna end that immediately. We're gonna end it day one."
    - April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: "On day one I will terminate crooked Joe's insane electric vehicle mandate. In addition to this job-killing disaster, Joe Biden is also preparing to approve a waiver request from California allowing them to enact a complete and total ban on all gasoline powered cars and trucks. I will terminate that."
    - April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: "We will stop Biden's inflation train wreck and we will 'drill, baby, drill.' We're gonna get your energy prices way down."

- March 20, 2024, Fox News reported: “In a statement to Fox News Digital, the Trump campaign said the climate regulations — unveiled by the White House and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Wednesday — would force Americans to buy expensive electric vehicles (EV) and reduce consumer choice. The campaign further vowed that Trump would immediately strike down the regulations if he bests President Biden in their election rematch later this year. ‘Joe Biden’s extreme electric vehicle mandate will force Americans to buy ultra-expensive cars they do not want and cannot afford while destroying the U.S. auto industry in the process,’ Trump campaign national press secretary Karoline Leavitt told *Fox News Digital* in a statement. ‘This radical policy is anti-jobs, anti-consumer and anti-American.’ ‘It will destroy the livelihoods of countless U.S. autoworkers while sending the U.S. auto industry to China. President Trump will reverse Joe Biden’s extreme electric vehicle mandate on Day One.’”
- March 16, 2024, Daytona, OH, Trumps said: “On day one I will terminate crooked Joe Biden’s insane electric vehicle mandate.”
- Jan. 16, 2024, Laconia, NH, Trump said: “On day one, I will end Crooked Joe Biden’s insane electric vehicle mandate.”
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: “And we're gonna start drilling. We're gonna start drill, drill, drill, drill, baby, drill. Day one…But you have no idea we're gonna drill.” He told the crowd that “I will immediately end Joe Biden's war on American energy.”
- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: “So, we're going to terminate the green new scam. We're going to drill, baby, drill. We're gonna get our energy way down. Don't forget that's what caused inflation. He let energy get out of hand and it went to $100 a barrel.”
- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: “On day one, I will immediately terminate Joe Biden's insane electric vehicle mandate, and there will be no ban on gas cars and gas trucks in the Garden State. There will be no ban anywhere in the United States of America on gas.”
- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: “And upon taking office,...we're going to halt his [Joe Biden’s] inflation death spiral, we're going to terminate his green new scam, it's going to be terminated, and we're going to end this war on American energy. We're going to drill, baby, drill, we're going to bring down your energy costs. We're going to bring down your energy costs like you wouldn't believe.”
- April 2024, Mar-a-Lago, while hosting top U.S. oil and gas executives at his Florida estate, Trump promised to immediately “reverse dozens of President Biden’s environmental rules and policies and stop new ones from being enacted,” *The Washington Post* reported. In exchange, some of those in attendance told the Post, Trump asked for $1 billion from the executives to help his return to the White House—a sum that Trump called a “deal” in exchange for his offer to also cut taxes and regulation.
    - Amongst Trump’s promises were to reverse recent restrictions on drilling in the Alaskan Arctic and ramp up new offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. He also said he would introduce speedier drilling permits. “You’ve been

waiting on a permit for five years; you'll get it on Day 1." He said he would end Biden's electric vehicles "mandate" and criticized the recent EPA regulations limiting gas-powered vehicle tailpipe emissions. He vowed that on day one in office he would end the Biden administration's freeze on approvals for pending and future applications to export liquefied natural gas from new projects, reportedly "a top priority for the executives" present. "'You'll get it on the first day,' Trump said, according to the recollection of an attendee."

- June 24, 2024, the watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) filed a criminal bribery complaint, calling on the FBI and DOJ to investigate Trump's donations "deal" with oil industry executives.
- May 23, 2024, Democrats on the Senate Budget Committee and the Senate Finance Committee launched a joint investigation into the Mar-a-Lago meeting with oil executives.

- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said on wind turbines: "We are going to make sure that that ends on day one. I'm going to write it out in an executive order. It's going to end on day one." Trump claimed that wind turbines "destroy everything," "cause tremendous problems with the fish and the whales" and that whales "come up all the time, dead." "They destroy everything, they're horrible, the most expensive energy there is," Trump said, adding, "They ruin the environment, they kill the birds, they kill the whales."
  - *The Washington Post* reported that when Trump met with top oil and gas executives at Mar-a-Lago in April 2024 (see above), he doubled down on his attack against renewable wind energy. "I hate wind," Trump is reported to have said to executives.
  - "'If I were in the offshore wind industry, I would probably be pretty, pretty nervous,' a former Trump administration energy official told the Washington Post."
- May 22, 2024, Houston, during a fundraising pitch at Houston's Post Oak Hotel, Trump made a host of second-term promises to oil executives, including that he would help fast-track their merger and acquisition deals, easing the Federal Trade Commission's scrutiny of the industry, the *The Washington Post* reported. According to an attendee's notes, Trump told the group that he would issue "immediate approvals for energy infrastructure. That's pipelines, power plants." "I approved the Keystone pipeline, and I approved the Dakota Access pipeline," Trump said. He also said he would ramp up drilling, including opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. He added that he would "lift the natural gas export ban, cancel all unnecessary energy-killing regulations … [and] open up more federal lands" to drilling, as well as reverse the Biden administration's pause on approvals of LNG exports and "end the EV mandate immediately." Unlike at his Mar-a-Lago event the month prior, "Trump did not ask the oil executives for a specific amount of campaign donations … 'Be generous, please,' he said to end his speech."

- Trump plans to violate statutory requirements by using administrative agencies within the executive branch to promulgate rules that prevent oversight and regulation required by Congress.
    - For instance, Congress passed the bipartisan Toxic Substances Control Act in 2016, but Trump's EPA illegally withheld chemical safety studies where public disclosure was required, violated the law's requirements to review new chemicals, and refused to ask companies to disclose data required under the law.
    - He has embraced violating, in similar fashion, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Clean Air Act.
    - Trump engaged in "a very aggressive attempt to rewrite our laws and reinterpret the meaning of environmental protections," said Hana V. Vizcarra, a staff attorney at Harvard's Environmental and Energy Law Program.
    - With respect to Trump's Day One Dictator promise, Ed Crooks, Vice Chair for the Americas at Wood Mackenzie, said the comments point to the potential use of executive actions and rule changes "to lighten the regulatory burden on oil and gas companies."

- Trump has called global warming a "hoax."
    - March 21, 2022, *Fox Business*: Trump called climate change a "hoax," explaining, "In my opinion, you have a thing called weather, and you go up, and you go down. If you look into the 1920s, they were talking about a global freezing, okay? In other words, the globe was going to freeze. And then they go global warming. Then they couldn't use that because the temperatures were actually quite cool. And many different things. So now they just talk about climate change. The climate's always been changing."
    - Trump has repeatedly changed his position on climate change and global warming. He has called global warming a "canard," a "make-believe problem," and a "big scam," as well as blaming the Chinese for creating the concept of global warming to hurt American manufacturing. But he has also described climate change as "Nothing's a hoax. It's a very serious subject."
    - The Project 2025 agenda calls for a radical reversal on climate change and clean energy policies:
        - "The next Administration should eliminate the Climate Hub Office and withdraw from climate change agreements that are inimical to the prosperity of the United States."
        - "Support repeal of massive spending bills like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which established new programs and are providing hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies to renewable energy developers, their investors, and special interests, and support the rescinding of all funds not already spent by these programs."
        - "The next conservative Administration should rescind all climate policies from its foreign aid programs."

        - In one of Project 2025's training videos, Bethany Kozma, a conservative activist and former deputy chief of staff at the U.S. Agency for International Development in the Trump administration, while noting that U.S. intelligence agencies have warned of the global threat climate change poses, went on to say that she believes climate change is just a front for advancing population control agendas." She also called for the next conservative administration "to eradicate climate change references from absolutely everywhere."
- Trump has called for dismantling the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
    - March 3, 2016: During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump said, "Department of Environmental Protection: We are going to get rid of it in almost every form. We're going to have little tidbits left. But we're going to take a tremendous amount out."
    - As *The Guardian* detailed, Trump's 2024 plan includes "systematically dismantling" the EPA, including cutting funding, rolling back regulations, forging closer ties to the fossil-fuel industry, and loosening fuel economy standards.

- *The Washington Post* reported that North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum (R) is a "key figure leading the Trump campaign's development of its energy policy" and also a "possible contender to lead the Energy Department in a second Trump term." At a fundraiser on May 4, 2024, "Burgum told donors that Trump would halt Biden's 'attack' on fossil fuels" "What would be the No. 1 thing that President Trump could do on Day 1? It's stop the hostile attack against all American energy, and I mean all," Burgum said, adding, "Whether it's baseload electricity, whether it's oil, whether it's gas, whether it's ethanol, there is an attack on liquid fuels."

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V. Day 1 Dictatorship Promise: Release January 6th rioters from prison

- Trump also promises that on day one he will release from prison those charged and convicted for their involvement in the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021. He has also promised to on day one pardon "a large portion" of convicted January 6th rioters. The January 6th Select Committee heard evidence that Trump was contemplating pardons for Jan. 6 rioters within the first 24 hours of the attack on the U.S. Capital, which over the days developed into considering the "the possibility of a 'blanket pardon' for all those involved in the events of January 6th." *POLITICO* also reported Trump had considered "blanket pardons" before he left office. He first mentioned his intention publicly in January 2022. To facilitate this day one promise, he announced in September 2023 that he would "appoint a special task force to rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner who's been unjustly persecuted by the Biden administration... so that I can study the situation very quickly and sign their pardons or commutations on day one."
    - Dec. 8, 2024, *Meet the Press*: Trump reaffirmed his plans to grant pardons to those involved in the January 6th insurrection. Vowing to "act very quickly", he

underscored his commitment, pledging to review the cases of over 900 individuals on his first day in office.

TRUMP: So yeah, most likely, I'll do it very quickly.

KRISTEN WELKER: Very quickly. Okay. But some of them, 169 of them, have pleaded guilty to assaulting police officers.

TRUMP: Because they had no choice.

WELKER: 900 pleaded guilty to other crimes. They're also going to be eligible for a pardon from you?

TRUMP: Listen, it's a very tough system. Do you know, almost nobody-- I saw people that didn't even go into the building and they were convicted. And you had the police saying, "Come on in. Come on in." I mean, you know, the police are saying, "Come on in, everybody. Come on in." They had people -- you know, you have a lot of cameras. They don't want to release the tapes. They don't want to release the tapes.

WELKER: But you're going to consider pardoning even those who pleaded guilty to crimes, including assaulting police officers?

TRUMP: Well, sometimes they say, "Here's your choice."

WELKER: You're not ruling it out?

TRUMP: Look. I know the system. The system's a very corrupt system. They say to a guy, "You're going to go to jail for two years or for 30 years." And these guys are looking, their whole lives have been destroyed. For two years, they've been destroyed. But the system is a very nasty system.

WELKER: Okay. Let's move on —

TRUMP: Yeah, I'm going to look at everything. We're going to look at individual cases —

WELKER: Everyone?

TRUMP: Yeah.

WELKER: Okay.

TRUMP: But I'm going to be acting very quickly.

WELKER: Within your first 100 days, first day?

TRUMP: First day.

WELKER: First day?

TRUMP: Yeah. I'm looking first day.

WELKER: You're going to issue these pardons?

TRUMP: These people have been there, how long is it? Three, four years.

WELKER: Okay.

TRUMP: You know, by the way, they've been in there for years, and they're in a filthy, disgusting place that shouldn't even be allowed to be open.

- Dec. 1, 2024, Truth Social post, Trump wrote, "Does the Pardon given by Joe to Hunter include the J-6 Hostages, who have now been imprisoned for years? Such an abuse and miscarriage of Justice!"
- Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: When asked if he decided whether he would be pardoning those involved in the January 6th attack on the Capitol, Trump indicated that he would focus on the non-violent offenders first but declined to rule out pardoning those who committed violent acts. In the same interview he later said he will be looking at January 6th pardons "early on, maybe the first nine minutes" of taking office.
- Nov. 11, 2024, posted on X: Mark Paoletta, who was recently nominated to serve again as General Counsel at OMB, wrote that Trump's agenda includes "granting pardons or commutations to January 6th defendants."
- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: "The moment we win, we will rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner unjustly victimized by the Harris regime, and I will sign their pardons on day one."
- July 31, 2024, National Association of Black Journalists Convention, Trump reiterated his vow to pardon January 6 rioters, clarifying that he would pardon those who assaulted police "if they're innocent." After being reminded that many had been convicted—at least 139 have pleaded guilty—Trump responded by stating they were found guilty by a "very tough system." As *POLITICO* noted, these comments mark the "most explicit promise Trump has made about the

range of defendants he might spring from prison if he takes office — a group that now appears to include some of the most notoriously violent actors that day." He also alleged some police officers were "ushering" rioters into the building.

> ABC NEWS' RACHEL SCOTT: "Mr. President, I would love to ask you about January 6th. You called yourself the candidate of law and order. When Time Magazine asked you if you would consider pardoning all the rioters, you said, yes, absolutely."
>
> TRUMP: "Sure, Yeah."
>
> SCOTT: "You called them patriots. One hundred and forty police officers were assaulted that day. Their injuries included broken bones. At least one officer lost an eye. One had two cracked ribs, two smashed spinal discs. Another had a stroke. Were the people who assaulted those 140 officers, including those I just mentioned, patriots who deserve pardon?"
>
> [Trump avoided answering the question]
>
> SCOTT: My question is on those rioters who assaulted officers. Would you pardon those people?
> ….
>
> TRUMP: Oh, absolutely I would. If they're innocent —
>
> SCOTT: You would pardon those —
>
> TRUMP: If they're innocent, I would pardon them.
>
> SCOTT: They've been convicted.
>
> TRUMP: By the way, the Supreme Court just under — well, they were convicted by a very — a very tough system.

- July 26, 2024, Turning Point Action summit, FL, referencing the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Fisher v. United States*, Trump advocated for releasing January 6th "hostages." "And when are they letting them out? You know, we had a great Supreme Court ruling four weeks ago that really will, should let most of them out. When are they coming out? They're still there. When are they coming out?" He later said: "From the moment I win the election, I will rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner who has been unjustly victimized by the Biden-Harris regime, so we can get them out of prison and back to their families where they belong. There's many of them out there."

- June 22, 2024, Faith and Freedom Coalition's "Road to Majority," Washington, DC, Trump said, "We will rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner who's unjustly victimized by the Biden regime … so we can get them out of the gulags and back to their families where they belong."
- June 9, 2024, Las Vegas, NV, Trump said: "So, when we get in, it's gonna go very rapidly. We're gonna do a lot of things. We're gonna look very strongly at J6. Those people, there has never been people treated more horrifically than J6 hostages."
- May 25, 2024, Libertarian Party National Convention, Washington, DC, Trump said: "Right now, the Biden DOJ is trying to put Christians in prison for 11 years for the crime of singing hymns. The moment I win the election, I will appoint a special task force to rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner who has been unjustly persecuted by the Biden administration, so that I can sign their pardons or commutations on day one … As everyone knows it will be my great honor to pardon the peaceful January 6 protesters, or as I often call them, 'the hostages.' They're hostages. There has never been a group of people treated so harshly or unfairly in our country's history. This abuse will be rectified and it will be rectified very quickly."
- April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Asked if he would consider pardoning the more than 800 individuals sentenced for actions on January 6th, Trump said "I would consider that, yes." "Yes, absolutely." "If somebody was evil and bad, I would look at that differently. But many of those people went in, many of those people were ushered in. You see it on tape, the police are ushering them in. They're walking with the police," he added.
- March 16, 2024, Daytona, Ohio, Trump began a MAGA rally by telling the crowd: "You see the spirit from the hostages, and that's what they are is hostages. They've been treated terribly and very unfairly, and you know that and everybody knows that. And we're gonna be working on that … the first day we get into office. We're gonna save our country and we're gonna work with the people to save treat those unbelievable patriots and they we unbelievable patriots, and are." "[I]t's a disgrace in my opinion."
- March 11, 2024, Truth Social post: "My first acts as your next President will be to Close the Border, DRILL, BABY, DRILL, and Free the January 6 Hostages being wrongfully imprisoned!"
- Sept. 15, 2023, "Pray, Vote, Stand Summit," Washington, DC, Trump revealed his plan to establish a special task force to "rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner" with the goal of issuing pardons and commutations on day one. Trump said: "But these Marxists and Stalinists in the administration got a Washington, DC jury to convict five pro-life activists who are now facing up to 11 years in prison for simple acts of protest. You read all about it. You hear all about it, and you talk all about it. Under Biden, others are being sentenced to 10, 15, and even 20 years in prison for retribution for their political beliefs while Antifa and other groups burned down cities like Portland, like Minneapolis. … To reverse these cruel travesties of justice, tonight I'm announcing that the moment I win the election, I will appoint a

special task force to rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner who's been unjustly persecuted by the Biden administration. … Well, you know what's going on better than anybody, so that I can study the situation very quickly and sign their pardons or commutations on day one. I want to sign them on day one. I want to see what's going on. It's a horrible thing that's happening, 22 years, 18 years, 10 years."

  - May 10, 2023, CNN town hall, NH, Trump promised as President to pardon "a large portion" of people convicted in connection with January 6th. "I am inclined to pardon many of them." "I can't say for every single one, because a couple of them, probably they got out of control." "I will most likely – I would say it will be a large portion of them." Asked if he would pardon members of the Proud Boys convicted of seditious conspiracy, Trump responded, "I don't know. I'll have to look at their case, but I will say in Washington, DC, you cannot get a fair trial." He also said that rioters "were there proud. They were there with love in their heart. That was an unbelievable – and it was a beautiful day."
  - Sept. 1, 2022, Wendy Bell Radio, Trump said: "I will tell you, I will look very, very favorably about full pardons. If I decide to run and if I win, I will be looking very, very strongly about pardons. Full pardons." "We'll be looking very, very seriously at full pardons because we can't let that happen. … And I mean full pardons with an apology to many."
  - Feb. 1, 2022, Newsmax interview, Trump said: "I would absolutely give them a pardon, if things don't work out fairly" and called the punishment "20 times out of proportion. These people are being persecuted."
  - Jan. 29, 2022, Conroe, TX, "If I run and I win, we will treat those people from Jan. 6 fairly." "We will treat them fairly." "And if it requires pardons, we will give them pardons, because they are being treated so unfairly."

- *POLITICO* reported that during Trump's final days in office he considered blanket pardons of Capitol rioters. Between Jan. 6 and Joe Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20, Trump reportedly made multiple calls to advisors to discuss the idea. "Do you think I should pardon them? Do you think it's a good idea? Do you think I have the power to do it? Trump asked one advisor, who summarized their three conversations. Another advisor said that Trump asked, "Is it everybody that had a Trump sign or everybody who walked into the Capitol" who could be pardoned? Trump "said, 'Some people think I should pardon them.' He thought if he could do it, these people would never have to testify or be deposed," according to that advisor.

- Neither Trump nor his campaign have confirmed who exactly Trump intends to release from prison and/or pardon. Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt has made various comments revising and interpreting Trump's remarks. For instance, in a statement to *NBC* at the end of April 2024, she said, "As President Trump has promised, he will pardon January 6th protestors who are wrongfully imprisoned by Crooked Joe Biden's Justice Department, and those decisions will be determined on a case-by-case basis when he is back in the White House." At least one month earlier, *The Washington Post*

asked Leavitt about who Trump was referring to as "hostages" and the potential for pardons, to which Leavitt indirectly responded: "President Trump will restore justice for all Americas who have been unfairly treated by Joe Biden's two-tier system of justice."

- Analysis by *Just Security* identified that, as of March 13, 2024, Trump likely intended to "get out" of the D.C. Department of Corrections 29 January 6th inmates, 27 of whom had been charged with assaulting law enforcement officers in the U.S. Capitol or on its grounds, as well as committing other crimes.

- Trump continues to hail January 6th rioters, including those incarcerated, as "warriors," "people who love our country" and "great patriots," and those incarcerated as "hostages" who are "wrongfully imprisoned." His solidarity has become more pronounced over recent months, now central to his campaign. *The Washington Post* found that between January through March 23, 2024, Trump's referencing Jan. 6 "hostages" increased, mentioning the term in every rally during March.
    - June 9, 2024, Las Vegas, NV, at Trump's first rally after having been convicted in New York on 34 felonies, he said: "So, when we get in, it's gonna go very rapidly. We're gonna do a lot of things. We're gonna look very strongly at J6. Those people, there has never been people treated more horrifically than J6 hostages." He continued: "Those J6 warriors, they were warriors, but they were really more than anything else, they're victims of what happened. All they were doing is protesting a rigged election. That's what they were doing. And the police say, 'go in, go in, go in, go in…go on in, everybody, go on in.' What a setup that was, what a horrible, horrible thing."
    - March 22, 2024, Truth Social, Trump posted on his platform a flyer advertising a nightly vigil for the inmates held by the D.C. Department of Corrections. "Stand in solidarity with our January 6th Political Prisoners in the DC jail as we honor their bravery," the flier reads. "At 9:00pm, everyone stops what they are doing to stand in solidarity as we all sing the National Anthem together." Trump captioned the flyer with his own announcement of the vigil: "The 600th Day of their nightly Vigil outside the DC Jail. From Micki Whitthoeft (Ashli Babbitt's Mother):"
        - Micki Witthoeft, the mother of a January 6th inmate, said at that vigil that had Trump called her earlier that day about "setting these guys free when he gets in," adding that "He said to pass that on to the guys inside that they're on his mind, and when he gets in they'll get out."
    - March 16, 2024, Daytona, OH, to introduce Trump to the stage while campaigning for Bernie Merona, Trump played the "Justice for All" recording. The song was preceded by an introduction from an unknown voice: "Ladies and gentleman, please rise for the horribly and unfairly treated January 6th hostages."
        - The same introductory message was played on March 9, 2024 in Rome, Georgia to introduce Trump to the stage at his "Get Out The Vote Rally" speech. Although, as above, the J6 Choir has long been used in Trump rallies, the introductory message appears to have first been introduced in March 2024.

    - March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: “You heard the hostages singing…they’re the ‘J6 hostages’ I call them. Because they are hostages. They’re policemen, they’re firemen, they’re accountants, they’re lawyers, in some cases. They’re put in jail for extended periods of time, for very long periods of time. They’re hostages.” He later added: “But when people who protest on January 6th in Washington they become hostages unfairly imprisoned for long periods of time.”
    - Feb. 24, 2024, CPAC, Trump said: “You heard the J6 hostages, didn't you? You heard that? And, I will tell you, there's never been in the history of our country a group of people treated the way they've been treated. There's never been anything like it.”
    - Dec. 19, 2023, Durham, NH, Trump said at a campaign rally: “[W]hen people who love our country protest in Washington, they become hostages, unfairly imprisoned for long periods of time.”
    - Dec. 17, 2023, Reno, NV, Trump told a crowd at a rally: “When people who love our country protest in Washington, they become hostages and prisoners unfairly imprisoned for long periods of time.”
    - Nov. 2, 2023, Houston, Trump said, referring to the J6 Choir: “I call them the J6 hostages, not prisoners. I call them the hostages, what’s happened. And it’s a shame.”
    - Jan. 13, 2023, Real America's Voice interview, Trump said: “I think it's a disgrace what's been happening, and so many of these people are great patriots.”
    - Sept. 1, 2022, Wendy Bell Radio, Trump said that he was “financially supporting people that are incredible.” “And they were in my office actually two days ago. It's very much on my mind. It’s a disgrace what they’ve done to them.”

- Trump has long sympathized with January 6th rioters, making no apologies for his unwavering support of those being held to account by DOJ as well as his support of their actions on January 6. Trump “has also fundraised for them, befriended their families and collaborated on a song that became a surprise iTunes hit.” He also featured on a record with January 6th rioters serving prison sentences, the profits of which are being used to fund rioters’ legal fees. The “Justice for All" record features the self-dubbed “J6 Choir” singing a version of the national anthem with Trump reciting the Pledge of Allegiance over the track. The song has made intermittent appearances in Trump’s rallies as early as March 2023. *The Washington Post* reported that “He routinely plays it on the patio at Mar-a-Lago.” Tom Homan, nominated Trump as the “border czar” to oversee immigration enforcement, previously served as a director of the nonprofit organization that sponsored the song, *The Justice for All Project*.

- According to DOJ data as of November 5, 2024, just under 46 months since the January 6th attack, at least 1,561 individuals had been charged for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including approximately 590 charged with assaulting, resisting, or impeding officers or employees, of which approximately 169 had been charged with using deadly or dangerous weapons or causing serious bodily injury to officers. 18 defendants had been charged with seditious conspiracy, of which 10 had been found guilty. There

have been approximately 1,229 successful convictions: approximately 1,028 of those convicted had received sentences, of which 645 resulted in prison sentences and 143 resulted in periods of home detention.

- Trump's support for January 6th rioters must be understood within the broader context of the GOP's and the wider Republican movement's efforts to rewrite the narrative of the attack on the U.S. Capitol. Numerous voices within the Republican Party have echoed Trump's stance, labeling those jailed for their role in the Capitol attack as "political prisoners" and "hostages." Some have even called for their immediate release and clemency, with certain Republican members of Congress visiting those incarcerated.
    - Sen. JD Vance (R-OH)
        - In a May 1, 2024, CNN interview, Vance said: "Here's been my basic argument about January 6: If you beat up a cop, of course you deserve to go to prison." "If you violated the law you should suffer the consequences. But there are people who protested on January 6 who've had the complete weight of the Justice Department thrown at them when at worst they're accused of misdemeanors."
        - Sept. 2, 2023, Twitter post: Vance appears to criticize the sentences handed to three former Proud Boys leaders—Joe Biggs, Zachary Rehl and Ethan Nordean—who were convicted of seditious conspiracy alongside Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio for their involvement in the U.S. Capitol assault. He reposted a tweet by Greg Price, communications director at States Freedom Caucus Network, questioning how an individual convicted of voluntary manslaughter could receive lighter sentences than January 6 offenders, "many of whom aren't even accused of violence." Vance said, "I would like to hear a single good argument for why a violent criminal who killed an innocent father deserves less time than these J6 offenders, many of whom aren't even accused of violence," despite the three Proud Boys leaders mentioned in the tweet having taken part in the violent assault on the U.S. Capitol and been intimately involved in planning and recruiting before the attack.
        - In January 6, 2022, Twitter posts, Vance complained about Jan. 6 rioters in prisons who had not yet been convicted, calling them "political prisoners" whose "captivity is an assault on democracy." In one post he linked to a group fundraising for those prosecuted for their involvement in Jan. 6, *Patriot Freedom Project* (see Trump/ally endorsements of the fundraising group here). Vance's four posts on X read:

            > "There are dozens of people who protested on J6 who haven't even been charged with a crime yet are being mistreated in DC prisons. A friend suggested the below link if you're able to support them. http://PatriotFreedomProject.com"

"*Even if* the very worst of the Democrats' claims about J6 are true (they're not), it is an insult to all of us that so many people are rotting in prison without being offered a speedy trial. These people are political prisoners, and their captivity is an assault on democracy."

"If you can't give, maybe consider writing a letter or offering words of encouragement. Many of these prisoners are veterans who served their country honorably and are accused of nothing. They are our people. Help them if you can."

"*convicted (not charged)"

- In a January 5, 2022, Twitter post, Vance posted a video to X where he said January 6 "is often framed as an assault on our democracy, but the assault on our democracy that too few people are willing to talk about is the fact that dozens of nonviolent protesters on January the 6 are being held in disgusting conditions in Washington DC jails. No Democrats and too few Republicans are willing to speak up for them. They're being denied their constitutional rights, and the fact that so few in our media or our political establishment are willing to speak up for them is the height of corruption." He continued: "They [Democrats in the media] are far bigger threats to American democracy than the nonviolent protesters of January 6."
- August 30, 2021, Twitter post: JD Vance shared *The Hill*'s story on Rep. Madison Cawthorn describing Jan. 6 rioters in prison as "political hostages" and "political prisoners" (see below on Rep. Cawthorn). The Hill's post read: "Cawthorn calls jailed Jan. 6 rioters 'political hostages,' 'political prisoners'." Vance's repost added: "Correct."

- Vivek Ramaswamy, former GOP presidential candidate
  - Sept. 6, 2023, Twitter post:

    "America now has a two-tiered justice system: Antifa & BLM rioters roam free while peaceful January 6 protesters are imprisoned without bail. Biden's 'Department of Injustice' has executed over 1,000 arrests for nonviolent offenses related to January 6, casting a dark shadow over Lady Justice & the foundational principles of our legal system.

    To unify this country, I commit as president to pardon all Americans who were targets of politicized federal prosecutions & those denied due process. This includes all peaceful, nonviolent January 6 protesters who were denied their constitutional due process rights. I will end the weaponization of police power in America. Every Republican candidate must be clear about where we stand on the hard issues."

"Amen," Charlie Kirk replied.
    - Ramaswamy, during his 2024 presidential campaign, told CNN that he expected to be making "tens of pardons on day one. I think there countless Americans who have been the victims of politically motivated persecutions through prosecution. Peaceful protestors on January 6. January 6 defendants who actually have had constitutional due process violations.
    - Ramaswamy told Jack Posobiec that on day one he would "absolutely" pardon non-violent January 6 defendants. "I will take the heat. Day 1 January 20th, 2025 they get that pardon."
- Former Rep. George Santos (R-NY)
    - June 2022, Rep. Santos told an undercover Democratic activist, ""I've actually been working on funding a ton of them to get out." I "wrote a nice check to a law firm" to help release January 6th rioters held in "D.C. Gitmo."
- Rep. Andrew Clyde (R-GA-09)
    - In and audio recording uploaded onto Rumble in May 2023, January 6th rioter Eric Christie, who was convicted in August 2023 for his role in the Capitol attack, reported from his jail cell that Rep. Clyde had visited him and others in jail and promised Christie that he would defund the DOJ and FBI.
    - In a video posted on X in Sept. 2022, Rep. Clyde said, "we're gonna do everything we can to get them out," referring to efforts by Republican members of Congress regarding those jailed for their actions on January 6, and agreed that pardons were "absolutely" on the table. Clyde also spoke about a planned walk through DC, including to the DC Jail Facilities, with other members of the House Oversight Committee.

- Rep. Marjorie Taylor-Greene (R-GA-14)
    - Jan. 11, 2024, speaking to CBS News near the House Chamber, Rep. Taylor-Greene said: "I call them 'political prisoners,' not 'hostages.' But I'm not caught up in the semantics of it."
    - Taylor-Greene has visited Jan. 6 defendants in the D.C. jail, including during a congressional tour offered in March of last year. Speaking to reporters, Greene condemned a "two-tier justice system" in which the Jan. 6 defendants were treated like "political prisoners."
- Rep. Troy Nehls (R-TX-22)
    - In January 2024, CBS News reported Nehls as telling CBS. "I think there *[sic]* civil rights are being violated in many cases." "When asked if he endorsed the term 'hostages', Nehls responded, 'Yeah. If you're being held in there and your civil rights are being violated.'"
- Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX-01)

        - Sept. 9, 2022, Gohmert presented an honorary American flag flown above the U.S. Capitol to Simone Gold upon her release from Miami Federal Detention Center for her involvement in the January 6 insurrection. In a statement released on his official congressional website during his term in Congress, Gohmert called Gold a "patriot" and "American hero" and falsely claimed she was a "political prisoner." Gold had pleaded guilty to entering a restricted building during the Capitol riot and was sentenced to 60 days in prison and a $9,500 fine. "After having her name and reputation shamefully dragged through the mud, the Biden administration's DOJ threw her in prison for peacefully walking into the U.S. Capitol on January 6 and delivering a speech," Gohmert's statement read. "Dr. Gold is the definition of what a political prisoner looks like—something I never thought I'd see here in the United States of America." (CNN & *The Hill* reporting) (*See also* Simone Gold post on X, Rep. Gohmert repost on X, and video of the Simone Gold and Rep. Gohmert)
        - June 15, 2022, Twitter post, Gohmert wrote: "Nothing like a tourist crashing a Capitol Hill press conference and shaming the mainstream media over their despicable coverage, or lack thereof, of #J6 political prisoners. Thank you, sir!"
    - J.R. Majewski, Republican congressional candidate in Ohio
        - November 2023, Majewski said: "Now that (U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson) has released the J6 tapes, the Biden DOJ should release the hostages." (*Ohio Capital Journal* reporting)
        - "In 2022, as a group calling itself a 'freedom convoy' prepared to drive across the U.S. toward Washington D.C. Majewkski urged them to turn the Washington D.C jail's parking lot into 'the worlds largest peaceful protest.' 'STOP GOVERNMENT OVERREACH – RELEASE POLITICAL PRISONERS!' he wrote." (*Ohio Capital Journal* reporting)

    - Matt Braynard, 2016 Trump campaign director of data and strategy
        - Braynard heads a nonprofit, Look Ahead America, which purports to be "dedicated to standing up for patriotic Americans who have been forgotten by our government."
        - In a January 2024 post on X, Braynard highlighted Look Ahead America's accomplishments since its relaunch on January 20, 2021. He noted that the group organized "over 70 live protests, vigils, and rallies across the country" and launched the "J6 Question Project," which succeeded in getting "every Republican Presidential Candidate on the record about J6 political prisoners." Additionally, they developed "the largest, most comprehensive database of J6 Political Prisoners" and produced the "Political Prisoner Podcast." The group also started the 'Jobs for J6 Project," helping former prisoners secure employment.
        - Look Ahead America was behind the September 2021 "Justice for J6" rally. The permit application for the event read: "Our event is a Rally

Against Political Persecution to bring awareness and attention to the unjust and unethical treatment of nonviolent January 6 political prisoners who are being denied their basic rights as afforded by the Constitution." "The event will include the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance, songs of patriotism, prayer, guest speakers, and the showing of a video. We will be using this time to make our voices heard in asking that all charges be dropped for nonviolent detainees and they be released from solitary confinement."

- In August 2021, Braynard called on the U.N. to "be a voice of reason and urge the United States government to immediately release pretrial detainees, investigate and prosecute their abuse, and halt all further arrests and prosecutions pending a thorough and meaningful bipartisan investigation into the prosecutions of these protesters."
- On July 17, 2021, Braynard spoke to a crowd at a *Look Ahead America* rally outside the D.C. Central Detention Facility. The event was a show of support for those incarcerated after the January 6 Capitol attack, whom organizers described as "political prisoners."
- In January 2021, he wrote to the Justice Department that "we do not support the Biden Administration using those few bad apples as an excuse to persecute the peaceful Trump supporters who entered the Capitol with selective prosecutions based on their political beliefs."

- *The Washington Post* reported that several individuals with ties to January 6th and other illicit efforts to overturn the 2020 election played significant roles in the recent Republican National Convention. For instance, Trump's formal nomination was seconded by Nevada GOP Chairman Michael McDonald who helped organize 2020 false electors in his state. The deputy policy director of the convention's platform committee, Ed Martin, was among the mob outside the Capitol, and the same for at least three others serving as delegates. At least five other convention delegates served as false electors, including four charged with fraud, forgery and conspiracy. As part of a lawsuit settlement, the false electors in Wisconsin formally "agree[d] not to serve as presidential electors in 2024 or in any United States presidential election in which Donald J. Trump is on the ballot." However that settlement agreement did not bar them from serving as RNC delegates, and one of the Wisconsin false electors served as a delegate at the Convention and another served as an alternate (CNN reporting).

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VI. Project 2025

Trump and Project 2025

- Trump and JD Vance's openly autocratic rhetoric and aspirations are complemented by an extensive pre-election plan to fundamentally alter the nature of American government: The Heritage Foundation's "2025 Presidential Transition Project" (or "Project 2025").

Project 2025's agenda, as outlined in the 887-page document, "Mandate for Leadership: the Conservative Promise," aligns with Trump's Agenda47 plans in several ways, offering "an important preview of a second [Trump] term." Driven in part by a broad desire to be prepared for "Day One" of a Trump administration, Project 2025 purports to "rescue the country from the grip of the radical Left" and "pave[ ] the way for an effective conservative Administration based on four pillars: a policy agenda, Presidential Personnel Database, Presidential Administration Academy, and playbook for the first 180 days of the next Administration." The project is steered by an advisory board comprising a "broad coalition of conservative organizations", including the Center for Renewing America (led by Russell Vought) and Conservative Partnership Institute, as well as complemented by other 2025 planning efforts including, for example, the America First Policy Institute.

- While Project 2025 director Paul Dans stepped down in August 2024, the project reportedly forged ahead with the Heritage Foundation's president, Kevin Roberts, now in charge of day-to-day management. Having essentially completed its extensive policy drafting under Dans's leadership, the project turned to the task of personnel, training and policy implementation.
    - *The Washington Post* reported, "The project is winding down its policy work in anticipation of handing off its recommendations to the official presidential transition. The project will continue to operate a database of 20,000 applicants for Republican political appointments. Participants are still drafting executive orders and conducting training classes for potential future administration officials".
    - *POLITICO* also noted, "Dans may be gone, but the policy book will still be out there ready to be adopted, and the project can still turn over its personnel database and '180-day playbook' to Trump's transition team … Out of sheer necessity, the Trump transition team may end up relying on the project's resources, especially its personnel database, given Trump's stated ambition to 'dismantle the deep state' and replace it with conservative loyalists."
    - "The most important pillar of Project 2025 has always been about personnel, not policy. Or rather, the whole effort is animated by the Reagan-era maxim that personnel is policy, that power flows from having the right people in the right jobs," *ProPublica* wrote.
    - Indeed, Paul Dans said at The Heritage Foundation's 50th Anniversary Leadership Summit, "What we're doing is systematically preparing to march into office and bring a new army of aligned, trained, and essentially weaponized conservatives ready to do battle against the Deep State."
    - Kevin Roberts told *POLITICO*, "Do we have conservatives who are experts at killing bureaucracies?" "No. The conservative movement has not developed this capability. But we're going to as a result of Project 2025."

- Both Trump and his campaign have publicly disavowed Project 2025, apparently concerned that Heritage and Project 2025's public statements and plans were unhelpful for Trump's prospects of taking office. His campaign and aides had for some time been distancing themselves, both publicly and privately. And as Project 2025 came under

intensified scrutiny, particularly following Roberts's "bloodless" revolution comment, Trump sought to sever any connections.

- Sept. 3, 2024, Lex Fridman podcast, Trump said: "I know nothing about it. And they know that, too. Democrats know that. And I purposely haven't read it because I wanna say to you, "I don't know, I have no idea what it's all about." It's easier than saying, "I read it" and, you know, all of the things. I purposely haven't read it. I've heard about it. I've heard about things that are in there that I don't like, and there are some things in there that everybody would like."
- August 22, 2024, Fox News: responding to Vice President Kamala Harris's nomination acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention (DNC), where she drew connections between him and Project 2025, Trump said: "She knows I have nothing to do with Project 25. They throw it out. A group of people got together. They did a thing. I haven't even seen it. I don't wanna see it. I told them specifically, 'I don't wanna see it.'"
- August 22, 2024, Truth Social post: Reacting to Kamala Harris's DNC nomination acceptance speech linking him to Project 2025, Trump said: "LYING AGAIN ABOUT PROJECT 2025, WHICH SHE KNOWS, AND SO DO ALL DEMOCRATS, THAT I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH!"
  - Trump "ReTruthed" the above post on August 23, attaching an image of a *USA TODAY* fact check (which he also shared on July 25) that found the claim "Project 2025 is a Trump plan" to be "false."
- August 22, 2024, Cochise County, AZ: Trump said, "They made up everything … They made up about Project 25. They've been told officially, legally, in every way, that we have nothing to do with Project 25. They know it but they bring it up anyway."
- August 22, 2024, *Fox & Friends*: Referring to Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz's comments at the Democratic National Convention about Trump's links to Project 2025, Trump told Fox News: "And for him to say about Project 25 is disgraceful. They know I have nothing to do with it. I had no idea what it was. A group of people got together, they drew up some conservative values, very conservative values. And in some case perhaps they went over the line, perhaps they didn't. I have no idea what Project 25 is."
- July 25, 2024, *Fox and Friends*, Trump said that "many of the points are fine. Many of the points are absolutely ridiculous. I have nothing to do with the document. I've never seen the document. I've seen certain things that are said in it … It doesn't speak for me. They wrote something that I disagree with in many cases, and in some cases you agree … This is a document I know nothing about … I heard about it a week ago, and has nothing to do with me whatsoever."
- July 25, 2024, Truth Social post, Trump shared a *USA TODAY* fact check which found as "false" the claim that "Project 2025 is a plan from Trump."
- July 24, 2024, Truth Social post: "I have nothing to do with, and know nothing about, Project 25. The fact that I do is merely disinformation put out by the Radical Left Democrat Thugs. Do not believe them! DJT"

    - July 15, 2024, *The Faulkner Focus* interview: Trump said: “Look, first of all, I have no idea what it is. It’s a group of extremely conservative people [who] got together and wrote up a wishlist of things, many of which I disagree with entirely. They’re too severe. Like on abortion, as an example. They have a strong view of abortion. Well, from what I’ve heard, it’s not ‘too far’ [but] ‘way too far.’ They’ve gone really too far.”
    - July 11, 2024, Truth Social post: “I know nothing about Project 2025. I have not seen it, have no idea who is in charge of it, and, unlike our very well received Republican Platform, had nothing to do with it. The Radical Left Democrats are having a field day, however, trying to hook me into whatever policies are stated or said. It is pure disinformation on their part. By now, after all of these years, everyone knows where I stand on EVERYTHING! DJT”
    - July 20, 2024, during his first rally speech following accepting the GOP nomination for president, Trump again tried to publicly sever ties to Project 2025. While he admitted to knowing “some of them,” he was adamant that he did not “know anything about it” and did not “want to know anything about it.” The former president did not stop there, though, this time saying Project 2025 was created by the “severe” and “radical” right, with some “seriously extreme” policies.
    - July 5, 2024, Truth Social post: “I know nothing about Project 2025. I have no idea who is behind it. I disagree with some of the things they’re saying and some of the things they’re saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal. Anything they do, I wish them luck, but I have nothing to do with them.”

- Despite public disavowments of Project 2025 by Trump and his team, as noted by many, including *Axios* and other sources, Project 2025 is “undeniably a Trump-driven operation,” simply one more audacious and frank in its stated goals than the Trump campaign. “Project 2025 is obviously intertwined with Trump’s universe of allies and staff” and “a second Trump administration will depend on those allies and that staff to run the government,” *The Washington Post*’s Phllip Bump explained. Indeed, in the words of Kevin Roberts, Project 2025 is a plan for “institutionalizing Trumpism.”

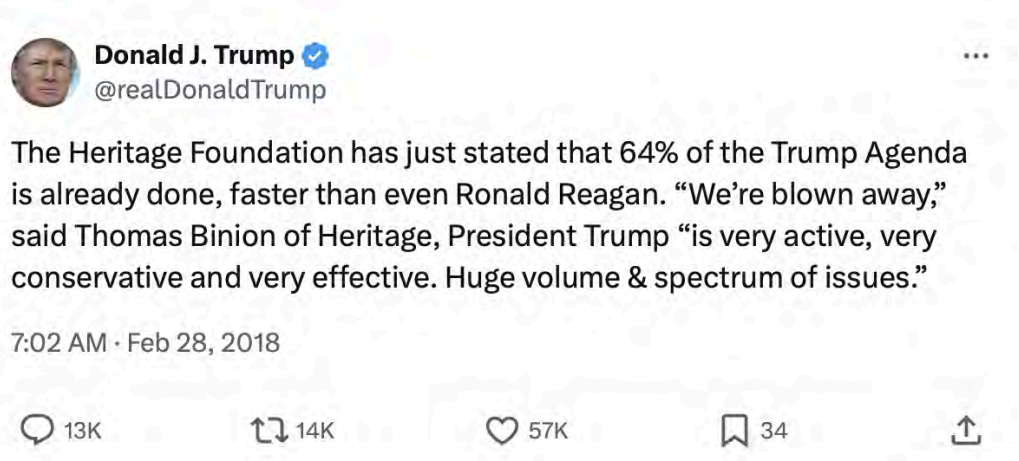
- Personnel profiles of Project 2025 staff, editors, contributors, and affiliates can be found here and here.

- Trump has direct and indirect links to the Heritage Foundation and Project 2025.
    - On August 30, 2024, Trump headlined the annual summit for Moms for Liberty, who is labeled an extremist group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. The summit was cosponsored by the Heritage Foundation, to which Moms for Liberty has close ties, including being awarded in 2022 with Heritage’s Salvatori Prize for Citizenship, which came with a $25,000 cash award. Moms for Liberty is listed as “coalition partner” for Project 2025.
    - On February 22, 2024, during an address to the National Religious Broadcasters, Trump said: “Heritage Foundation president, somebody else doing an

unbelievable job. He's bringing it back to levels it's never seen, Dr. Kevin Roberts. Kevin, thank you."

- In April 2022, Trump delivered a keynote speech at The Heritage Foundation.
  - *The Washington Post* reported that Trump and Roberts shared a 45-minute private flight from Trump's home in Palm Beach, Florida, to the foundation's annual conference on Amelia Island, with Heritage chartering the plane due to Trump's jet being refurbished at the time. "Roberts brought it up with Trump on the flight, but Trump seemed uninterested and moved on to another subject, according to a Heritage official. A Trump campaign official said Trump and Roberts didn't discuss Project 2025 on the plane ride."
  - During the event, just as the think tank was beginning Project 2025, Trump said of Heritage, "This is a great group and they're going to lay the groundwork and detail plans for exactly what our movement will do ... when the American people give us a colossal mandate to save America." He continued, "With Kevin and the staff, and I met so many of them now, I took pictures with among the most handsome, beautiful people I've ever seen." Also adding, "Already we have shown the power of our winning formula, working closely with many of the great people at Heritage over the four incredible years. And we've worked with you a lot. We were just discussing with Kevin [Roberts]" and "we're gonna work on some other things that are going to be very exciting, I think, Kevin. I think maybe the most exciting of all."
  - During his keynote address, Trump also praised the then-new leader Roberts and expressed confidence in his future success; complimented other Heritage leaders, including those who had advised his campaign or served in his administration; and repeated his interest in being a "dictator," saying he would rather be "a dictator" than "a dumb person."

- Before the 2016 election, Heritage launched a similar project with 334 policy recommendations, and a year into Trump's term Heritage reported that 64 percent of those recommendations had been adopted in his budget, implemented through regulatory guidance, or were under consideration for future action. A month later, in February 2018, Trump approvingly cited that analysis in a post on Twitter, appearing to consider Heritage's "Mandate" at the time synonymous with his own "Trump Agenda," and championing his implementation of the Agenda. He quoted Thomas Binion's statement—who was at that time the director of Heritage's congressional and executive outreach program, which oversaw the "Mandate"—in which Binion said that Trump "is very active, very conservative, and very effective." (Heritage then shared Trump's post on its website.)



- In October 2017, Trump delivered a keynote speech at Heritage Foundation.
- Edwin J. Feulner, co-founder and former president of the Heritage Foundation, has met Trump on at least two occasions: once during a Heritage event and again at a 2017 dinner hosted by Trump with conservative grassroots leaders.
- Trump appointed Hans von Spakovsky, Heritage Foundation's Election Law Reform Initiative Manager and Senior Legal Fellow, to serve on his 2017 Advisory Commission on Election Integrity.

- Trump’s associates who have been involved in Project 2025 continue to be intimately involved in the Trump campaign.
  - The Trump campaign has appointed some of Project 2025’s architects to work on the Republican Party’s platform, and several have met with Trump personally. *Rolling Stone* identified at least seven members of the RNC working on the GOP’s platform that had ties to Project 2025.
  - Notably, the Trump campaign and RNC named Russell Vought—who authored a key chapter of the Project 2025 report and has been identified as a potential chief of staff in a future Trump administration—as the RNC platform committee’s policy director. Vought himself noted in his July 2024 interview with the Centre for Climate Reporting that behind the scenes things are friendly between Trump and Project 2025: “I think the best example is like the campaign selecting me to be the [RNC] platform [committee’s policy director] … because of their views on my policy ideas, and they’re not running from all the negativity I get from the press … The relationship is great.”
  - The Heritage Foundation also sponsored the 2024 Republican National Convention, where Trump officially received the Republican nomination for president. Identified as a convention partner on the convention host committee’s website, Heritage held a day-long “policy fest” on the opening day, as well as a closed social event on the penultimate day.
  - Further, the main Trump Super PAC, “Make America Great Again Inc.” (or “MAGA Inc.”), has been recently running online ads promoting a website called “Trump Project 2025.”

- The project was created in large part by, and is led by, Trump allies.
    - Until Paul Dans's recent resignation, Project 2025 was led by three individuals—the project's director, Dans, and associate directors Spencer Chretien and Troup Hemenway—all of whom served in Trump's administration.
    - In April 2022, Paul Dans was tapped by Kevin Roberts to oversee Project 2025, and Dans co-edited its "Mandate." He was Chief of Staff at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and OPM's White House Liaison, and later worked as a senior advisor at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Trump also appointed Dans Chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission.
    - Spencer Chretien, who "support[s] each pillar of the project's work," served as Special Assistant to the President and as an associate director of the Presidential Personnel Office (PPO), where he "help[ed] to identify, recruit, and place hundreds of political appointees at all levels of government," and had previously been a HUD political appointee.
    - Troup Hemenway, a senior advisor of the project and associate director of personnel placement, was an associate director of PPO, overseeing "presidential appointments in the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Energy, and the Intelligence Community." He was also "a senior advisor to the undersecretary of defense for research and engineering at the Pentagon, a member of the Senior Executive Service, and a defense fellow and special assistant in the Office of the Secretary of Defense." Before that, Hemenway worked on Trump's 2016 campaign and the 2016 transition team.
    - Steven Groves is The Heritage Foundation's Margaret Thatcher Fellow and co-edited the "Mandate" with Dans. He was Ambassador Nikki Haley's Chief of Staff at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. He subsequently joined the White House as Special Assistant to the President and Assistant Special Counsel, representing the White House in the Mueller investigation, before becoming the White House Deputy Press Secretary.

- Project 2025 is supported by numerous Trump allies, including many of his past and likely future appointees if he recaptures the presidency
    - A comprehensive CNN review revealed in July 2024 the deep interconnections between Trump and Project 2025, particularly in contributing to the "Mandate". "[N]early 240 people" had "ties to both Project 2025 and to Trump" from "nearly every aspect of his time in politics and the White House – from day-to-day foot soldiers in Washington to the highest levels of his government." CNN noted that the number of individuals with connections to both Trump and Project 2025 was "likely higher" than 240. Their reporting found that "at least 140 people who worked in the Trump administration had a hand in Project 2025, … including more than half of the people listed as authors, editors and contributors to 'Mandate for Leadership.'" (An analysis by Judd Legum found that a total of 81% of those responsible for the "Mandate" had official roles in the Trump administration.) CNN

also noted that six of Trump's former Cabinet secretaries, four of his ambassadorial nominees, and several officials who enforced his stringent immigration policies were involved in drafting or collaborating on the "Mandate."

- An October 2024 review by *The New York Times* found that "182 out of 307 authors, editors and contributors to Project 2025's playbook are tied to Mr. Trump. In fact, of the 40 contributors to "Mandate," 18 served in Trump's first administration, while another 12 worked in both the administration and on either his campaign or transition teams. An additional contributor was part of his initial presidential transition team only. Further, out of the 267 additional contributors, at least 144 also served in Trump's administration or were involved with his campaign or transition teams.
- A review of Project 2025's training videos, as part of its "Presidential Administration Academy," "shows that 29 of the 36 speakers have worked for Trump in some capacity — on his 2016-17 transition team, in the administration or on his 2024 reelection campaign." For instance, Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt co-delivers one of the training videos, "The Art of Professionalism."
- Russell Vought, Trump's former director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), heads the Center for Renewing America, which is on Project 2025's advisory group. Described as a "chief architect of Project 2025", Vought authored a key chapter of the Project 2025 report and is leading efforts to draft regulations, executive orders and secretarial memos to be used by a Trump administration.
- Stephen Miller, a central advisor in the Trump Administration who ABC News reported "helped Trump with debate prep and acted as a surrogate in the spin room," is "one of the most powerful architects" of Project 2025, according to *Axios*; he has also appeared in videos produced by Project 2025. While "Miller has started forcefully denying any role in the project," the *The Washington Post* reported, "His America First Legal group was part of the coalition, and his deputy, Gene Hamilton, wrote the playbook's chapter on the Justice Department."
- Another influential Trump advisor, John McEntee, who served as director of the White House Presidential Personnel Office under Trump, is also a senior advisor to Project 2025. McEntee has effectively confirmed the integration between Project 2025 and Trump, saying on the Daily Wire podcast "Morning Wire": "Obviously, there will need to be coordination and the president and his team will announce an official transition this summer, and we're going to integrate a lot of our work with them. But I think keeping the two separate is actually the most beneficial way to go about it."
- Only days after denying any connection to Project 2025, Trump announced that if he wins the election, he will bring back Tom Homan, his former acting director of ICE and the "father" of the family separation policy. Homan, a contributor to Project 2025's "Mandate" and a fellow and speaker at Heritage, last year confirmed to *The New York Times* that he met with Trump shortly after he announced his campaign and agreed to return to help organize and run the "largest deportation operation" in U.S. history. Homan reiterated that commitment

during a “fiery speech” at the 2024 Republican National Convention, and during Trump’s acceptance speech the following day, the former president again suggested Homan would be “put in charge” of stopping “the invasion” at the border.

- “In November 2022, Heritage hired Rick Dearborn, the executive director of Trump’s first transition team in 2016 who later served as White House deputy chief of staff, as a fellow advising the project. Dans then tasked Dearborn with writing the chapter about the White House Office, the innermost sanctum of the West Wing that’s led by the White House chief of staff and includes the president’s closest advisers.” (*POLITICO* reporting)
- Other contributors to the “Mandate” who were appointed by the former president to independent positions include: Brendan Carr, who drafted a chapter on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and had been nominated by Trump to be a Commissioner on the FCC; and Lisa Correnti, an anti-abortion advocate Trump selected as a delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Former U.S. Attorney for the District of Utah Brett Tolman is also named as a contributor to the “Mandate;” although not a member of the Trump administration, he “functioned as an informal adviser to Trump on pardons and commutations” and helped facilitate the pardon of Charles Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law’s father, as part of his compensated work lobbying the administration.

- Many of the groups that comprise Project 2025’s advisory board are led by or have ties to Trump allies and advisors.
  - Mark Meadows has been Senior Partner at the Conservative Partnership Institute (CPI) since January 2021. CPI “has become a breeding ground for the next generation of Trump loyalists and an incubator for policies he might pursue,” *The New York Times* reports, adding, Meadows “‘helped incubate and launch’ numerous related groups that would be headed by prominent fellow Trump alumni, another annual C.P.I. report said. Among them: the America First Legal Foundation [(AFL)], a litigious conservative firm led by the former White House senior policy adviser and speechwriter Stephen Miller; the Center for Renewing America, a culture-war messaging hub whose top officials include Russell Vought, the former Office of Management and Budget director, and Kash Patel, a former national security aide; and the Election Integrity Network, headed by Ms. [Cleta] Mitchell, whose role in Mr. Trump’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election results led to her abrupt departure from the Washington establishment law firm Foley & Lardner two months before C.P.I. hired her.” Mitchell is CPI’s Senior Legal Fellow. CPI Chairman Jim DeMint was the Heritage Foundation’s former president and later appointed by Trump to the White House Economic Advisory Board in 2020.
  - AFL, founded in 2021 by Trump Administration officials Miller, Meadows, and Gene Hamilton (who wrote Project 2025’s chapter on the Justice Department), “engages in ‘lawfare’ designed to defeat the ever-pervasive woke agenda infiltrating Big Business, Big Education, and Big Government,” according to CPI’s 2022 annual report.

    - Jay Sekulow, Trump's personal attorney and lead counsel during the first impeachment trial, is the President and CEO of ACLJ Action, a political group tied to the American Center for Law and Justice, for which he is chief counsel. Although Sekulow himself does not appear to have directly contributed to the "Mandate," three key members of ACLJ Action, all of whom served in the Trump administration, did contribute.
        - Thomas F. Gilman, the Director of ACLJ Action, authored Chapter 21 of the "Mandate" on the Department of Commerce. Gilman previously served as the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Administration and Chief Financial Officer of the Commerce Department under Trump.
        - James Rockas, Executive Director of ACLJ Action, and Robert Burkett, Senior Advisor and Chief of Staff at ACLJ Action, also contributed to Gilman's chapter, as well as to Chapter 2 on the Executive Office of the President, authored by Russ Vought.
        - During the Trump administration, Rockas held various roles, including Deputy Chief of Staff to Secretary Wilbur Ross, Deputy Director of Policy & Strategic Planning, and lead spokesman for the Department of Commerce. Burkett served as a Special Assistant and Senior Advisor in the Office of the Secretary at the Department of Commerce, a Senior Advisor in International Engagement within the Office of Industrial Base Policy at the Department of Defense, and as a Legislative Assistant in the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Labor.
    - John Eastman, the attorney who assisted Trump's failed bid to overturn the 2020 presidential election, has been charged with related crimes in multiple jurisdictions. His law license was subsequently suspended after a judge recommended his disbarment. Eastman has been a director of the Public Interest Legal Foundation since its inception and (now former) board member since 2015. He serves as a senior fellow and board member at the Claremont Institute.

- Those involved in Project 2025 have attested to Trump's close connection to the project as well as to the significant overlap between policy agendas.
    - July 24, 2024, during a covertly recorded meeting at the presidential suite of the Rosewood hotel in DC, Vought told the Centre for Climate Reporting not to take Trump's disavowals of Project 2025 seriously, but as merely "graduate-level politics"; the former president is "very supportive" of Vought's think tank, the Center for Renewing America (CRA), an advisory group to Project 2025, and "blessed" Vought's plans on the last day in the White house in January 2021.
        - "I expect you to hear 10 more times from the rally the president, you know, distancing himself from the left's boogie man of Project 2025 … I'm not worried about it. He's running against a brand. He is not running against any people. He is not running against any institutions. It's interesting, he's in fact not even opposing himself to a particular policy. He's been at our organization [CRA]]. He's raised money for our organization. He's blessed it from the, you know, I remember walking into our last day in office and

told him what I was going to do. So, he's very supportive of what we do. And, and know that we have an all manner of things that we do that's, you know, even unrelated to Project 2025," Vought said. "So, I see what he's doing is just very, very conscious distancing himself from a brand."
        - Vought said, "So, I am very happy with the JD pick. I think it's transformative, for sure … And think of him as a member version of what we do. So, there's no think tank, no policy organization, no battle plan creator, other than us for the worldview that I think Donald Trump has and that JD has."
        - CNN reported that "Trump and Vought have spoken at various times since leaving office, and the former president has adopted some of Vought's ideas."
        - Vought also said he had personally talked to the former president in recent months and received at least one personal "assignment" from Trump after he left office.
    - In an interview aired in mid-July 2024, Paul Dans said Project 2025 has "integration with folks on the [Trump] campaign," "often…suppl[ies] ideas," and "I know President Trump's team will be receptive of it."
    - In early July 2024, just days after Trump's early attempts to distance himself, Kevin Roberts said there is "tremendous" and "significant" "overlap" between Project 2025, the GOP's 2024 platform and Trump's campaign website, adding that there are "no hard feelings from any of us at Project 2025 about the statement because we understand Trump is the standard bearer and he's making a political tactical decision there."
    - In June 2024, Paul Dans told *POLITICO*'s Ian Ward, "We talk to President Trump, and we also talk to his team." "The reality is that we have a great complement of people here that are extremely effective and who were in the prior administration, and we have a hundred [allied] organizations with thousands of people at work. You can't help but not use this work."
    - In April 2024, Roberts told *The Washington Post*, "I personally have talked to President Trump about Project 2025 because my role in the project has been to make sure that all of the candidates who have responded to our offer for a briefing on Project 2025 get one from me."
    - Dans said in an April 2023 podcast that "we've had great relationships" with Trump and other Republicans, adding that "ultimately, yes, I think, you know, President Trump's very bought in with this."

- JD Vance also has close links to The Heritage Foundation and Project 2025.
    - He is "good friends" with Heritage president, Kevin Roberts, who in March 2024 said that Vance "is absolutely going to be one of the leaders — if not the leader — of our movement." ("Privately, we were really rooting for him," Roberts told reporters at the Republican National Convention.)
    - On April 20, 2023, Vance spoke at the Heritage Foundation's *50th Anniversary Leadership Summit*, where he said: "We are gonna, hopefully in 2024, take back

the White House, and this organization is gonna play a major role in helping us figure out how to govern at the White House, at the Senate, at the House and all across our great country. So, Kevin, thank you for your leadership. And thanks for being at the forefront of the things that matter."

- Vance wrote the introduction to Heritage Foundation's "2017 Index of Culture and Opportunity."
- He authored the foreword for Roberts's upcoming book on "taking back Washington," which "outlines a peaceful 'Second American Revolution' for voters looking to shift the power back into the hands of the people." (An archived version of the book's Amazon page reveals markedly more incendiary language.) In Vance's foreword, he asserts, "Never before has a figure with Roberts's depth and stature within the American Right tried to articulate a genuinely new future for conservatism ... We are now all realizing that it's time to circle the wagons and load the muskets. In the fights that lay ahead, these ideas are an essential weapon." Promoting the book on X, Vance wrote, "I was thrilled to write the foreword for this incredible book, which contains a bold new vision for the future of conservatism in America." To which Heritage amplified in a repost of Vance's promotion, adding, "The Swamp is long overdue for a controlled burn. It's time to take our country back." (On August 6, 2024, Roberts announced that he would delay publication of his book until after the election.)
- Vance has also endorsed Heritage and championed many of its Project 2025 proposals, including mass firings of civil service employees and clearing out the deep state. He said "corruption in our institutions" is what changed his mind about Trump.

- July 30, 2024, after news of Paul Dans's resignation, the Trump campaign released a statement saying, "Reports of Project 2025's demise would be greatly welcomed and should serve as notice to anyone or any group trying to misrepresent their influence with President Trump and his campaign— it will not end well for you." Statements like this coupled with the close proximity of Dans's resignation to Trump and his campaign's developing criticism of the project, underscore Trump's likely commanding influence over Project 2025, with other staffers reportedly considering leaving amid fear of losing a potential spot in his administration.

- Kevin Roberts praised the U.S. Supreme Court's presidential immunity decision during an appearance on Steve Bannon's "War Room" podcast, calling it "vital" for preventing presidents from having to "second guess, triple guess every decision they're making." He suggested that the decision could support the group's Project 2025 plan and help conservatives in "taking this country back" if Trump wins in November. Roberts framed this effort as a "second American Revolution," which he shockingly said would "remain bloodless if the left allows it to be." The Heritage Foundation subsequently endorsed that statement in a post on X:

Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise

- The Project 2025 "Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise" is a detailed policy guide designed by The Heritage Foundation and its partners to prepare a conservative administration for 2025. Paul Dans and Steven Groves "worked with more than 35 primary authors and hundreds of contributors to assemble the 900-page book," which serves as a strategic blueprint to dismantle the existing federal administrative structure and implement conservative governance. It aims to reverse progressive policies, particularly in areas like family structure, national sovereignty, and economic regulation. The "Mandate" pushes for a rollback of government influence in various sectors, advocating for a return to traditional conservative values, and reflects a highly coordinated effort to impose significant changes across federal agencies, with a focus on reshaping American society in line with conservative principles. Among other things, Project 2025's "Mandate" proposes to dismantle or radically overhaul the Departments of Justice and State, eliminate the Departments of Homeland Security, Education, and Commerce, radically repurpose other agencies, eviscerate the professional civil service, withdraw approval for the abortion pill, crack down on immigration, and thwart environmental and climate change efforts.
- The chapters are organized as follows, with contributions from various authors (personnel profiles of many authors can be found here and here):
    - "Note on 'Project 2025," by Paul Dans, co-editor of the "Mandate"

- "Foreword: A Promise to America," by Kevin D. Roberts, President of The Heritage Foundation
- Section 1, "Taking the Reins of Government" has three chapters:
  - Chapter 1, "White House Office," by Rick Dearborn
  - Chapter 2, "Executive Office of the President of the United States," by Russell Vought
  - Chapter 3, "Central Personnel Agencies: Managing the Bureaucracy," by Donald Devine, Dennis Dean Kirk, and Paul Dans
- Section 2, "The Common Defense" has six chapters:
  - Chapter 4, "Department of Defense," by Christopher Miller
  - Chapter 5, "Department of Homeland Security," by Ken Cuccinelli;
  - Chapter 6, "Department of State," by Kiron K. Skinner
  - Chapter 7, "Intelligence Community," by Dustin J. Carmack
  - Chapter 8, "Media Agencies," features contributions from Mora Namdar and Mike Gonzalez on, respectively, the "U.S. Agency for Global Media" and the "Corporation for Public Broadcasting"
  - Chapter 9, "Agency for International Development," by Max Primorac
- Section 3, "The General Welfare" has 11 chapters:
  - Chapter 10, "Department of Agriculture", is authored by Daren Bakst
  - Chapter 11, "Department of Education," by Lindsey M. Burke
  - Chapter 12, "Department of Energy and Related Commissions," by Bernard L. McNamee
  - Chapter 13, "Environmental Protection Agency," by Mandy M. Gunasekara
  - Chapter 14, "Department of Health and Human Services," by Roger Severino
  - Chapter 15, "Department of Housing and Urban Development," by Benjamin S. Carson, Sr., MD
  - Chapter 16, "Department of the Interior," by William Perry Pendley
  - Chapter 17, "Department of Justice," by Gene Hamilton
  - Chapter 18, "Department of Labor and Related Agencies," by Jonathan Berry
  - Chapter 19, "Department of Transportation," by Diana Furchtgott-Roth
  - Chapter 20, "Department of Veterans Affairs," by Brooks D. Tucker
- Section 4, "The Economy," has six chapters:
  - Chapter 21, "Department of Commerce," by Thomas F. Gilman
  - Chapter 22, "Department of the Treasury," by William L. Walton, Stephen Moore, and David R. Burton
  - Chapter 23, "Export-Import Bank," features contributions from Veronique de Rugy and Jennifer Hazelton on, respectively, "The Export-Import Bank Should be Abolished" and "The Case for the Export-Import Bank"
  - Chapter 24, "Federal Reserve," by Paul Winfree
  - Chapter 25, "Small Business Administration," by Karen Kerrigan

        - Chapter 26, "Trade," includes contributions from Peter Navarro and Kent Lassman on, respectively, "The Case for Fair Trade" and "The Case for Free Trade."
    - Section 5, "Independent Regulatory Agencies," has four chapters:
        - Chapter 27, "Financial Regulatory Agencies," features contributions from David R. Burton and Robert Bowes on, respectively, the "Securities and Exchange Commission and Related Agencies" and the "Consumer Financial Protection Bureau"
        - Chapter 28, "Federal Communications Commission," by Brendan Carr
        - Chapter 29, "Federal Election Commission," by Hans A. von Spakovsky
        - Chapter 30, "Federal Trade Commission," by Adam Candeub
    - Finally, an afterword by Edwin J. Feulner, "Onward!"

Presidential Personnel Database

- The Project 2025 "Presidential Personnel Database" is designed to identify and fully vet conservative candidates for roles across future Republican administrations. Promoted by Project 2025 as a "Conservative LinkedIn", *POLITICO* describes it more accurately as resembling "conservative Facebook, circa 2006" due to its simple interface. Built by Oracle Corp., the platform allows users to input demographic information, professional history, and political background. The database included over 10,000 profiles as of June 2024, with that number nearing 20,000 by July. Applicants complete a publicly available questionnaire that includes politically charged statements, which they must agree or disagree with, and submit a resume, after which a small team at Heritage reviews the profiles. This team conducts "mapping exercises" to match applicants with suitable roles, aiming to ensure the next administration is staffed with individuals who align with the project's policy goals. The database will be made available to Donald Trump's transition team if he wins in November, according to *POLITICO*'s reporting, and if he loses, associate director Spencer Chretien said the database could in any case benefit future Republican administrations.

Presidential Administration Academy

- The "Presidential Administration Academy" (PAA), according to Project 2025, is "a one-of-a-kind educational and skill-building program designed to prepare and equip future political appointees now to be ready on Day One of the next conservative Administration." *POLITICO* described it as giving "job-seekers the ideological and practical chops to make the entire federal bureaucracy match Trump's MAGA ambitions." According to Project 2025, "When conservatives do finally make it into an administration, they often don't know what to do or how to seize the gears of power effectively. Through their action, inaction, and their encyclopedic knowledge of volumes of technicalities about the federal workforce, certain career federal employees are masterful in tripping us up. Our interactive, on-demand training sessions will change that. They will turn future conservative political appointees into experts in governmental effectiveness."

- The PAA provides aspiring appointees with the insight, background knowledge, and expertise in governance to immediately begin rolling back policies and advancing conservative ideas in the federal government. The PAA is an online program designed for current and aspiring political appointees interested in serving a future conservative president. It offers training on topics such as identifying suitable positions, navigating security clearances, understanding the federal budget, working with the media, and managing congressional and stakeholder relations. The PAA caters to professionals at all career levels, from recent graduates to experienced individuals, and welcomes both newcomers and former appointees. Participants can take individual courses or pursue full certificate programs. The majority of the courses are self-paced, lasting 30 to 90 minutes. In-person sessions, tailored for high-level positions, will be available as the presidential election approaches. The academy's faculty includes former political appointees from past administrations, including the Trump administration, as well as other conservative politicos from over 100 partner organizations. (*See also* *POLITICO* reporting.
- *ProPublica* and *Documented* received all 23 training videos, totaling over 14 hours of content, which "coach future appointees on everything from the nuts and bolts of governing to how to outwit bureaucrats. There are strategies for avoiding embarrassing Freedom of Information Act disclosures and ensuring that conservative policies aren't struck down by 'left-wing judges.' Some of the content is routine advice that any incoming political appointee might be told. Other segments of the training offer guidance on radically changing how the federal government works and what it does."
    - As noted above, 29 of the 36 speakers seen on training videos "have worked for Trump in some capacity — on his 2016-17 transition team, in the administration or on his 2024 reelection campaign."
    - A key focus in the videos is drawing lessons from the mistakes of Trump's first term to inform the next Republican administration.
        - In September 2022, Russell Vought echoed a common frustration among former Trump officials, lamenting that the administration lost valuable time during its early years while navigating the complexities of governing. "My hope is that we don't have to do that again because we're laying the groundwork now," Vought told *The Charlie Kirk Show*, further emphasizing that "[w]e want to make sure that can never happen again and make sure that from day one, ensure that the agenda is being done."
    - In a video covering "government oversight and investigations," a team of conservative investigators counsels future appointees on how to prevent creating a paper trail of sensitive communications that could be exposed to congressional committees or external organizations through the Freedom of Information Act. For instance, Tom Jones, a former Senate investigator and current head of the American Accountability Foundation, suggests, "If you need to resolve something, if you can do it, it's probably better to walk down the hall, buttonhole a guy and say, 'Hey, what are we going to do here?' Talk through the decision." He also notes that while government lawyers might use exemptions in public-records laws to block the release of certain documents, appointees are "probably better off" avoiding written records altogether (a point he emphasizes). "You're probably

better off," Jones says, "going down to the canteen, getting a cup of coffee, talking it through and making the decision, as opposed to sending him an email and creating a thread that Accountable.US or one of those other groups is going to come back and seek."

- Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt co-delivers one of the training videos, "The Art of Professionalism."
- Dan Huff, a former legal adviser in Trump's Presidential Personnel Office, emphasizes in a video that future appointees should be ready to implement substantial changes in the American government and be prepared for any backlash that may arise. He advises, "If you're not on board with helping implement a dramatic course correction because you're afraid it'll damage your future employment prospects, it'll harm you socially — look, I get it." "That's a real danger. It's a real thing. But please: Do us all a favor and sit this one out."

180-Day Transition Playbook

- The fourth and final (and arguably most important) pillar of Project 2025 is the "180-day Transition Playbook", which Project 20205 says "will take the policy ideas expressed in *Mandate for Leadership* and transform them into an implementation plan for each agency to advocate to the incoming administration. What regulations and executive orders must be signed on Day One? Where are the greatest needs for more political appointees? How can we effectively use the mechanisms of government to face our most challenging problems? Our Playbook will put our movement to work answering questions like these." Very little detail has been offered about the playbook, which will remain intentionally "very, very close hold" and not available publicly. "The time is short, and conservatives need a plan", Project 2025's website states. Hence the playbook is a set of "actions to be taken in the first 180 days of the new Administration to bring quick relief to Americans suffering from the Left's devastating policies." It "includes a comprehensive, concrete transition plan for each federal agency. Only through the implementation of specific action plans at each agency will the next conservative presidential Administration be successful."
- Part of the 180-day transition plan is to have drafted for day one swathes of executive orders, regulations and memos. Russell Vought and his think tank, Center for Renewing America (CRA), are leading those efforts for Trump's return to the White House, with Vought describing his efforts as creating "shadow" agencies.
    - On July 24, 2024, during a covertly recorded meeting at the presidential suite of the Rosewood hotel in DC, Vought told the Centre for Climate Reporting (CCR) that he had a team of staffers drafting regulations, executive orders, and secretarial memos for Trump's return to the White House. (CNN reportedly received a complete, unedited version of the recording.)
        - Those drafts and plans, which are based on Trump's own promises and plans, will remain a "very, very close hold," Vought said. Vought's plans are based on Trump's own speeches and promises as well as his actions during his first term: "We were always going of off, if Donald Trump were head of this agency what would he do with it? What has he said? And then

what do we know from the first term? And that's how we've been approaching this."

- "We've got about 350 different documents that are regulations and things of that nature that are, we're planning for the next administration," Vought revealed, continuing, "[For example,] you may say, 'OK, all right, DHS, we wanna have the largest deportation, what are your actual memos that a secretary sends out to do it?' Like, there's an executive order, regulations, secretarial memos. Those are the types of things that need to be thought through so you're not, you're not having to scramble or do that later on."
- The work of drafting policies is happening months ahead of the election in part because "President Trump will want to spend literally zero amount of time thinking or contemplating what a transition will look like," Vought said. "It's not how he thinks."
- Vought made clear that he was not worried about his plans being attached to the Project 2025 brand. "For what I do, the brand is not important."
- While he did not believe he would be chosen to lead the Trump transition team, Vought said he was confident that, no matter who was named, he would be able deliver his plans directly to Trump. "If it's someone like Stephen Miller or Bob Lighthizer, then all the stuff gets plugged right in. If it's not, we'll figure it out, but all of it will be designed for a theory of the case that President, if a battle plan is out there that will do what he wants, there are the people like me that have his trust, that will be able to get it to him in whatever position we're at. I could be at Center for New America. But the relationships will be there. The trust level will be there." Asked if he had received a job offer for a second Trump term, Vought said no, but added, "I think there's an expectation that I would go in." "I don't know what that would be," he said. "I don't know what the President would want me to do."

- On July 8, 2024, CCR journalists attended the National Conservatism Conference in Washington, DC, sponsored by the Heritage Foundation and CRA. JD Vance and The Heritage Foundation's president, Kevin Roberts, were speakers. Micah Meadowcroft, the research director for CRA and a contributor to Project 2025's "Mandate", was also in attendance and told CCR journalists that Vought is running "the second phase" of Project 2025, following its "Mandate": the "second phase after the book came out, was to break down like actual sort of policy packets and executive orders and agenda items, things like that. And that's been supervised largely by Russ." "It's a big, fat stack of papers that will be distributed during the transition period," Meadowcroft said, confirming that the draft documents would be kept confidential and sent to Trump's transition team in a way that would minimize paper trails to circumvent transparency obligations required by the Freedom of Information Act. "Because obviously you want as little of it to be 'FOIAble'," he said, adding, "the goal is to familiarize all the transition team people with these plans, but you don't actually like, send them to their work emails … You know, you could just give the handbooks to everyone, like, 'this is the game plan for the

admin.' If the press knows that you're doing that, they're gonna immediately just say, like, 'I request all of your emails from Heritage.'

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VII. Subverting the Rule of Law to Protect Himself from Prosecution

- Trump has constantly attacked the criminal and civil cases against him.
    - Aug. 4, 2023, Truth Social, Trump wrote the day after pleading not guilty in the January 6th case: "IF YOU GO AFTER ME, I'M COMING AFTER YOU!"
    - Sept. 21, 2023, Truth Social, he called for Congress to shut down the federal government in order to "defund these political prosecutions against me and other Patriots."
    - April 5, 2023, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS SHOULD DEFUND THE DOJ AND FBI UNTIL THEY COME TO THEIR SENSES."
    - June 10, 2023, Georgia GOP Convention: Responding to the DOJ's Mar-a-Lago indictment, Trump said: "This is a sick nest of people that needs to be cleaned out immediately. Get them out."
    - November 14, 2023, Truth Social: Trump reposted that New York Attorney General Letitia James and Judge Arthur Engoron, who is overseeing the New York corporate fraud trial, should be placed under "CITIZENS [sic] ARREST FOR BLATANT ELECTION INTERFERENCE AND HARASSMENT."
    - November 10, 2023, Truth Social: Trump posted on social media that NY AG James "should be prosecuted" for bringing the case against him.
    - October 17, 2023, Truth Social: Trump said during a video posted on social media that the state of New York should "intercede and stop" the Office of the NY Attorney General's prosecution of the Trump Organization for fraud.
    - October 16, 2023, Truth Social: Trump shared a link of AG James' home address while accusing her of a "MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE AND ELECTION INTERFERENCE ALL WRAPPED UP IN ONE!" Earlier in 2023, James revealed she had received death threats for pursuing the case against Trump.

- Following the election, Trump allies have escalated efforts to undermine accountability for Trump.
    - Nov. 7, 2024, Benny Johnson podcast: Conservative lawyer Mike Davis, who is on Trump's transition team, said: "Let me just say this to Big Tish James, the New York Attorney General, I dare you, I dare you to try to continue your lawfare against President Trump in his second term, because listen here, sweetheart, we're not messing around this time, and we will put your fat ass in prison for conspiracy against rights. And I promise you that. So think long and hard before you want to violate President Trump's constitutional rights or any other American's constitutional rights. It's not going to happen again."

    - Nov. 7, 2024 Newsmax:, Mike Davis said, “The American people will not tolerate” New York Justice Merchan sentencing Trump to prison. “And I hope that Judge Merchan is not that stupid.”

- Convicted in New York state court on May 30, 2024, on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to unlawfully influence the 2016 presidential election, Trump and his GOP allies have persistently sought to undermine the justice system as a tool for radical left “lawfare,” “election interference” and “political persecution,” saying that the prosecution and eventual conviction were only possible in a “banana republic” and a “rigged” system. He and allies, some of whom attended trial days, have attacked prosecutors, witnesses, and the judge. GOP support of Trump and rebuke of the judicial system only seem to have grown since Trump’s conviction, which they wasted no time in attacking as a “travesty” and an “injustice,” warning that it will likely backfire.
    - Throughout the trial Trump levied attacks.
        - May 29, 2024, on the morning of closing arguments, Trump wrote on Truth Social: “KANGAROO COURT! A CORRUPT AND CONFLICTED JUDGE. RELIANCE ON COUNSEL (ADVISE OF COUNSEL) NOT ALLOWED BY MERCHAN, A FIRST. HIS RULINGS, ON A CASE THAT SHOULD, ACCORDING TO ALL LEGAL SCHOLARS AND EXPERTS, NEVER HAVE BEEN BROUGHT, HAVE MADE THIS A BIDEN PUSHED WITCH HUNT. THERE WAS NO CRIME, EXCEPT FOR THE BUM THAT GOT CAUGHT STEALING FROM ME! IN GOD WE TRUST!”
        - May 27, 2024, Truth Social: “Can you imagine, a President of the United States, who got more votes than any sitting President in the history of our Country, and who is also the Republican Nominee for President in the upcoming 2024 Election, and leading in all polls against the Democrat Nominee, Joe Biden, is tomorrow going before a Corrupt and Conflicted Democrat Appointed, Acting New York Judge, on a FAKE & MADE UP CASE by a Soros backed failed D.A., and the Judge himself, to see whether or not he will become a common criminal? According to virtually all Legal Scholars and Experts, THERE IS NO CRIME OR CASE against President Trump, and if there was it should have been brought seven years ago, not in the middle of his Campaign for President. Prosecutorial Misconduct. Election Interference!”
        - May 26, 2024, Truth Social: “The reason the Radical, highly Conflicted Judge Juan Merchan had to come up with three FAKE options for the jury to choose from, without requiring them to be unanimous, which is completely UNAMERICAN AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL, is because the Corrupt, Soros backed D.A., Alvin Bragg, couldn’t come close to proving that any crime was committed. THERE WAS NO CRIME. Legal Expense paid to a lawyer was marked, by a bookkeeper using a dropdown menu in a computer program, as Legal Expense paid to a lawyer. WHAT ELSE COULD YOU CALL IT? There is NO CASE, just a Democrat Persecutor controlled by Crooked Joe Biden’s White House, a Democrat Judge, and a

biased venue. This is nothing but an Election Interfering Witch Hunt, and the American People know it! MAGA2024."

- May 26, 2024, Truth Social: "Can anyone believe that Soros backed D.A., Alvin Bragg, was able to get a DELAY of 7 days to his Corrupt and Unconstitutional Case against me, with no sequester? Legal Expense = Legal Expense! The only thing Bragg has going for him is the Corrupt and highly Conflicted Judge - Which is a lot!!!"
- May 25, 2024, Truth Social: "I HAVE A GREAT CASE, BUT WITH A RIGGED AND CONFLICTED JUDGE. HISTORY PROVES, HOWEVER, THAT I WOULD BE FAR BETTER OFF WITH A BAD CASE AND A GREAT, FAIR, AND HONEST JUDGE!!!"
- May 24, 2024, Truth Social: "The Worst FBI Director in History, who I inherited from the Obama Administration, but fired almost immediately into ours, along with many other Corrupt Actors in the DOJ and FBI (The start of DRAIN THE SWAMP!), is going around LYING about the SCAM brought by Soros backed D.A. Alvin Bragg, and perpetuated by the Highly Conflicted, Democrat Appointed Judge, Juan Merchan. If you want to see the real story on Comey, read the Report put out by Inspector General Michael Horowitz, that gives you all the Horrors of Comey, in great detail. If Comey had any respect for our System of Justice, which is being DESTROYED before our eyes, he would be fighting against the Crooked Joe Biden inspired Witch Hunts, instead of spreading LIES!"
- May 24, 2024, Truth Social: "When the Disgraceful District Attorney and his Thugs, WITH FULL APPROVAL, I assume, by the Highly Conflicted Judge, Juan Merchan, and the Crooked Joe Biden Administration, who are leading the Trial for ELECTION INTERFERENCE purpose, keep talking about the 'bookkeeping error' or 'crime,' they are referring to the fact that a bookkeeper, with zero influence from or discussion with me, correctly called the payment of a Legal Expense to a lawyer - a Legal Expense. In other words, I am being prosecuted because a bookkeeper, who I had no contact with, marked down, from a dropdown menu in the ledger, a Legal Expense to a lawyer as 'Legal Expense.' What the hell is wrong with that? And, what else would you call it?…."
- May 24, 2024, Truth Social: "….For this ridiculous charge, Millions of Dollars have been spent on the PERSECUTION of a Popular President (Got more Votes than any sitting President in History!), and the current Leader in the Polls against his Democrat Opponent, Crooked Joe Biden, without whom NO CASE WOULD HAVE BEEN CHARGED. Any other Judge would not have allowed this SCAM to proceed, and neither did D.A. Bragg, nor any other Agency in Government, want to bring it. We are fighting against a Rigged New York System of "Justice." WITCH HUNT!"
- May 24, 2024, Truth Social: "Corrupt, Deeply Conflicted, Democrat Appointed Acting Judge Juan Merchan is doing all he can to even further RIG the Manhattan Sham "Trial." He is denying me the opportunity to put

on a Highly Respected Election Law Expert who will say, once again, that THERE WAS NO CRIME. This Judge, whose conflicts are completely disqualifying, isn't even requiring a unanimous decision by the jury on key portions of this Criminal Hoax, which is UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND UNAMERICAN. The whole Case should be ENDED IMMEDIATELY, and all the charges THROWN OUT, because everything was done right, with Legal Expenses being reported as Legal Expenses! The Judge CANNOT be allowed to do further damage to Justice in New York and our Nation, and every Legal Scholar and Expert agrees with this. The whole Sham is a disgusting Political Witch Hunt by Crooked Joe Biden's White House. ELECTION INTERFERENCE!"

- May 21, 2024, Truth Social: "Judge Juan Merchan, who has thus far been the exact Conflicted Democrat Operative his Comrades expected, has a chance to take a real step toward rehabilitating both his Reputation and the Justice System of New York by dismissing the Biden Election Interference Witch Hunt brought by Soros funded D.A. Alvin Bragg. Every serious Legal Expert and Scholar is unequivocally stating that the 'prosecutors' have not come close to putting on a case, THERE IS NO CRIME, which means that the right thing to do is to END THIS SCAM NOW AND FOREVERMORE. It would be a Big, Bold, Beautiful, but Highly Unexpected, yet BRILLIANT, step toward Justice in New York, and our Nation as a whole!"
- May 17, 2024, Truth Social: "Wow! Even MSDNC & Fake News CNN, home of the First Presidential Debate in June, now feel the Soros backed D.A., Alvin Bragg, 'Case' against me SHOULD BE DROPPED IN THAT IT IS NOT WINNABLE, AND SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN BROUGHT IN THE FIRST PLACE!!! The only thing they have going for them is a HIGHLY CONFLICTED JUDGE who has done everything within his power to help Crooked Joe Biden win a Presidential Election that he has, based on performance, no right to win. He is systematically destroying America, and is a true THREAT TO DEMOCRACY!!!"
- May 16, 2024, Truth Social: "People are thinking that Soros backed D.A., Alvin Bragg, who never wanted to bring the Witch Hunt against me in the first place, is going to drop this ridiculous and very unpatriotic 'CASE' in order to save lots of money, and also the self respect of his once revered Office. He would then be able to focus on Violent Crime, which is running rampant and totally out of control in New York. The dilemma is, and always has been, the Trump Hating (APPOINTED IN 2009 & STILL ACTING!) Judge, Juan Merchan, who would be confronted with the problem of how he would explain this TRUMP loss, to the Radical Left Democrats, to whom he owes so much? Bring back 'Justice in America.' ELECTION INTERFERENCE!!!"
- April 27, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Trump said, "I think we're becoming less of a democracy when I look at the weaponization of the

Justice Department, the FBI. When you look at what happened with FISA. When you look at all the things that have happened, we're becoming less and less of a democracy. But with democracy, if it's a properly-run democracy, which it will be, if and when I get back into office, it'll be a very proper democracy, not like what we have right now. I don't even think what we have right now is, where a presidential candidate has to spend eight hours a day in court instead of campaigning over nothing. Over zero. Over nonsense. And all speared and all spread out and—and really done by the Biden administration. And I think that's no longer democracy. I think that's third-world country stuff."

- Following conviction Trump has continued his attack.
  - May 31, 2024, Trump Tower, Trump attacked Justice Merchan as a "devil" and "tyrant." "The judge was a tyrant." "[Merchan] looks like an angel but he's really a devil." He continued, "We're losing our country, and I really think that this is an event what took place yesterday with this judge that we have conflicted, but he's a crooked judge, and you'll understand that. And I say that knowing that is very dangerous for me to say that, and I don't mind because I'm willing to do whatever I have to do to save our country and to save our constitution. I don't mind."
  - May 30, 2024, Trump said outside Manhattan court: "I've gone through two of these trials already. It's a very, with the same kind of a judge. It's all worked, it's all rigged, the whole thing, the whole system is rigged."
- Following Trump's conviction, his allies have continued in their marked attacks on the justice system as well as on those who have spoken favorably of the verdict.
  - Speaker of the House Mike Johnson:
    - May 30, 2024, 5:10pm on X, within minutes of the verdict, Johnson issued a statement:

      "My statement on President Trump trial verdict:

      Today is a shameful day in American history. Democrats cheered as they convicted the leader of the opposing party on ridiculous charges, predicated on the testimony of a disbarred, convicted felon. This was a purely political exercise, not a legal one.

      The weaponization of our justice system has been a hallmark of the Biden Administration, and the decision today is further evidence that Democrats will stop at nothing to silence dissent and crush their political opponents.

      The American people see this as lawfare, and they know it is wrong—and dangerous. President Trump will rightfully appeal this absurd verdict—and he WILL WIN!"

        - May 31, 2024, Hugh Hewitt interview, Johnson said, “You know, I mean, there’s so many grounds for appeal here. I think it’s a certainty that it will be overturned. It’s just going to take us some months to do that, I’m afraid. And that’s the peril of all this, and that’s, of course, what they knew and what they wanted all along.”
        - May 31, 2024, *Fox and Friends*, Johnson called for the Supreme Court to “step in” on Trump's appeal to “set this straight.”
- Jim Jordan
    - House Judiciary Committee Chair Jim Jordan sent letters on May 31 to DA Alvin Bragg and senior counsel Mathhew Colangelo requesting their appearance on June 13 before the committee’s subcommittee on the weaponization of the federal government.
- Ron DeSantis
    - May 30, 2024, Twitter post: “Today’s verdict represents the culmination of a legal process that has been bent to the political will of the actors involved: a leftist prosecutor, a partisan judge and a jury reflective of one of the most liberal enclaves in America—all in an effort to “get” Donald Trump. That this case—involving alleged misdemeanor business records violations from nearly a decade ago—was even brought is a testament to the political debasement of the justice system in places like New York City. This is especially true considering this same district attorney routinely excuses criminal conduct in a way that has endangered law-abiding citizens in his jurisdiction. It is often said that no one is above the law, but it is also true that no one is below the law. If the defendant were not Donald Trump, this case would never have been brought, the judge would have never issued similar rulings, and the jury would have never returned a guilty verdict. In America, the rule of law should be applied in a dispassionate, even-handed manner, not become captive to the political agenda of some kangaroo court.”
- Seven Maryland state delegates—Kathy Szeliga, Matt Morgan, Lauren Arikan, Robin Grammer, Mark Fisher, Brian Chisholm, and Ryan Nawrocki—released a signed statement expressing their vehement opposition to the conviction, calling it “political persecution” from a “kangaroo court” and a “left-leaning prosecutor,” which is turning the US justice system into a “third world parody of law and order.”
- Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD-01) called the verdict “a travesty of justice and a blatant attempt by the Biden Justice Department to jail a political opponent in the middle of an election year.”
- The delegates Maryland Republican Party Chairwoman Nicole Beus Harris released a statement on the state GOP’s X account that said, “Americans are sick of a two-tiered justice system which is broken and corrupt.”

        - National Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee Chair Steve Daines (R-Mont.) said in a Fox News interview as news of the verdict broke: "I thought that the trial was a complete sham."
        - Trump allies recently denounced Larry Hogan, Maryland's Republican Senate nominee, for his call to "respect the verdict."
            - June 2, 2024, Lara Trump told CNN's Kasie Hunt on *State of the Union* that Hogan "should have thought long and hard" before releasing his statement. "I'll tell you one thing, I don't support what he just said there. I think it's ridiculous." "He doesn't deserve the respect of anyone in the Republican Party at this point, and quite frankly, anybody in America, if that's the way you feel. That's very upsetting to hear that."
            - Chris LaCivita, a senior adviser to the Trump campaign, in a post on X, just moments after Hogan's statement, said in a post on X, "You just ended your campaign." *The Washington Post* reported that the following day LaCivita said in an interview: "There are a lot of Republicans who are going to be upset with him for making that comment, and he needs all the Republicans he can get to win." "From a political standpoint, it makes no sense to issue a statement that can be considered by us to be a criticism. It was stupid," LaCivita said, adding, "He didn't have to say anything. Say, 'It's a sad day in America.' But no, he had to make a point. If he's going to make his point, we're going to make our point. You take a shot, you're going to get a shot back. That's how it works in politics."

- June 2, 2024, "Fox and Friends" interview, Trump has warned of a public "breaking point" if he is sentenced to home detention or incarceration for his New York falsifying business records conviction. Trump said he was "OK with it," but added, "I don't know that the public would stand it, you know? I don't — I'm not sure the public would stand for it." "I think it'd be tough for the public to take. You know, at a certain point, there's a breaking point."

- Trump considered pardoning himself during his first term and has not ruled out doing so if re-elected.
    - Sept. 14, 2023, *Meet the Press*: Trump said it's "very unlikely" he would pardon himself if he won a second term in 2024 but declined to rule out a personal pardon if re-elected.
    - Trump discussed pardoning himself in the final days of his presidency, stating, "I could've pardoned myself" but that he decided against it. He claims he said, "The last thing I'd ever do is give myself a pardon," but other accounts suggest that several attorneys, including White House counsel Pat Cipollone and Attorney General Bill Barr, dissuaded Trump from pardoning himself after he brought it up several times.

    - At the end of his first term, Trump considered granting pardons to his three oldest children—Don Jr., Ivanka, and Eric Trump—as well as his son-in-law Jared Kushner.

- Trump has argued that he is above the law as president and has claimed complete immunity from prosecution.
    - April 22, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "IF A PRESIDENT DOES NOT HAVE IMMUNITY, THE COURT WILL BE 'OPENING THE FLOODGATES' TO PROSECUTING FORMER PRESIDENTS. AN OPPOSING HOSTILE PARTY WILL BE DOING IT FOR ANY REASON, ALL OF THE TIME. THIS IS NOT WHAT THE FOUNDERS HAD IN MIND!"
    - April 22, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Page Two: No Immunity for a President would make it very difficult for him or her to do the job of protecting our Country. A current President would always be thinking, with every move made, whether or not there would be a Criminal Prosecution after leaving Office!"
    - April 22, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "A key Constitutional issue is whether or not a President should have Immunity. The answer is YES! During the hearing in the D.C. Circuit, the other side actually conceded two very important points, either of which would give the critical Immunity argument to us. If for any reason it were held that a President doesn't have Immunity, then Crooked Joe Biden, after he leaves Office, could be charged for the horrible and dangerous job he is doing on the Southern Border, the Afghanistan Disaster with all of its Death, Destruction, and 'Surrender,' or his quid pro quo on Ukraine, where he said, on tape, that if they don't get rid of an Unfriendly Prosecutor, they don't get the $1 Billion in Funding from the United States (He then clapped his hands, and said, in effect, 'I won!')….."
    - April 22, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "WITHOUT IMMUNITY, IT WOULD BE VERY HARD FOR A PRESIDENT TO ENJOY HIS OR HER 'GOLDEN YEARS' OF RETIREMENT. THEY WOULD BE UNDER SIEGE BY RADICAL, OUT OF CONTROL PROSECUTORS, MUCH LIKE I AM (BUT WITHOUT THE 'RETIREMENT' WORD!)."
    - April 22, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "A PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES MUST HAVE FULL IMMUNITY, WITHOUT WHICH IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM/HER TO PROPERLY FUNCTION. ANY MISTAKE, EVEN IF WELL INTENDED, WOULD BE MET WITH ALMOST CERTAIN INDICTMENT BY THE OPPOSING PARTY AT TERM END. EVEN EVENTS THAT "CROSS THE LINE" MUST FALL UNDER TOTAL IMMUNITY, OR IT WILL BE YEARS OF TRAUMA TRYING TO DETERMINE GOOD FROM BAD. THERE MUST BE CERTAINTY. EXAMPLE: YOU CAN'T STOP POLICE FROM DOING THE JOB OF STRONG & EFFECTIVE CRIME PREVENTION BECAUSE YOU WANT TO GUARD AGAINST THE SELDOM SEEN 'ROGUE COP.' SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO LIVE WITH 'GREAT BUT SLIGHTLY IMPERFECT.' ALL PRESIDENTS MUST HAVE COMPLETE & TOTAL PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY, OR THE AUTHORITY & DECISIVENESS OF A PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED

STATES WILL BE STRIPPED & GONE FOREVER. HOPEFULLY THIS WILL BE AN EASY DECISION. GOD BLESS THE SUPREME COURT!"

- April 22, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "The Supreme Court will address the historic question of Presidential Immunity on Thursday, but unfortunately, I will not be able to attend. The Highly Conflicted Judge in the Manhattan D.A. 'case' (Soros-backed Alvin Bragg) has prohibited me from attending. Without Presidential Immunity, the President cannot function, as his Political Opponents will blackmail and extort him with the threat of wrongful prosecution at every turn. We look forward to presenting our case to the Supreme Court."
- April 22, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Without Immunity, the Presidency, as we know it, will no longer exist. Many actions for the benefit of our Country will not be taken. This is in no way what the Founders had in mind. Legal Experts and Scholars have stated that the President must have Full Presidential Immunity. A President must be free to make proper decisions. His mind must be clear, and he must not be guided by fear of retribution!"
- April 20, 2024, Truth Social: Trump wrote, "Of course I was entitled, as President of the United States and Commander in Chief, to Immunity. I wasn't campaigning, the Election was long over. I was looking for voter fraud, and finding it, which is my obligation to do, and otherwise running our Country. If I don't get Immunity, then Crooked Joe Biden doesn't get Immunity, and with the Border Invasion and Afghanistan Surrender, alone, not to mention the Millions of dollars that went into his "'pockets'" with money from foreign countries, Joe would be ripe for Indictment. By weaponizing the DOJ against his Political Opponent, ME, Joe has opened a giant Pandora's Box. As President, I was protecting our Country, and doing a great job of doing so - Just look around at the complete mess that Crooked Joe Biden has caused. The least I am entitled to is Presidential Immunity on Fake Biden Indictments!"
- April 20, 2024 Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Legal Scholars are extremely thankful for the Supreme Court's Decision to take up Presidential Immunity. Without Presidential Immunity, a President will not be able to properly function, or make decisions, in the best interest of the United States of America. Presidents will always be concerned, and even paralyzed, by the prospect of wrongful prosecution and retaliation after they leave office. This could actually lead to the extortion and blackmail of a President. The other side would say, 'If you don't do something, just the way we want it, we are going to go after you when you leave office, or perhaps even sooner.'"
- April 20, 2024 Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Page 2: A President has to be free to determine what is right for our Country without undue pressure. If there is no Immunity, the Presidency, as we know it, will 'no longer exist.' Many actions for the benefit of our Country will not be taken. This is in no way what the Founders had in mind. Legal Experts and Scholars have stated that the President must have Full Presidential Immunity. A President must be free to make proper decisions. His mind must be clear, and he must not be guided by the fear of retribution!"

- April 20, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “REMEMBER, if I don’t have Presidential Immunity, then Crooked Joe Biden doesn’t have it either, and he would certainly be Prosecuted for his many ACTUAL CRIMES, including illegally receiving massive amounts of money from Foreign Countries, including China, Ukraine, and Russia, paying off Ukraine to fire an unfriendly prosecutor, allowing millions of people to illegally Enter and Destroy our Country, SURRENDERING in Afghanistan, with Hundreds Dead, many Americans Left Behind, and handing over Billions of Dollars Worth of the Best Military Equipment anywhere on Earth, the Decimation of American Wealth through the Green New Scam, and so much more. REMEMBER, Crooked Joe Biden and his CORRUPT JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, D.A.’s and A.G.’s, has attacked his Political Opponent at a level never seen before in this Country, and wants desperately to PUT ‘TRUMP’ IN PRISON. He is playing a very dangerous game, and the great people of America WILL NOT STAND FOR IT. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!!!”
- April 20, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “A President of the United States must have Full Immunity in order to properly function and do what has to be done for the good of our Country. A Nation-destroying ruling like the one handed down by the D.C. Circuit cannot be allowed to stand. If not overturned, as it should be, this decision would terribly injure not only the Presidency, but the Life, Breath, and Success of our Country. A President will be afraid to act for fear of the opposite Party’s Vicious Retribution after leaving Office. I know from personal experience because I am going through it right now. It will become a Political Weapon used for Election Interference. Our Elections will be corrupted and under siege. So bad, and so dangerous for our Nation. SAVE PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY!”
- April 20, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “WITHOUT PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR A PRESIDENT TO PROPERLY FUNCTION, PUTTING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN GREAT AND EVERLASTING DANGER!”
- April 20, 2024 Truth Social, Trump wrote: “IF THEY TAKE AWAY MY PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY, THEY TAKE AWAY CROOKED JOE BIDEN’S PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY.”
- April 20, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “Without Presidential Immunity, the Presidency will lose its power and prestige, and under some Leaders, have no power at all. The Presidency will be consumed by the other Branches of Government. THAT IS NOT WHAT OUR FOUNDERS WANTED!”
- April 20, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “If a President does not have Immunity, the Opposing Party, during his/her term in Office, can extort and blackmail the President by saying that, ‘if you don’t give us everything we want, we will Indict you for things you did while in Office,’ even if everything done was totally Legal and Appropriate. That would be the end of the Presidency, and our Country, as we know it, and is just one of the many Traps there would be for a President without Presidential Immunity. Obama, Bush, and soon, Crooked Joe Biden, would all be in BIG TROUBLE. If a President doesn’t have IMMUNITY, he/she will be nothing more than a ‘Ceremonial’ President, rarely having the courage to do what has to

be done for our Country. This is not what the Founders had in mind! Protect Presidential Immunity. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

- April 20, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "IF IMMUNITY IS NOT GRANTED TO A PRESIDENT, EVERY PRESIDENT THAT LEAVES OFFICE WILL BE IMMEDIATELY INDICTED BY THE OPPOSING PARTY. WITHOUT COMPLETE IMMUNITY, A PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PROPERLY FUNCTION!"
- April 19, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "IF IMMUNITY IS NOT GRANTED TO A PRESIDENT, EVERY PRESIDENT THAT LEAVES OFFICE WILL BE IMMEDIATELY INDICTED BY THE OPPOSING PARTY. WITHOUT COMPLETE IMMUNITY, A PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PROPERLY FUNCTION!"
- April 19, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "If a President does not have Immunity, the Opposing Party, during his/her term in Office, can extort and blackmail the President by saying that, 'if you don't give us everything we want, we will Indict you for things you did while in Office,' even if everything done was totally Legal and Appropriate. That would be the end of the Presidency, and our Country, as we know it, and is just one of the many Traps there would be for a President without Presidential Immunity. Obama, Bush, and soon, Crooked Joe Biden, would all be in BIG TROUBLE. If a President doesn't have IMMUNITY, he/she will be nothing more than a 'Ceremonial' President, rarely having the courage to do what has to be done for our Country. This is not what the Founders had in mind! Protect Presidential Immunity. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"
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- April 19, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "WITHOUT PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR A PRESIDENT TO PROPERLY FUNCTION, PUTTING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN GREAT AND EVERLASTING DANGER!"
- Jan. 18, 2024, Truth Social: Trump wrote, "A PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES MUST HAVE FULL IMMUNITY, WITHOUT WHICH IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM/HER TO PROPERLY FUNCTION. ANY MISTAKE, EVEN IF WELL INTENDED, WOULD BE MET WITH ALMOST CERTAIN INDICTMENT BY THE OPPOSING PARTY AT TERM END. EVEN EVENTS THAT "CROSS THE LINE" MUST FALL UNDER TOTAL IMMUNITY, OR IT WILL BE YEARS OF TRAUMA TRYING TO DETERMINE GOOD FROM BAD…ALL PRESIDENTS MUST HAVE COMPLETE & TOTAL PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY, OR THE AUTHORITY & DECISIVENESS OF A PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES WILL BE STRIPPED & GONE FOREVER."

- Jan. 27, 2024, Truth Social: Trump wrote, “IF IMMUNITY IS NOT GRANTED TO A PRESIDENT, EVERY PRESIDENT THAT LEAVES OFFICE WILL BE IMMEDIATELY INDICTED BY THE OPPOSING PARTY. WITHOUT COMPLETE IMMUNITY, A PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PROPERLY FUNCTION!”
- Jan. 9, 2024, Truth Social: Trump wrote, “IF A PRESIDENT DOES NOT HAVE IMMUNITY, THE COURT WILL BE ‘OPENING THE FLOODGATES’ TO PROSECUTING FORMER PRESIDENTS. AN OPPOSING HOSTILE PARTY WILL BE DOING IT FOR ANY REASON, ALL OF THE TIME!”
- Jan. 9, 2024, Washington, DC: Shortly after oral argument in his immunity appeal in the DC Circuit, Trump told the press, “I feel that as a president, you have to have immunity, very simple.” “You can’t have a president without immunity.” “You have to have, as a president, you have to be able to do your job.”
- Jan. 9, 2024: Trump’s legal team argued before the DC Court of Appeals that a president could direct SEAL Team Six to assassinate his political opponent and be immune from prosecution.
    - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview, Trump later said that he understood this argument differently and equivocated on its validity: “Well, I understood it differently. I thought it was a political rival from another country. I think I understood it differently, and I'm not sure. And John Sauer also said that first you go through an impeachment and then you make that determination based on impeachment. But a president, if you don't don't have immunity from prosecution, fairly strong immunity from prosecution. Now, if you do something just overtly very bad and very stupid, that's a different situation. That may be one of those cases.”
    - April 25, 2024, during oral argument before the US Supreme Court, Trump counsel John Sauer doubled down on arguments before the DC Circuit. Justice Sotomayor asked, “Now I think -- and -- and your answer below, I'm going to give you a chance to say if you stay by it. If the president decides that his rival is a corrupt person and he orders the military or orders someone to assassinate him, is that within his official acts for which he can get immunity?” Sauer replied: “It would depend on the hypothetical. We can see that could well be an official act.”
        - Trump counsel later told the justices that ordering the military to stage a coup “could well be” an official act:

> JUSTICE KAGAN: How about if a president orders the military to stage a coup?
>
> SAUER: I think that, as the Chief Justice pointed out earlier, where there's a whole series of, you know, sort of guidelines against that, so to speak, like the UCMJ prohibits the military from following a plainfully unlawful act, if one adopted Justice Alito's test, that would fall outside. Now, if

one adopts, for example, the Fitzgerald test that we advance, that might well be an official act and he would have to be, as I'll say in response to all these kinds of hypotheticals, has to be impeached and convicted before he can be criminally prosecuted. But I emphasize to the Court that –

JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, he's gone. Let's say this president who ordered the military to stage a coup, he's no longer president, he wasn't impeached, he couldn't be impeached. But -- but he ordered the military to stage a coup. And you're saying that's an official act?

SAUER: I think it would depend on --

JUSTICE KAGAN: That's immune?

SAUER: I think it would depend on the circumstances whether it was an official act. If it were an official act, again, he would have to be impeached and convicted.

JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, what does that mean, depend on the circumstances? He was the president. He is the commander in chief. He talks to his generals all the time. And he told the generals: I don't feel like leaving office, I want to stage a coup. Is -- is -- is that immune?

SAUER: If -- if it's an official act, there needs to be impeachment and conviction beforehand because the Framers viewed the risk -- that -- that kind of very low risk --

JUSTICE KAGAN: If it's an official act, is it an official act?

SAUER: If it's an official act, it's impeaching --

JUSTICE KAGAN: Is it an official act?

SAUER: On -- on the way you described that hypothetical, it could well be. I -- I just don't know. You'd have to -- again, it's a fact-specific, context-specific determination that it's contemplating.

JUSTICE KAGAN: That answer sounds to me as though it's like, yeah, under my test, it's an official act, but that sure sounds bad, doesn't it?

SAUER: Well, it certainly sounds very bad ..."

- Jan. 8, 2024, Truth Social: Trump wrote, "Of course I was entitled, as President of the United States and Commander in Chief, to Immunity."
- March 9, 2024, Truth Social, Trump, reposting news that the US Supreme Court had scheduled oral argument in his immunity appeal, said: "If a President doesn't have IMMUNITY, he/she will be nothing more than a 'Ceremonial' President, rarely having the courage to do what has to be done for our Country. This is not what the Founders had in mind!"

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VIII. Persecuting his Perceived Enemies, Critics, and Disappointments

- When Trump returns to office, he plans to weaponize the justice system against political opponents and critics. A *Washington Post* analysis of Trump's social media posts from 2016 through 2024 found that Trump is "often on the warpath, lashing out at his perceived enemies in hundreds of aggressive, insult-filled screeds. At least 570 posts since he announced his presidential bid in November 2022 have contained insulting language directed at someone." *NPR* found that since 2022, Trump has issued over 100 threats to "to investigate, prosecute, imprison or otherwise punish his perceived opponents."

- Trump and his allies have vowed sweeping targeted action against a broad spectrum of individuals, with reports of MAGA acolytes creating "target lists" of government officials, members of Congress, and even their families. A particular focus is on those accused of "weaponizing" the government to target political opponents or manipulate elections—but the list extends broadly to anyone Trump or his supporters perceive as opponents or critics. The 2024 GOP platform pledges to "stop woke and weaponized government" and "hold accountable those who have misused the power of Government to unjustly prosecute their Political Opponents."

- Many of Trump's allies—including those working on his transition team and handpicked by Trump to serve in his administration (subject to Senate confirmation)—have also called

for harsh and retaliatory actions against individuals, federal agencies, and institutional norms.

- Ivan Raiklin, a retired Green Beret and pro-Trump activist, has reportedly been circulating a "Deep State target list" since at least January 2024. Raiklin is known for his controversial "Pence card" proposal, which gained traction after being amplified by a Trump retweet in the lead-up to the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Investigations by *Raw Story* and *The Atlantic* revealed that Raiklin has actively promoted his ideas through social media posts, podcasts, interviews, a press conference, and discussions with prominent far-right extremists. Originally said to include around 350 individuals, Raiklin boasted in a November 13, 2024, post on X (formerly Twitter) that the list had grown to over 1,500 names. It allegedly includes elected officials, journalists, state and federal prosecutors, members of the House Select Committee on January 6, intelligence personnel, current and former U.S. Capitol Police employees, and some of their family members. Raiklin has advocated for deploying so-called "constitutional sheriffs" in rural conservative areas to detain Trump's perceived political enemies, backed by what he claims is a network of 80,000 military veterans allegedly ousted over vaccine mandates. He has openly called for "live-streamed swatting raids of every single individual on that Deep State target list," insisting that such actions are "legal," "moral," and "ethical," and justified by precedents set by the so-called Deep State itself.
    - During a June 7, 2024, appearance on an X Space seemingly hosted by a QAnon supporter, Raiklin further outlined his vision for retribution, underlining the importance of first gathering and releasing "evidence" to influence "public opinion" before arrests and trials take place. He revealed that he had spoken with Sheriff Richard Mack—a former Oath Keepers board member and founder of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA)—about "phases of the operation" for "getting a little bit of retribution." Raiklin's breakdown was in response to a question by Ben Moore—a QAnon influencer known online as "Sun Tzu" and a member of Flynn's America's Future—about what deputized arrests and trials might look like in practice. The CSPOA advocates for the belief that "constitutional sheriffs" hold the highest authority within their jurisdictions, surpassing both federal and state powers. In June 2024, Mack appeared on the website of a then-newly formed militia group, led by January 6th rioter Jake Lang, as part of its council, which is apparently working "in collaboration with" CSPOA. (Mack has denied involvement with the militia.) Following a *Media Matters* report in June 2024, Mack was quickly removed from the militia's official site, and its Instagram account was removed from the platform.
        - *WIRED* reported that Lang is leveraging encrypted messaging platforms to establish a nationwide network of armed militias across all 50 states. According to the report, "Lang claims that the Telegram groups already have 20,000 members, including pastors, farmers, former military personnel, and currently serving sheriffs. However, multiple experts who reviewed the channels tell WIRED that figure was wildly overestimated, and that the real figure was closer to 2,500 members. But a group this

size, they warn, is still large enough to cause a serious threat. And while unarmed members are welcome, the group is, at its core, a pro-gun organization."

- Raiklin is reportedly an ally of Michael Flynn and a board member of Flynn's organization, America's Future. He has been a prominent proponent of false claims and conspiracy theories about the 2020 election, gaining attention for authoring the "Pence Card" memo on December 22, 2020, which outlined a plan for Vice President Pence to overturn the election results. Raiklin tweeted his plan just one day before John Eastman allegedly drafted and circulated his infamous December 23 memo outlining a six-step plan for then-Vice President Mike Pence to refuse to count Electoral College votes on January 6. Indeed, Trump also retweeted Raiklin's post on December 23 but later deleted it, an interaction cited by the January 6th Select Committee and special counsel Jack Smith as evidence of efforts to pressure Pence ahead of January 6. In this past election cycle, Raiklin and Flynn promoted a range of tactics to secure the 2024 election no matter the outcome.

- Below, we document developments reported since Election Day 2024 regarding plans to pursue aggressive action against Trump's critics, perceived enemies, those accused of weaponizing the government, and individuals alleged to have cheated in elections.
  - Trump intends to fire the entire team involved in Special Counsel Jack Smith's federal prosecutions of former President Trump, *The Washington Post* reported on November 22, 2024, with a source saying it was a top priority. Smith's team, including career attorneys usually shielded from political retaliation, comprises specialists in national security and public corruption cases, along with temporary staff from across the Justice Department and U.S. attorneys' offices.
  - Trump and his transition are considering creating investigative teams within the Department of Justice to search for evidence of fraud in battleground states from the 2020 election, *The Washington Post* also reported on November 22, 2024. These investigations could potentially be led by Trump-appointed U.S. attorneys in key battleground states or assigned to a dedicated DOJ task force or special counsel. While the plan is less developed and not as high a priority as Trump's broader aim of restructuring the Justice Department, officials in battleground states who defended the 2020 election results are preparing for the possibility of such investigations.
  - The Trump transition team is preparing an executive order to accelerate the removal of senior military leadership, according to a *Wall Street Journal* report on November 12, 2024. The draft order outlines the creation of a "warrior board" composed of retired generals and noncommissioned officers. This board would review three- and four-star officers and recommend dismissals based on assessments of "leadership capability, strategic readiness, and commitment to military excellence," though specific evaluation criteria remain unspecified. See further details at *Section XVII*,

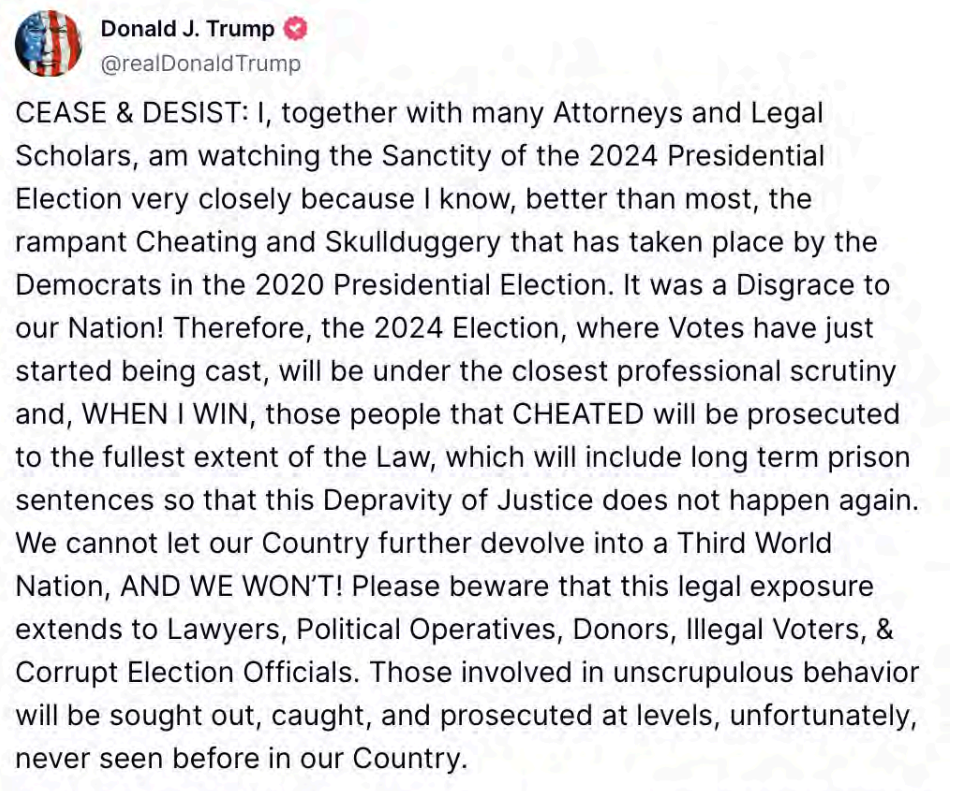
- Members of Trump's transition team are reportedly compiling a list of military officers for potential dismissal, including members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as reported by *Reuters* on November 14, 2024. This significant restructuring of the Pentagon is expected to focus on officers associated with former Joint Chiefs Chairman Mark Milley. Sources familiar with the plans suggest current Chairman Air Force General C.Q. Brown may be among those slated for replacement. See further details at *Section XVII*.

- Specifically, Trump has indicated he would prosecute President Biden and his family, with a similar rhetorical stance developing against Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris; remove and investigate "radical" prosecutors; and even fire and deport Special Counsel Jack Smith. His targets for targeted action extend to those who criticize pro-Trump judges, Members of Congress, the January 6th Select Committee, judges, non-governmental organizations, Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg, and Google. He has also vowed to investigate lawyers, political operatives, donors, and election officials for election "cheating" Meanwhile, Trump intends to pardon January 6th rioters (and potentially other allies) and shield his allies from prosecution.
  - On November 8, just 55 hours after winning the presidency, Donald Trump quickly moved to threaten those he accused of spreading "fake, untrue, and probably illegal rumors" about his social media platform's value. Trump took to his platform to deny any intention of selling shares, demanding that the alleged "market manipulators or short sellers" responsible for these rumors "be immediately investigated by the appropriate authorities." The post read:

    > "There are fake, untrue, and probably illegal rumors and/or statements made by, perhaps, market manipulators or short sellers, that I am interested in selling shares of Truth. THOSE RUMORS OR STATEMENTS ARE FALSE. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF SELLING! I hereby request that the people who have set off these fake rumors or statements, and who may have done so in the past, be immediately investigated by the appropriate authorities. Truth is an important part of our historic win, and I deeply believe in it. Thank you for your attention to this matter. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"
  - Sept. 27, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "It has been determined that Google has illegally used a system of only revealing and displaying bad stories about Donald J. Trump, some made up for this purpose while, at the same time, only revealing good stories about Comrade Kamala Harris. This is an ILLEGAL ACTIVITY, and hopefully the Justice Department will criminally prosecute them for this blatant Interference of Elections. If not, and subject to the Laws of our Country, I will request their prosecution, at the maximum levels, when I win the Election, and become President of the United States!"
  - Since September 7, 2024, Trump has posted and reposted the exact same statement across Truth Social and X, warning that he and his team are vigilantly monitoring the 2024 election for any "fraud." The message states that "those

people that CHEATED will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law," explicitly targeting lawyers, political operatives, donors, "illegal voters," and election officials. Trump underscores that he, along with attorneys and legal scholars, is scrutinizing the election, asserting that those involved in "unscrupulous behavior" will face unprecedented legal consequences. The post reads:

- "CEASE & DESIST: I, together with many Attorneys and Legal Scholars, am watching the Sanctity of the 2024 Presidential Election very closely because I know, better than most, the rampant Cheating and Skullduggery that has taken place by the Democrats in the 2020 Presidential Election. It was a Disgrace to our Nation! Therefore, the 2024 Election, where Votes have just started being cast, will be under the closest professional scrutiny and, WHEN I WIN, those people that CHEATED will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law, which will include long term prison sentences so that this Depravity of Justice does not happen again. We cannot let our Country further devolve into a Third World Nation, AND WE WON'T! Please beware that this legal exposure extends to Lawyers, Political Operatives, Donors, Illegal Voters, & Corrupt Election Officials. Those involved in unscrupulous behavior will be sought out, caught, and prosecuted at levels, unfortunately, never seen before in our Country." (emphasis added)



- Sept. 5, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “Comrade Kamala Harris and her Department of Justice are trying to interfere in and suppress the Election in favor of the Democrats by resurrecting the Russia, Russia, Russia Hoax, and trying to say that Russia is trying to help me, which is absolutely FALSE. In fact, President Putin would much rather see Comrade Kamala Harris in Office, as he strongly said just this morning. Why aren’t they looking into Iran, China, & other Countries and, more importantly, why aren’t they looking at Marc Elias, Mark Pomerantz, the relationship between Lisa Monaco to Andrew Weissmann, CREW, and all of the other Enemies of the People that had such an effect on the 2020 Election, and are trying to Rig and Steal the 2024 Presidential Election. So ironic watching Lisa Monaco, a figurehead for Weissmann and the group of Radical Left Lunatics who had so much to do with the original Russia, Russia, Russia Hoax, and now she is at it again, leading A.G. Merrick Garland down an empty and Country destroying path…”
- On August 28, 2024, in the aftermath of the superseding indictment from Special Counsel Jack Smith in the ongoing federal case against Trump for his attempts to interfere in the 2020 election, Trump “ReTruthed” a number of memes calling for his political enemies to be prosecuted:

- August 2024, *The Shawn Ryan Show*, Trump spoke about those who are “talented” at “cheating in elections. They’re very talented on, I say crime. I mean

really crime." Trump said: "But they've weaponized government. We've never done that before. They're vicious people. These are vicious people. You know, I could have done that to Hillary Clinton. She was totally, what she did was so bad, she got a subpoena from the United States Congress, and she destroyed everything. You go to jail for that for years, and if you did it as a private person, you go to jail. But she destroyed everything. And I said, 'you know, wouldn't it be terrible … wouldn't it be terrible to have the wife of the president of the United States, a former president of the United States, being put in prison?' And I meant that, I think it would be terrible. And I could have pushed that very easily, and I did sort of the opposite, and now they come after me." He added he would hold accountable those "destroying" the United States.

> RYAN: I think that one of the biggest problems within the country is the distrust in the United States Government. I'm one of them. I have zero trust in any government agencies. I have zero trust in our Congress and our Senate, anything. We have a government that's not functioning right now. How are you gonna gain the trust back of the American people within the government? And are we going to see anybody held accountable?
>
> TRUMP: Yeah, the answer is yes on the second, they're gonna be held accountable. They've gotta be held accountable. What they're doing, they're destroying this country. They're crooked people, they're dishonest people. They're gonna be held accountable.

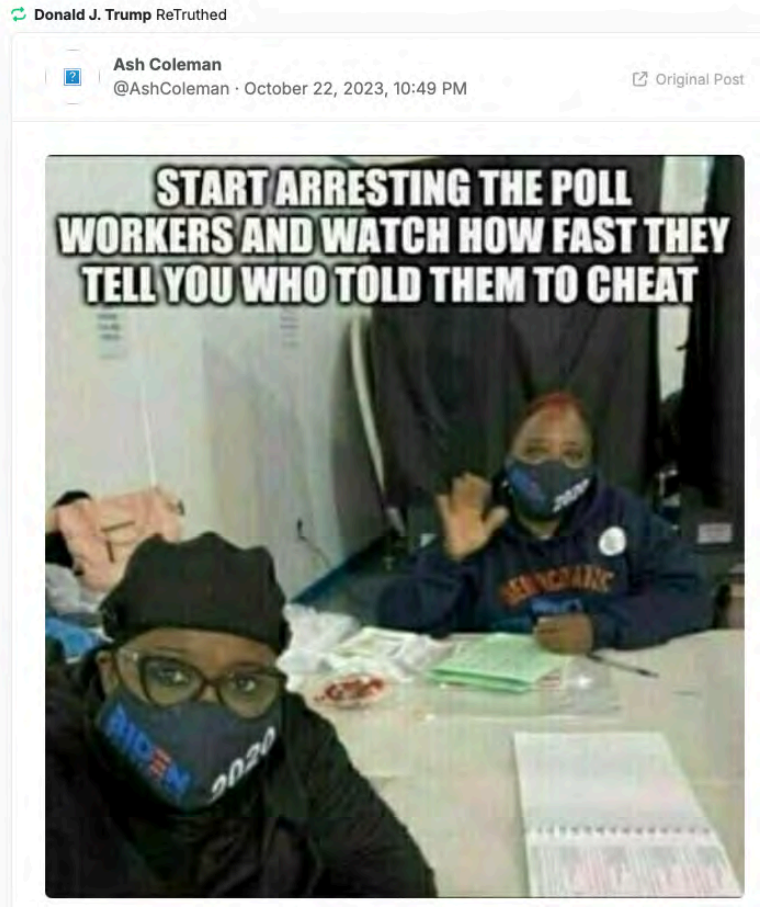
- July 24, 2024, Charlotte, NC, at his first rally after President Joe Biden exited the 2024 election race, Trump said: "You know, I was supposed to be nice. They say something happened to me when I got shot, I became nice. And when you're dealing with these people, they're very dangerous people. When you're dealing with them, you can't be too nice. You really can't be, so, if you don't mind, I'm not going to be nice. Is that okay?"
- July 9, 2024, Truth Social, Trump threatened to "pursue Election Fraudsters at levels never seen before" and send them to "prison for long periods of time," name-checking Meta Platforms' Mark Zuckerberg as well as generally referring to cheating Democrats at "every level of government." He wrote: "Republicans must pass the Save Act, or go home and cry yourself to sleep. Non citizen Illegal Migrants are getting the right to vote, being pushed by crooked Democrat Politicians who are not being stopped by an equally dishonest Justice Department. Our whole voting system is under siege. Harmeet and David, go to court and get this stopped, NOW. The Dems can't win on their policies, the only way they can win is to CHEAT. They do it at every level of government, and they do it well. That's how they get an incapacitated moron like Joe Biden elected. Get tough RNC (Michael W!), Speaker Johnson, and all State and Local Republican politicians. The Justice Department is CORRUPT and won't do a thing to help. They have no shame! All I can say is that if I'm elected President, we will pursue

Election Fraudsters at levels never seen before, and they will be sent to prison for long periods of time. We already know who you are. DON'T DO IT! ZUCKERBUCKS, be careful!"

- June 6, 2024, Dr. Phil McGraw interview, Trump suggested that he could seek revenge as "sometimes revenge can be justified." In response to McGraw's suggestion that if Trump returns to the Oval Office he would likely have "so much to do" to repair the country that he wouldn't "have time to get even," Trump said: "Well, revenge does take time. I will say that." "And sometimes revenge can be justified, Phil. I have to be honest. Sometimes it can."
- June 5, 2024, Fox News, Trump said that while he would not go after his political enemies, he would have "every right" to do so. Asked by Sean Hannity whether Trump wants "retribution" and would "use the system of justice to go after" his "political enemies," Trump said: "So, number one, they're wrong. It has to stop, because otherwise we're not gonna have a country. Look, when this election is over, based on what they've done, I would have every right to go after them, and it's easy, because it's Joe Biden and you see all the criminality, all of the money that's going into the family and him, all of this money from China, from Russia, from Ukraine."
- June 2, 2024, "Fox and Friends" interview, Trump falsely claimed that he had never called for Hilary Clinton to be imprisoned, despite the fact he "could have done it." Trump said: "They always said, 'lock her up,' and I felt — and I could have done it, but I felt it would have been a terrible thing." "And then this happened to me, and so I may feel differently about it."
  - Trump made similar comments two days later during a Newsmax interview (see above).
- March 2, 2024, Richmond, VA, Trump said: "But until then, Republicans must win. We have to win to get it done. And we won a landslide that is 'too big to rig, too big to rig.' That's what we need. Because they're going to be cheating and they're cheaters and we're gonna be watching them and we're gonna prosecute. We're gonna, if we get in, we're gonna catch them and we're gonna to do things that were never done before."
- Jan. 5, 2024, Sioux Center, IA, Trump said at a rally that NY AG Letitia James and Justice Arthur Engoron "should be arrested and punished accordingly."
- Reporting in November 2023, *The Washington Post* said, "In private, Trump has told advisers and friends in recent months that he wants the Justice Department to investigate onetime officials and allies who have become critical of his time in office, including his former chief of staff, John F. Kelly, and former attorney general William P. Barr, as well as his ex-attorney Ty Cobb and former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Gen. Mark A. Milley … Trump has also talked of prosecuting officials at the FBI and Justice Department."
- November 2023, during a Univision interview at Mar-a-Lago, Trump said in response to whether he would weaponize the DOJ and FBI: "Well, he's [Joe Biden] unleashed something that everybody we've all known about this for a hundred years. We've watched other countries do it and, in some cases, effective

and in other cases, the country's overthrown or it's been totally ineffective. But we've watched this for a long time, and it's not unique, but it's unique for the United States. Yeah, if they do this and they've already done it, but if they want to follow through on this, yeah, it could certainly happen in reverse. It could certainly happen in reverse. What they've done is they've released the genie out of the box. You understand that." Trump added: "If I happen to be president and I see somebody who's doing well and beating me very badly, I say, 'go down and indict them.' Mostly, that would be, you know, they would be out of business. They'd be out. They'd be out of the election."

- Nov. 13, 2023, Trump "ReTruthed" a post calling for NY AG Letitia James and Justice Arthur Engoron to be "PLACED UNDER CITIZENS ARREST FOR BLATANT ELECTION INTERFERENCE AND HARASSMENT."
- Oct. 9, 2023, Wolfeboro, NH: Trump said, "This is third-world-country stuff, 'arrest your opponent.' And that means I can do that, too."
- Sept. 2023, Rapid City, SD, Trump said: "If I win and somebody wants to run against me, I call my attorney general. I say, 'listen, indict him.' 'Well, he hasn't done anything wrong that we know of.' 'I don't know, indict him on income tax evasion, you'll figure it out.'"
- June 13, 2023, *The Howie Carr Show*: Trump warned that charges against him have "opened Pandora's box" in terms of political investigations, ominously adding, "You will see what happens."
- As President, Trump repeatedly told his Chief of Staff John Kelly that he wanted the IRS to investigate several of his perceived political enemies, including former FBI director James Comey and deputy director Andrew McCabe. Both Comey and McCabe were subsequently subjected to a rare, intensive IRS audit that affects only one out of every 30,600 tax filers.
- Nov. 13, 2023, Truth Social, Trump suggested that Special Counsel Jack Smith, other current and former senior Justice Department officials, and a "team of losers and misfits" from Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), the non-profit organization, will end up in a mental institution by the end of his second term. (Note that the Soviet Union sent dissidents to mental institutions.)
- October 2023, Trump "ReTruthed" a meme showing two election workers, with the caption, "start arresting the poll workers and watch how fast they tell you who told them to cheat."



- June 10, 2023, Trump shared on Truth Social a post from Charlie Kirk which said, "One day, hopefully soon, powerful, corrupt Democrats are going to start getting indicted. They started this. This is the only way to stop it." Trump added, "BILL BARR WAS WEAK & INEFFECTIVE. WE WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN!!!"
- February 26, 2023, Truth Social, Trump accused Meta Platforms' Mark Zuckerberg of election fraud and asked why he was not being prosecuted. "He cheated on the Election(s). The whole system is RIGGED. Why isn't he being prosecuted? The Democrats only know how to cheat. America isn't going to take it much longer!"

- Trump and his transition team are reportedly planning to target senior military leadership involved in the 2021 Afghanistan withdrawal, intensifying efforts to hold them accountable through measures such as establishing a commission to investigate the withdrawal's mismanagement, compiling a list of officials for potential court-martial on treason charges, and considering the recall of retired officers to active duty for prosecution.

- Trump has said he will use the Justice Department to investigate and criminally punish President Biden and his family, though he has, at times, been more or less overt. *CREW* analyzed over 13,000 of Trump's Truth Social posts from January 1, 2023, to April 1, 2024, and found that Trump made 25 direct or implied threats to target Joe Biden using

federal government powers in a second term. These threats included potential FBI raids, investigations, indictments, and jail time.

- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said, “What they've done in allowing maybe 25 million people into our country, it should be illegal … it should be illegal. Maybe it is illegal.”
- June 27, 2024, CNN presidential debate, Trump signaled retaliatory prosecution of Biden, saying: “But he could be a convicted felon as soon as he gets out of office. Joe could be a convicted felon with all of the things that he’s done. He’s done horrible things. All of the death caused at the border, telling the Ukrainian people that we’re going to want a billion dollars or you change the prosecutor, otherwise, you’re not getting a billion dollars.” It was in answer to the question: “After a jury convicted you of 34 felonies last month, you said if reelected you would, quote, ‘have every right to go after,’ unquote, your political opponents. You just talked about members of the Select Committee on January 6th going to jail. Your main political opponent is standing on stage with you tonight. Can you clarify exactly what it means about you feeling you have every right to go after your political opponents?”
- Nov. 8 , 2023, Hialeah, FL, Trump said: “We will start by exposing every last crime committed by crooked Joe Biden. Because now that he indicted me, we’re allowed to look at him. But he did real bad things.”
- Jan. 8, 2024, Truth Social: “If I don’t get Immunity, then Crooked Joe Biden doesn’t get Immunity […] Joe would be ripe for Indictment. By weaponizing the DOJ against his Political Opponent, ME, Joe has opened a giant Pandora’s Box.”
- Aug. 15, 2023: Trump said, “[A]s soon as I am reelected, I will appoint a real special counsel, or maybe you'll call him a special prosecutor, whatever you want to call it ... to look at all of these bribes, kickbacks, and other crimes, as well as the shameless attempt at a coverup. Justice will be done. The Biden crime family will be looked at. We have to get there first, we have to win the election. They're trying to step in my way at every path because the one person they don't want to run is Donald Trump. But when we get there, the Biden crime family will pay a price like other people are being forced to pay. And that price will be very, very substantial.”
- Aug. 5, 2023, South Carolina GOP event, Trump said: “From the first day in office, I will appoint a special prosecutor to study each and every one of the many claims being brought forth by Congress concerning all of the crooked acts, including the bribes from China and many other countries, that go into the coffers of the Biden crime family.”
- June 13, 2023, Bedminister, NJ: “I will appoint a real special prosecutor to go after the most corrupt president in the history of the United States of America, Joe Biden, and the entire Biden crime family.”
    - June 27, 2023, Concord, NH, Trump said: “I will appoint a real special prosecutor to investigate the Biden bribery and crime ring.”

        - Jan. 9, 2024, Washington, DC: “I feel that as a president, you have to have immunity, very simple...It’s the opening of a Pandora’s box and it’s a very, very sad thing that’s happened with this whole situation.”
    - June 5, 2024, Fox News, Trump said that while he would not go after his political enemies, he would have “every right” to do so, including Biden for “all the criminality.” Asked by Sean Hannity whether Trump wants “retribution” and would “use the system of justice to go after” his “political enemies,” Trump said: “So, number one, they're wrong. It has to stop, because otherwise we're not gonna have a country. Look, when this election is over, based on what they’ve done, I would have every right to go after them, and it’s easy, because it’s Joe Biden and you see all the criminality, all of the money that’s going into the family and him, all of this money from China, from Russia, from Ukraine.”
    - April 22, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “A key Constitutional issue is whether or not a President should have Immunity. The answer is YES! During the hearing in the D.C. Circuit, the other side actually conceded two very important points, either of which would give the critical Immunity argument to us. If for any reason it were held that a President doesn’t have Immunity, then Crooked Joe Biden, after he leaves Office, could be charged for the horrible and dangerous job he is doing on the Southern Border, the Afghanistan Disaster with all of its Death, Destruction, and ‘Surrender,’ or his quid pro quo on Ukraine, where he said, on tape, that if they don’t get rid of an Unfriendly Prosecutor, they don’t get the $1 Billion in Funding from the United States (He then clapped his hands, and said, in effect, ‘I won!’)…..”
    - April 20, 2024, Truth Social: Trump wrote, “Of course I was entitled, as President of the United States and Commander in Chief, to Immunity. I wasn’t campaigning, the Election was long over. I was looking for voter fraud, and finding it, which is my obligation to do, and otherwise running our Country. If I don’t get Immunity, then Crooked Joe Biden doesn’t get Immunity, and with the Border Invasion and Afghanistan Surrender, alone, not to mention the Millions of dollars that went into his “‘pockets’” with money from foreign countries, Joe would be ripe for Indictment. By weaponizing the DOJ against his Political Opponent, ME, Joe has opened a giant Pandora’s Box. As President, I was protecting our Country, and doing a great job of doing so - Just look around at the complete mess that Crooked Joe Biden has caused. The least I am entitled to is Presidential Immunity on Fake Biden Indictments!”
    - April 20, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “REMEMBER, if I don’t have Presidential Immunity, then Crooked Joe Biden doesn’t have it either, and he would certainly be Prosecuted for his many ACTUAL CRIMES, including illegally receiving massive amounts of money from Foreign Countries, including China, Ukraine, and Russia, paying off Ukraine to fire an unfriendly prosecutor, allowing millions of people to illegally Enter and Destroy our Country, SURRENDERING in Afghanistan, with Hundreds Dead, many Americans Left Behind, and handing over Billions of Dollars Worth of the Best Military Equipment anywhere on Earth, the Decimation of American Wealth through the Green New Scam, and so much

more. REMEMBER, Crooked Joe Biden and his CORRUPT JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, D.A.'s and A.G.'s, has attacked his Political Opponent at a level never seen before in this Country, and wants desperately to PUT 'TRUMP' IN PRISON. He is playing a very dangerous game, and the great people of America WILL NOT STAND FOR IT. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!!!"

- April 20, 2024 Truth Social, Trump wrote: "IF THEY TAKE AWAY MY PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY, THEY TAKE AWAY CROOKED JOE BIDEN'S PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY."
- April 20, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "If a President does not have Immunity, the Opposing Party, during his/her term in Office, can extort and blackmail the President by saying that, 'if you don't give us everything we want, we will Indict you for things you did while in Office,' even if everything done was totally Legal and Appropriate. That would be the end of the Presidency, and our Country, as we know it, and is just one of the many Traps there would be for a President without Presidential Immunity. Obama, Bush, and soon, Crooked Joe Biden, would all be in BIG TROUBLE. If a President doesn't have IMMUNITY, he/she will be nothing more than a 'Ceremonial' President, rarely having the courage to do what has to be done for our Country. This is not what the Founders had in mind! Protect Presidential Immunity. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"
- April 19, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "If a President does not have Immunity, the Opposing Party, during his/her term in Office, can extort and blackmail the President by saying that, 'if you don't give us everything we want, we will Indict you for things you did while in Office,' even if everything done was totally Legal and Appropriate. That would be the end of the Presidency, and our Country, as we know it, and is just one of the many Traps there would be for a President without Presidential Immunity. Obama, Bush, and soon, Crooked Joe Biden, would all be in BIG TROUBLE. If a President doesn't have IMMUNITY, he/she will be nothing more than a 'Ceremonial' President, rarely having the courage to do what has to be done for our Country. This is not what the Founders had in mind! Protect Presidential Immunity. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"
- April 19, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "IF THEY TAKE AWAY MY PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY, THEY TAKE AWAY CROOKED JOE BIDEN'S PRESIDENTIAL IMMUNITY."
- April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Asked if he would "appoint a real special prosecutor to go after Biden and his family," Trump equivocated, saying, "Well, it depends what happens with the Supreme Court. Look, a president should have immunity. That includes Biden. If they've ruled that they don't have immunity, Biden, probably nothing to do with me, he would be prosecuted for 20 different acts, because he's created such. You take a look at not only his criminal acts of taking a lot of money and being a Manchurian Candidate. Look at what happened in Afghanistan. Look at what happened throughout the world. Look at what happened with him allowing Russia to do that with Ukraine. That would have never happened with me, and it didn't happen. And I knew Putin very well." Trump added, "Wait a minute, I haven't had a chance to do it to them. I would be inclined

not to do it. I don't want to do it to them. But a lot of that's going to have to do with the Supreme Court. Look, we are going in another two weeks to the Supreme Court. And they're going to make a ruling on presidential immunity. If they said that a president doesn't get immunity, then Biden, I am sure, will be prosecuted for all of his crimes, because he's committed many crimes. If they say, on the other hand, that a president has immunity, and I happen to think a president has to have immunity, because otherwise it's going to be just a ceremonial position. But Biden has done so many things so badly. And I'm not even talking the overt crime. I'm talking about the border, allowing all of the death and destruction at the border—"

- Dec. 19, 2023, Truth Social, Trump said: "So, now we have reached a point when a President of the United States has WEAPONIZED the Department of Justice as though we were a Third World Country. They don't want to run against me, and never have. I am leading in the Polls, by a lot, and based on the results of the failed Biden Administration, this will continue. But 'Justice' Weaponization is a very dirty game to play, and it can have repercussions far greater than anything that Biden or his Thugs could understand. They ought to withdraw all of their Fake, Political Indictments against their Republican Opponent, me, immediately. This is a Pandora's Box, that works two ways, and it should be closed and tightly sealed RIGHT NOW. Withdraw your Political Indictments and Lawsuits, Joe, before it is too late!"
- Dec. 4, 2023, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Judge says Trump does not have absolute immunity. This Radical Left ideology is a threat to the Presidency. It means that Crooked Joe Biden can be held personally liable for his Open Border Policy, and all of his other mistakes and decisions that are destroying our Nation!"
- Oct. 30, 2023, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Why didn't Crooked Joe Biden tell his Injustice Department to file the lawsuits and Indictments against me 3 years ago, instead of right in the middle of my campaign for President? You're setting a BAD precedent for yourself, Joe. The same can happen to you. These Third World Biden Indictments, which should never have been filed, would have been tried and over with years ago. My SleazeBag Opponent shouldn't be able to do this during my campaign, OR BEFORE THE ELECTION!"
- June 9, 2023, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "For purposes of fighting the Greatest Witch Hunt of all time, now moving to the Florida Courts, I will be represented by Todd Blanche, Esq., and a firm to be named later. I want to thank Jim Trusty and John Rowley for their work, but they were up against a very dishonest, corrupt, evil, and "sick" group of people, the likes of which has not been seen before. We will be announcing additional lawyers in the coming days. When will Joe Biden be Indicted for his many crimes against our Nation? MAGA!"
- Jan. 12, 2023, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Merrick Garland has to immediately end Special Counsel investigation into anything related to me because I did everything right, and appoint a Special Counsel to investigate Joe Biden who hates Biden as much as Jack Smith hates me."
- June 16, 2023, Truth Social, Trump shared a post alongside a video of himself saying the same thing: "NOW THAT THE "SEAL" IS BROKEN, IN ADDITION TO

CLOSING THE BORDER & REMOVING ALL OF THE "CRIMINAL" ELEMENTS THAT HAVE ILLEGALLY INVADED OUR COUNTRY, MAKING AMERICA ENERGY INDEPENDENT, & EVEN DOMINANT AGAIN, & IMMEDIATELY ENDING THE WAR BETWEEN RUSSIA & UKRAINE, I WILL APPOINT A REAL SPECIAL "PROSECUTOR" TO GO AFTER THE MOST CORRUPT PRESIDENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE USA, JOE BIDEN, THE ENTIRE BIDEN CRIME FAMILY, & ALL OTHERS INVOLVED WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR ELECTIONS, BORDERS, & COUNTRY ITSELF!" In the video, he added, "These are corrupt people. These people are destroying America and they're going to pay a price for it."

- April 12, 2023, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "…And they investigate 'Trump.' Biden and his family are CORRUPT. They are the ones that Trump Hating Special 'Prosecutor, Jack Smith, should be investigating - And ALL of America knows this!!!"
- More recently Trump has suggested that he did not want to "hurt" Biden and would only seek "retribution" through his great successes in office.
  - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview, after first suggesting that he will go after Biden, he later seemed to pull back: "No, I don't, I wouldn't want to, I wouldn't want to do anything having to do with. I wouldn't want to hurt Biden. I'm not looking to hurt Biden. I wouldn't want to hurt him. I have too much respect for the office. But he is willing to hurt a former President who is very popular, who got 75 million votes. I got more votes than any other sitting president in history. And I have probably eight cases right now that are all inspired by them, including my civil case."
  - May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, speaking on the "enemy from within," Trump said, "we will take care of business. We're gonna to do the right job. We're gonna be fair to everybody. We're going to do the right job and our revenge. You know, they say, 'Oh, this is a revenge tour for Trump.' It's not a revenge tour. Revenge is going to be our great success. What we're going to do is, success, we're gonna have such success that's it's going to turn that word 'revenge.' There's not going to be any revenge. We're gonna make this country so successful again, it's gonna to be so successful. That will be our revenge, that's going to be our revenge"

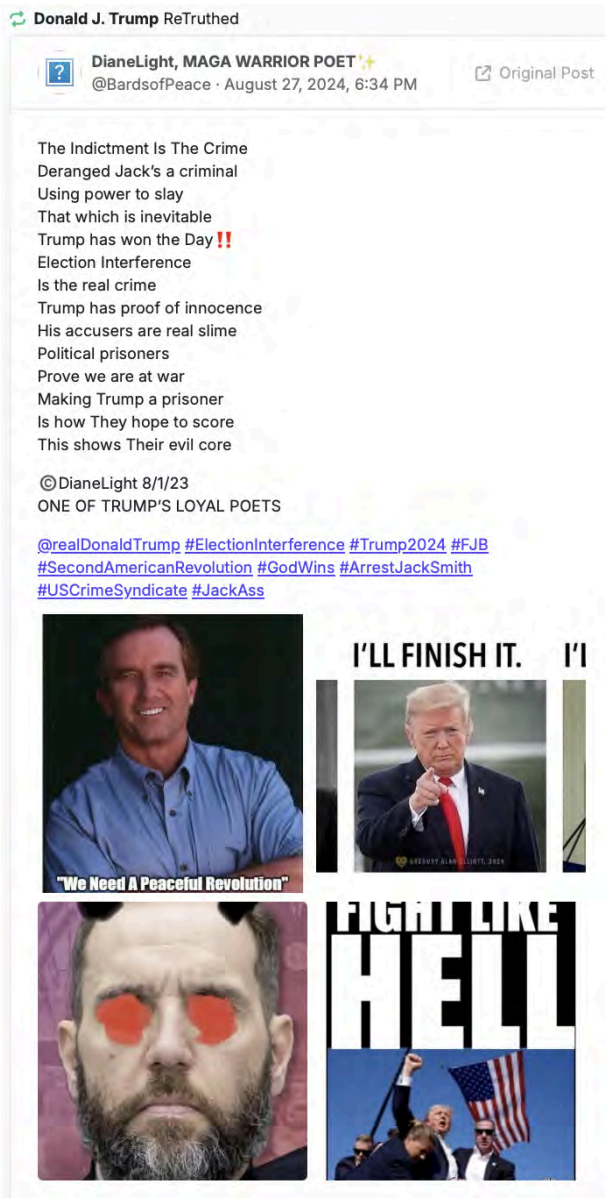
- Trump is repurposing accusations against Vice President Kamala Harris, akin to those he has directed at President Biden, particularly concerning the alleged political prosecutions of Trump. He has alleged Harris is "the one behind" Trump's multiple criminal cases. He has alleged criminality in her purported role as the Biden administration's "border czar," in which he claims she is "committing crimes" and should be "should be impeached and prosecuted." Trump has also accused Harris of deceiving the public for years to hide Biden's "mental unfitness", calling for her impeachment for the "biggest scandal in American political history." He paused theatrically as the crowd at a campaign rally chanted, "Lock her up!"
  - Border Czar

        - Sept. 29, 2024, Erie, PA, Trump said Harris “should be impeached and prosecuted for her actions.” People were “murdered because of her action at the border, and thousands more will follow in rapid succession,” Trump claimed.
        - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said, “As Border Czar, Kamala Harris let in over 20 million. They're now saying the number could be 25 million illegal aliens from 168 different countries,” adding, “What they've done in allowing maybe 25 million people into our country, it should be illegal … it should be illegal. Maybe it is illegal.”
        - July 24, 2024, Charlotte, NC, Trump alleged Harris’s role in the Biden administration’s immigration policies amounts to criminality and disqualifies her from office. He described her as the “border czar” and accused her of being “the ultraliberal driving force behind every single Biden catastrophe.” “Kamala’s deadly destruction of America’s borders is completely and totally disqualifying. She shouldn’t even be allowed to run for president, what she’s done. She’s committing crimes,” Trump said.
        - June 16, 2023, on Truth Social, Trump shared a post alongside a video of himself saying the same thing: "NOW THAT THE “SEAL” IS BROKEN, IN ADDITION TO CLOSING THE BORDER & REMOVING ALL OF THE “CRIMINAL” ELEMENTS THAT HAVE ILLEGALLY INVADED OUR COUNTRY, MAKING AMERICA ENERGY INDEPENDENT, & EVEN DOMINANT AGAIN, & IMMEDIATELY ENDING THE WAR BETWEEN RUSSIA & UKRAINE, I WILL APPOINT A REAL SPECIAL “PROSECUTOR” TO GO AFTER THE MOST CORRUPT PRESIDENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE USA, JOE BIDEN, THE ENTIRE BIDEN CRIME FAMILY, & ALL OTHERS INVOLVED WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR ELECTIONS, BORDERS, & COUNTRY ITSELF!" In the video, he added, “These are corrupt people. These people are destroying America and they’re going to pay a price for it.”
    - Weaponizing the justice system
        - Sept. 5, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “9/6 This is what various Legal Scholars and Experts, Brilliant Lawyers, and Highly Respected Journalists think of the Manhattan D.A. Hoax, where the Democrats, headed up by Comrade Kamala Harris, working directly with the DOJ (which they’re not supposed to be!), want to put a Former President of the United States, and the Leading Candidate for President, in PRISON. This is unheard of, there has never been anything like it in our Country, and they are doing it in a blatant and illegal attempt to “win” an Election that, based on their results, should be “unwinnable,” but I can’t talk about it because Judge Merchan has put an UnConstitutional Gag Order on me. Somehow it will ALL work out - I don’t know how, I don’t know why, I don’t know when, but it always does!”

        - July 31, 2024, National Association of Black Journalists Convention, Trump said: “Well, I’ve been prosecuted because I’m a political opponent of two people that have weaponized our justice system.”
        - July 24, 2024, Charlotte, NC, at his first rally after President Joe Biden exited the 2024 election race, Trump directed his familiar accusations at Kamala Harris, repurposing the claims he had previously levied against Biden. While, unlike with Biden, Trump stopped short of accusing Harris of crimes related to the criminal prosecutions against him, he did accuse her of instigating his criminal cases. He claimed Harris is the “the one behind” President’s Biden’s alleged attempts to put Trump in jail. Trump’s multiple criminal cases, he claimed, are “all headed up by” Harris “because she's a prosecutor, a really bad one.”
    - Cover-Up of President Biden’s Incapacity
        - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said, “I will support modifying the 25th amendment to make clear that if a vice president lies or engages in a conspiracy to cover up the incapacity of the President of the United States, ... its grounds for impeachment immediately and removal from office, because that’s what they did.”
        - July 24, 2024, Charlotte, NC, at his first rally after President Joe Biden exited the 2024 election race, Trump claimed “Kamala Harris has also been caught red handed, perpetrating the biggest scandal in American political history for three and a half years. Harris shamelessly lied to the public to cover up Joe Biden's mental unfitness, claiming that crooked Joe was at the absolute top of his game.” He said that she “lie[d] to you so brazenly about Joe Biden's mental incapacity.”

- Trump has talked about investigating and removing federal, state, and local prosecutors.
    - Oct. 24, 2024, *Cats & Cosby*, Trump said: “We should throw Jack Smith out with them, the mentally deranged people. Jack Smith should be considered mentally deranged and he should be thrown out of the country.”
    - Oct. 24, 2024, *The Hugh Hewitt Show*, Trump said he “would fire” Jack Smith “within two seconds. He’ll be one of the first things addressed.”
    - On August 28, 2024, in the aftermath of the superseding indictment from Special Counsel Jack Smith in the ongoing federal case against Trump for his attempts to interfere in the 2020 election, Trump “ReTruthed” posts calling for Smith’s arrest and prosecution.
        - One meme stated: “JACKAL SMITH IS A CAREER CRIMINAL, A POLITICAL WEAPON AGAINST AMERICA. HE SHOULD BE PROSECUTED FOR ELECTION INTERFERENCE & PROSECUTORIAL MISCONDUCT.”

- Another post featured memes, one of which depicted Smith with blurred-out eyes and devil horns, accompanied by a hashtag calling for his arrest.



- June 4, 2024, Newsmax interview, Trump warned that his felony conviction in New York the week prior had set "a terrible precedent," in which "it's very possible that it's going to have to happen to them." Speaking to "Greg Kelly Reports," Trump said:
  - "It's a terrible precedent for our country. Does that mean the next president does it to them? That's really the question. You know, I said on a recent show…when I'd mentioned Hillary's name, they'd all scream, '...Lock her up, lock her up,' and everybody got a kick out of it and all."
  - "And I said, 'Wouldn't it really be bad?' You know, with — like as an example — Hillary, with the hammering of her cell phones and all of the things she did, but wouldn't it be terrible to throw the president's wife and the former secretary of state — think of it, the former secretary of state — but the president's wife into jail? Wouldn't that be a terrible thing? But they

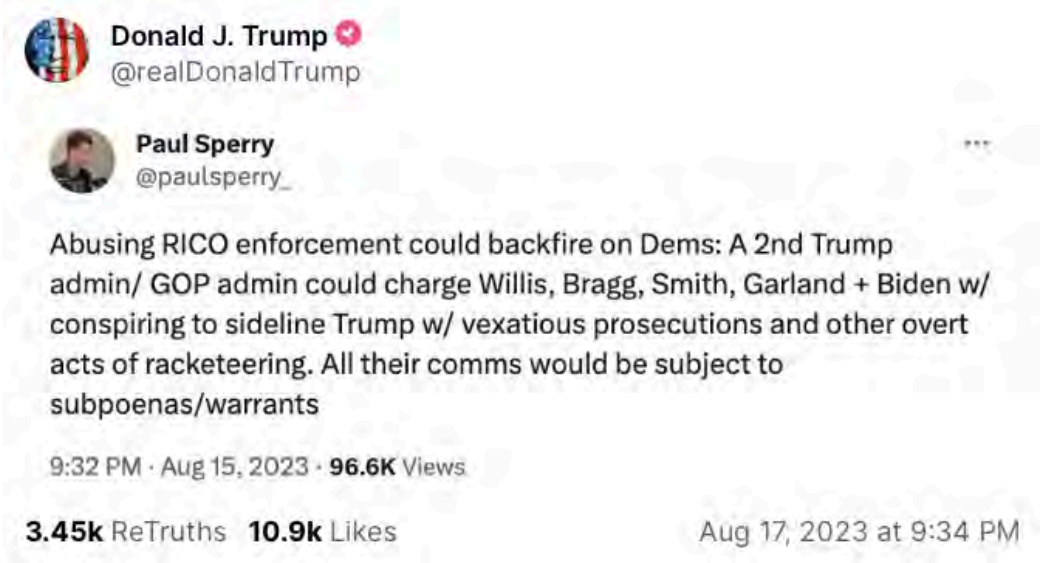
want to do it. So, you know, it's a terrible, terrible path that they're leading us to, and it's very possible that it's going to have to happen to them…I got a lot of credit from a lot of people, and some people said I should have done it, but, you know, could have, would have been very easy to do it, but I thought it would be a terrible precedent for our country." "And now, whoever it may be, you're gonna have to view it very much differently. This is a bad, bad road that they're leading us down to as a country."

- June 2, 2024, Fox and Friends, asked just days after being convicted in New York on 34 felony counts whether he would seek revenge in a second term against his opponents and prosecutors, Trump said, "It's a really tough question in one way because these are bad people. These people are sick. And they do things that are so destructive…Look, it's a very interesting question. And I say it and it sounds beautiful, right, you know, 'My revenge will be success,' and I mean that. But it's awfully hard when you see what they've done, these people are so evil."
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said that Jack Smith is "a deranged person who wants to hurt people, and we, we're hurting him. I'll tell you, we're hurting him. … Being a fair and good prosecutor is a very important thing but some of these animals, I mean, they are bad."
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "We will restore law and order in our country. And I will direct a completely overhauled DOJ to investigate every radical out-of-control prosecutor in America, for their illegal, racist-in-reverse enforcement of the law. There is no law."
- As noted below, Trump has recently tried to pull back from previous statements to use the DOJ to prosecute Biden and other prosecutors.
  - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview, when asked if he would request the Attorney General to prosecute state officials like Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg, Trump said: "Well, we're gonna look at a lot of things like they're looking. What they've done is a terrible thing. No, I don't want to do that. I was not happy looking at Clinton. I was not happy. I think it's a terrible thing. But unfortunately, what they've done is they've lifted up the lid and they've—what they've done to me is incredible. Over nothing." Asked further about using his AG to prosecute Bragg, Trump said, "We are going to have great retribution through success. We're going to make our country successful again. Our retribution is going to be through success of our country."
- April 4, 2024, Trump called for Jack Smith to be sanctioned or censured for his apparent "attacking" of Judge Aileen Cannon. He wrote on Truth Social: "Deranged 'Special' Counsel Jack Smith, who has a long record of failure as a prosecutor, including a unanimous decision against him in the U.S. Supreme Court, should be sanctioned or censured for the way he is attacking a highly respected Judge, Aileen Cannon, who is presiding over his FAKE Documents Hoax case in Florida. He is a lowlife who is nasty, rude, and condescending, and obviously trying to 'play the ref.' He shouldn't even be allowed to participate in this sham case, where I, unlike Crooked Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton, and all the rest,

come under the Presidential Records Act. I DID NOTHING WRONG, BUT BIDEN DID, AND THEY LET HIM OFF SCOT-FREE. HOW DID THAT HAPPEN, JACK? A TWO TIERED SYSTEM OF JUSTICE. ELECTION INTERFERENCE!"

- November 2023, Trump "ReTruthed" a post calling for New York AG Letitia James and Justice Merchan to be placed "UNDER CITIZENS ARREST FOR BLATANT ELECTION INTERFERENCE AND HARASSMENT."

- Oct. 29, 2023, Sioux City, Iowa, Trump said: "To stop the Marxist prosecutors who release rapists and murderers while persecuting Republicans, conservatives and people of faith like you, I will direct a completely overhauled DOJ to investigate every radical DA and AG in America for their illegal, racist-in-reverse enforcement of the law."
- Aug. 17, 2023, Truth Social, Trump shared on Truth Social an X post from conservative journalist Paul Sperry, promising to charge Fani Willis, Alvin Bragg, Jack Smith, Merrick Garland, and Joe Biden with conspiracy and racketeering.



- Aug. 7, 2023, Alabama GOP dinner, Trump said: "I will direct a completely overhauled DOJ to investigate every radical DA and AG in America for their illegal, racist-in-reverse enforcement of the law."

- Aug. 5, 2023, South Carolina GOP event, Trump said: “But to investigate every radical DA and AG, and they all coordinate, you know, the Democrats. They all coordinate with the DOJ. But we're gonna investigate every single one in America for their illegal racist-in-reverse enforcement of the law.”
- June 10, 2023, GOP Convention, GA, Trump called Jack Smith and others at the Justice Department “a sick nest of people that needs to be cleaned out immediately.”
- April 27, 2023, Manchester, NH, Trump promised to use the Justice Department to investigate local prosecutors and attorneys general: “On Day One of my new administration, I will direct the D.O.J. to investigate every radical district attorney and attorney general in America for their illegal, racist-in-reverse enforcement of the law.”
- March 21, 2023, Truth Social, Trump reposted a post on X by Sen. Rand Paul, calling for DA Alvin Bragg to be "put in jail."

- Trump has called for members of the January 6th Select Committee to be prosecuted and imprisoned. A *Washington Post* analysis of Trump’s social media posts found he “regularly goes after members of Congress who investigated his role in the Jan. 6, 2021 attacks”.
  - Dec. 8, 2024, *Meet the Press*: Trump said he believes members of the Congressional January 6 Committee should go to jail.

> TRUMP: And Cheney was behind it.
>
> KRISTEN WELKER: Well —
>
> TRUMP: And so was [Mississippi Congressman] Bennie Thompson and everybody on that committee.
>
> WELKER: We’re going to —
>
> TRUMP: For what they did —
>
> WELKER: Yeah —
>
> TRUMP: – honestly, they should go to jail.
>
> WELKER: So you think Liz Cheney should go to jail?
>
> TRUMP: For what they did —
>
> WELKER: Everyone on the committee you think —

TRUMP: I think everybody —

WELKER: – should go to jail?

TRUMP: – on the -- anybody that voted in favor —

- Dec. 17, 2024: The GOP Majority on the House Administration Subcommittee on Oversight, chaired by Trump-ally Rep. Barry Loudermilk (R-GA), issued a report recommending a criminal investigation against Cheney for her role in investigating January 6. The report criticized the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6 Attack on the United States Capitol as "a political weapon with a singular focus to deceive the public into blaming President Trump for the violence on January 6…." It singled out Cheney for her role as vice-chair of the January 6 Select Committee.
  - Dec. 18, 2024: Following release of the Subcommittee report, Trump posted on Truth Social: "Liz Cheney could be in a lot of trouble based on the evidence obtained by the subcommittee, which states that 'numerous federal laws were likely broken by Liz Cheney, and these violations should be investigated by the FBI.' Thank you to Congressman Barry Loudermilk on a job well done. Newsmax, by Greg Kelly."
- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: "How about the J6 Committee? So the J6 Committee of political thugs and losers gets together and they investigate J6 for years, destroyed the lives of many people, and now it was revealed fairly recently that they destroyed and deleted all documents, all evidence, all proof. They don't have anything. You know why? Because a lot of it pointed to Nancy Pelosi. It was her fault, because she's supposed to be in charge of security, and she turned down thousands of soldiers or National Guard. She turned them down, and it was so obvious, and all of the stories, many of those stories, were fake stories. They were all made up, and we caught them because the Secret Service frankly said that stuff wasn't true. They deleted and destroyed documents. Now, I think that's a criminal act. Isn't a criminal act. What the hell happened? When is something going to happen? How come it always happens to a Republican but doesn't happen to them? They deleted and destroyed every ounce of documents and evidence that they did over a year and a half because it came out badly for them, and they should pay a big price for that. They should pay a big price."
- On August 28, 2024, in the aftermath of the superseding indictment from Special Counsel Jack Smith in the ongoing federal case against Trump for his attempts to interfere in the 2020 election, Trump "ReTruthed" a number of memes calling for his political enemies to be prosecuted. Aug. 28, 2024, Trump "ReTruthed" One meme called for members of the January 6 select committee to be indicted for sedition. "RETRUTH IF YOU WANT TO LOCK THEM UP", part of the meme read. Another called for them to be jailed for perjury.

- June 30, 2024, Truth Social, Trump "ReTruthed" a post that featured a meme with photos of 15 former and current elected officials who allegedly "HID THE J6 FOOTAGE," according to the meme, and "SHOULD BE GOING TO JAIL ON MONDAY NOT STEVE BANNON!," according to the post. The officials in the post include President Biden, Vice President Harris, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, former Vice President Mike Pence, and members of the January 6th Committee.

- June 30, 2024, Truth Social, Trump "ReTruthed" a meme alleging former Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) committed "treason" and suggesting she be prosecuted in a televised military tribunal. The meme read: "ELIZABETH LYNNE CHENEY IS GUILTY OF TREASON[.] RETRUTH IF YOU WANT TELEVISED MILITARY TRIBUNALS"

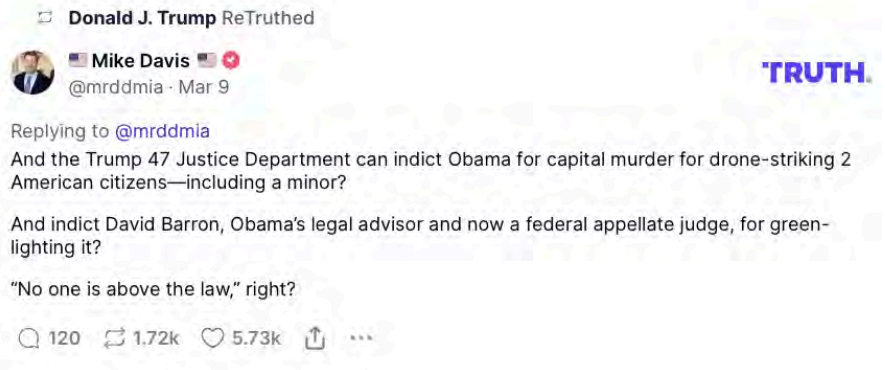
- The suggestion to prosecute Cheney through the U.S. military justice system for treason, a charge seldom brought, and to televise those proceedings, indicates Trump's willingness to eschew standard legal frameworks and procedures as well as promote actions contrary to law, mirroring tactics used in authoritarian regimes to employ extraordinary measures against political opponents
- A Trump campaign spokesperson refused to address the post directly in a statement, "instead repeating allegations of misconduct by members of the committee, saying 'Liz Cheney and the sham January 6th committee banned key witnesses, shielded important evidence, and destroyed documents' related to their investigation," *The New York Times* reported.

    - June 6, 2024, Truth Social, Trump called for members of the January 6th House Select Committee to be indicted for allegedly deleting and destroying evidence. Trump made the post shortly after news that his chief strategist Steve Bannon had been sentenced to four months imprisonment for denying a committee subpoena. The post read: "It is a Total and Complete American Tragedy that the Crooked Joe Biden Department of Injustice is so desperate to jail Steve Bannon, and every other Republican, for that matter, for not SUBMITTING to the Unselect Committee of Political Thugs, made up of all Democrats, and two CRAZED FORMER REPUBLICAN LUNATICS, Cryin' Adam Kinzinger, and Liz 'Out of Her Mind' Cheney. It has been irrefutably proven that it was the Unselects who committed actual crimes when they deleted and destroyed all material evidence, in a pathetic attempt to protect Crazy Nancy Pelosi and other Democrats from the TRUTH — THAT I DID ABSOLUTELY NOTHING WRONG. The unAmerican Weaponization of our Law Enforcement has reached levels of Illegality never thought possible before. INDICT THE UNSELECT J6 COMMITTEE FOR ILLEGALLY DELETING AND DESTROYING ALL OF THEIR 'FINDINGS!' MAGA2024"
    - March 17, 2024, Truth Social, Trump reshared an article by Just The News titled, "Democrats' Jan. 6 panel withheld crucial evidence, including denial from Trump driver: new report," with his own caption reading: "She should go to Jail along with the rest of the Unselect Committee!"

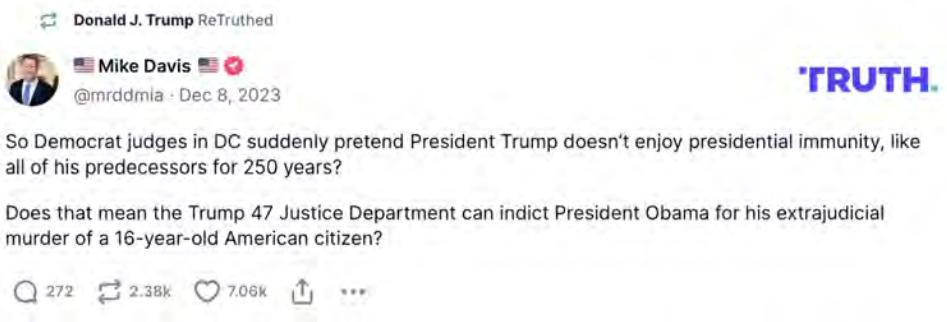
- Oct. 31, 2024, Tucker Carlson interview, Glendale, AZ, Trump suggested "nine barrels shooting" at former Rep. Liz Cheney. "She's a radical war hawk," Trump said. "Let's put her with a rifle standing there with nine barrels shooting at her, OK? Let's see how she feels about it. You know, when the guns are trained on her face."

- Trump has suggested prosecuting former President Barack Obama, even advocating for trying him in a military tribunal for alleged crimes.
    - Aug. 28, 2024,Trump "ReTruthed" a meme calling for Obama to be subject to "military tribunals." The meme read: "ALL ROADS LEAD TO OBAMA. RETRUTH IF YOU WANT PUBLIC MILITARY TRIBUNALS."

- March 12, 2024, Trump "ReTruthed" a Truth Social suggesting the Justice Department “indict Obama for capital murder for drone-striking” two American citizens.



- January 25, 2024, Trump “ReTruthed” a Truth Social post suggesting a Trump DOJ could indict Obama for drone strikes on two American citizens.
- December 9, 2023, Trump “ReTruthed” a post calling for Obama to be indicted for the extrajudicial killing of an American citizen.



- Trump has claimed a breadth of perceived opponents are the "enemy from within," who pose the greatest threat to America, including more than than foreign adversaries like Russia and China.
    - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said: "They're smart and they're vicious, and we have to defeat them. And when I say, 'the enemy from within, the other side goes crazy,' …. They are indeed the enemy from within, but this is who we're fighting."
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: "We're up against very bad, evil people. It's an evil force. You know, we have people on the outside and we have people on the inside."
    - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "I always talk about we have enemies on the outside and we have enemies from within. The enemies from within are more dangerous to me than the enemies of the outside. Russia and China, we can handle, but these lunatics within our government that are going to destroy our country, and probably want to, we have to get it stopped."
    - May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, alleging that there are plenty of "communists," "fascists," and "criminals," in the US government, Trump said: "I say the enemy from within and the enemy on the outside. I think that, frankly, the enemy from within is more dangerous to our country than China and Russia and others. I feel that, because if you have a president that knows what he's doing, he can handle China and Russia. But these people are crazy. And the enemy from within is very dangerous, criminals that nobody can believe and we will take care of business."
    - April 27, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Trump said, "They have broken the Constitution. They have gotten very far astray from our Constitution. I'm talking about the fascists and the people in our government right now, because I consider them, you know, we talk about the enemy from within. I think the enemy from within, in many cases, is much more dangerous for our country than the outside enemies of China, Russia, and various others that would be called enemies depending on who the president is, frankly."
        - He later said, "Because if you have the proper president, you'll be able to handle them very smartly, and everybody will be very satisfied. But if you don't have the proper president, I agree they would be strong enemies. But the enemy from within is a bigger danger to this country than the outside enemy, on the basis of having a president that knows what he's doing.

Because if a President is good, solid, the proper person, and you're not gonna have a big problem with China, Russia or others, but you still have a problem from the sick people inside our country."

- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "Together we're taking on some of the most menacing forces and vicious opponents our people have ever seen. But no matter how hateful and corrupt the communist and criminals are, and they are hateful. We are fighting against some of the most vicious people in the world and they're not outside, they're inside…We can handle China, we can handle Russia, we can handle all of them."
- Feb. 23, 2024, National Religious Broadcasters Convention, Nashville, TN, Trumps said: "This time, the greatest threat is not from the outside of our country. I really believe this. It's from within. It's the people from within our country that are more dangerous than the people outside. We can handle China, we can handle Russia."
- Veterans Day 2023, Claremont, NH, during a rally, Trump said he would "root out" political opponents who "live like vermin within the confines of our country" warning that the greatest threats come "from within" (words that according to ABC News and others "echoed those of past fascist dictators like Hitler and Benito Mussolini," and alarmed historians).
- Nov. 15, 2022, Mar-a-Lago, while announcing his 2024 presidential bid, Trump said, "the gravest threats to our civilization are not from abroad, but from within."

- Trump has advocated for making it illegal to criticize (pro-Trump) judges, specifically urging the Justice Department to investigate Democrats for their attacks on the judiciary, appearing to single out attacks on Judge Aileen Cannon, the federal judge who recently dismissed the classified documents case against him, and the Supreme Court.
  - Sept. 23, 2024, Indiana, PA, Trump said at a rally: "They were very brave, the Supreme Court, very brave, and they take a lot of hits because of it. It should be illegal what happens. You have these guys that like playing the rough, like the great Bobby Knight. These people should be put in jail the way they talk about our judges and our justices, trying to get them to sway their vote, sway their decision."
  - Sept. 6, 2024, Press Conference at Trump Tower, NY, Trump said: "And they say terrible things about judges. They do it with the Supreme Court justices because they think they're going to intimidate him. I think it should be illegal. That's what the DOJ should look into. The legality of these people. Taking a brilliant judge [Judge Aileen Cannon] and demeaning her, and taking other people that are fair and solid and demeaning them. It's called playing the ref."
  - Aug. 17, 2024, Wilkes-Barre, PA, Trump said:
    - "The radical left harasses our judges, and harasses our justices. They scream at them. They call them names. They say they're incompetent. They're horrible. They're this, they're that. They should be impeached. They're constantly saying they should be impeached. … I believe it's illegal. … And I'm trying to give you things that you've never heard before,

and this is true. I believe they are playing the ref. They're constantly criticizing our great, some of our greatest, justices, and a lot of great judges."
        - "We had a very brilliant, I don't know the judge, but a fair and very brilliant judge [Judge Aileen Cannon], who took tremendous abuse. Would've been so easy for her to just rule against me. But she didn't do that. She threw out the whole case. It was thrown out. That was a big case. And I have such respect for her, because she is, in fact, brilliant. But they were hitting her so hard. 'She's going too slow. She's not, she should be removed immediately from office.' These people are horrible. I really think it's illegal, what they do with judges and justices. They're playing the ref. No different than Bobby Knight. … But we can't let these radical left thugs constantly scream at our judges."
        - That Sen. Chuck Schumer should have been jailed for his comments about Supreme Court Justice Kavanaugh, "but he got lucky."
        - He added: "So, remember the term, 'playing the ref' with our judges and our justices should be punishable by very serious fines and beyond that."
    - April 11, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Crooked Joe Biden and his crew of Hacks and Thugs, led by Merrick Garland and Deranged Jack Smith, are working overtime to try to illegally intimidate and harass respected Federal Judge Aileen Cannon. They are calling her terrible names, wrongfully threatening her with Impeachment, and disrespecting her, all because they want her to act like the dishonest, politically biased, and conflicted Judges in New York, and not like the fair and impartial Judge that she is. These Persecutors are using Third World tactics in a corrupt ploy to 'play the ref.' However, no matter how hard he tries, Deranged Jack Smith will never be Coach Bobby Knight, a Basketball Legend for all time, who led the last undefeated team in College Basketball. Coach Knight would always "play the refs," but not to change the last call, to change the next one…."

- Trump has expressed support for executing high-ranking American government officials, and while in office he used the levers of government to harass and intimidate his political opponents.
    - On Jan. 6, 2021, Trump expressed support for the January 6th rioters who were chanting, "hang Mike Pence," including commenting that Pence "deserve[d]" it.
    - Trump rebuked then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley's proper attempts to quell potential conflict between the U.S. and China as "treasonous" and once punishable by death.
        - Sept. 23, 2023, Truth Social, in response to intelligence suggesting that China believed the U.S. planned to attack it, General Milley made two backchannel phone calls, in October 2020 and on Jan. 8, 2021, to China's top general, Li Zuocheng, attempting to offer reassurances. Trump later posted about Milley, "This guy turned out to be a Woke train wreck who, if the Fake News reporting is correct, was actually dealing with China to give

them a heads up on the thinking of the President of the United States. This is an act so egregious that, in times gone by, the punishment would have been DEATH! A war between China and the United States could have been the result of this treasonous act.

- Several MAGA acolytes, including those working on the transition team and to serve in Trump's administration, have explicitly or implicitly advocated for aggressive, targeted against Trump's perceived adversaries.
    - As noted in *Section I*, Trump's administration picks for law enforcement leadership, including Kash Patel and Pam Bondi, reflect his vision of targeting perceived foes.
        - In his book "Government Gangsters," Patel lists in an appendix, "Members of the Executive Branch Deep State," 60 figures, described by media reports as an "enemies list." He calls the deep state a "cabal of unelected tyrants" and "the most dangerous threat to our democracy." He also calls for eradicating "government tyranny" within the FBI by firing top ranks and prosecuting those who "abused their authority for political ends" to "the fullest extent of the law;" prosecuting those who "manipulated evidence" or "hid exculpatory information" during the Russia investigation; stripping security clearances from individuals across the FBI, DOJ, CIA, military, and private sector; and revoking the clearances of 51 intelligence officials who dismissed the Hunter Biden laptop story. Patel often attacks the media, which he has vowed to target for allegedly helping Joe Biden "rig presidential elections."
        - As Trump's pick for Attorney General and a "longtime Trump loyalist," Bondi has vowed to "clean house" at the DOJ, asserting, "now we know who most of them are" and "there's a record of it." She has criticized certain DOJ prosecutors as "horrible" people and endorsed prosecuting the "bad ones." Bondi has also advocated for investigations targeting those who conducted prior probes into Trump, frequently referencing the so-called "Deep State" in her remarks. Her unwavering loyalty to Trump was evident when she publicly supported a "lock her up" placard aimed at Hillary Clinton, drawing enthusiastic chants from the crowd.
    - Other Trump picks for key positions in his administration have aggressively called for sweeping targeted action against political opponents and institutions. Stephen Miller, tapped as deputy chief of staff for policy, has demanded prosecuting President Biden and Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas, subpoenaing Vice President Kamala Harris for allegedly covering up Biden's health concerns, and urged Republicans to go "toe-to-toe" with their opponents. Peter Navarro, Trump's incoming senior trade adviser, pledged to pursue impeachment and legal actions against Democratic leaders. (He was later jailed for contempt of Congress). Additionally, Elon Musk, set to co-lead Trump's proposed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), and RFK Jr., tapped to head the Department of

Health and Human Services (HHS), have called for prosecuting Dr. Anthony Fauci for alleged misconduct.

- Trump allies have continued to make threats against perceived opponents since Election Day 2024:
  - Since Election Day 2024, Republican lawmakers serving on influential congressional oversight committees have suggested using congressional investigations, in tandem with contempt actions by a Trump-led DOJ, as a strategy to pursue political opponents, including former government officials. Experts have warned that unlike criminal subpoenas, constrained by judicial oversight and defined limits, congressional subpoenas operate without such restrictions, enabling far-reaching investigations with minimal checks on their expansive reach.
    - On November 20, 2024, *Roll Call* reported:
      - Chair of the House Oversight Committee James R. Comer "said he's heard rounds of complaints from his fellow conservatives that the DOJ did not act on the contempt referral of Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. 'Well, the reason is we haven't had a fair Department of Justice. Now we have a fair Department of Justice[.]'" Comer said, "the only way we're going to see accountability from all the investigations that Jim Jordan and I have done over the past two years is if the Trump Department of Justice takes the criminal referrals and prosecutes people for being held in contempt of Congress." He added, "I think the American people saw that. I think the American people believed that there was a two-tiered system of justice, and that's why they voted for Trump in such large numbers," Comer said.
      - "Rep. Clay Higgins, R-La., said he hopes that the new Justice Department will aid in investigating what he thinks is criminal conduct by current Biden administration officials even after they have left the administration. 'They think it is going to be a peaceful retirement, it is not going to be a peaceful retirement," Higgins said of outgoing administrative officials.'"
      - Rep. Jim Jordan "said he intends for the House Judiciary Committee to continue its probe of special counsel John L. 'Jack' Smith's office in the new Congress, as well as that of special counsel David Weiss, who has shepherded the probe of Joe Biden's son Hunter."... "Jordan also said he intends to have the committee continue its probes of Biden administration officials' actions around social media, as well as the special counsels appointed to investigate Biden and Trump. 'We're still concerned about the censorship and what took place in the Biden administration, so we'll

continue that work,' Jordan said. Jordan said he intends to continue probes into the 'weaponization' of the federal government, pointing to reports of Federal Emergency Management Agency staff allegedly being directed to avoid homes with Trump signs outside of them[.]"

    - "Rep. Ben Cline, R-Va., a House Judiciary Committee member, said he looks forward to working with Trump officials 'to make sure we get rid of any individuals who are pursuing lawfare against conservatives or Republicans, and return the Justice Department to the independent institution that it has been for so long.'"

- Since Election Day, Trump allies, including some of Trump's administration picks and Republican lawmakers, have called for aggressive action against Dr. Anthony Fauci. (Further below we document below threats made against Dr. Fauci prior to November 5, 2024.)
    - Nov. 20, 2024, Musk amplified a post that called for Fauci to be investigated.

    - Nov. 19, 2024, Musk reshared a post that called for the arrest "EVIL Dr. Fauci."
    - Nov. 12, 2024, Rep. Majorie Taylor Greene wrote on X, "I told Dr. Fauci to his face that he should be in jail and prosecuted for crimes against humanity. Well, we might finally get the chance…"
    - Nov. 12, 2024, Musk wrote on X: "My pronouns are still prosecute/Fauci"
- Steve Bannon, deeply linked to Trump, is a central figure in advocating retribution against Trump's and his personal perceived enemies.

- Nov. 13, 2024, during an edition of *War Room: Battleground*, Steve Bannon expressed strong intentions to pursue legal action against media outlets and individuals critical of Donald Trump.

  > "Weissmann, you were on TV with MSNBC and all the producers at MSNBC, preserve your documents. Ari Melber and all you hosts, preserve your documents. All of it. You better be worried and you better lawyer up. Some of you young producers, better call mom and dad tonight — hey mom and dad, you know a good lawyer? Lawyer up. Lawyer up. You tried to destroy Trump, you tried to imprison Trump, you tried to break Trump. He's not breakable. You couldn't destroy him and now he is turned on you and he's put a firebrand in charge of main justice, Department of Justice. And you're going to have to live it with — Andrew Weissmann and all your kind — McCabe and Comey. Oh my lord.
  >
  > …
  >
  > [Weissmann,] you better man up, bro. Because you got a bunch of tough years ahead of you. As many people as MSNBC and CNN. … The hunted now become the hunters, yep. With the full apparatus — but here's the difference, here's the difference, here's the difference. It's going to be totally transparent. It's going to start with the mass declassification of all this information we've been keeping back from the American people, shouldn't keep it back. American people should understand that, should see it, and see what you've done. It's going to be fully transparent, all of it, and all of the interconnections. Norm Eisen and all these NGOs, and you know, and Reid Hoffman is all worried. You better be worried. You big billionaire donors, you better be worried. You better lawyer up. You should be worried. And these phony NGOs … what you did to try to destroy people, you should be worried. And the politicians that work with them. And the Justice Department Lawyers. And Weissmann, you, and Comey and all those guys. Brennan, the 51 that signed the phone letter, that knew about it."

- Nov. 6, 2024, as he reacted to news that Trump had won the election, Steve Bannon said, "You stole the 2020 election. You've mocked and ridiculed and put people in prison and broken people's lives because you said this thing was stolen. This entire phony thing is getting swept out. Biden's getting swept out. Kamala Harris

is getting swept out. MSNBC is getting swept out. The Justice Department is getting swept out. The FBI is getting swept out. You people suck, okay?! And now you're going to pay the price for trying to destroy this country. … You don't deserve any respect, you don't deserve any empathy, and you don't deserve any pity. … And you deserve, as Natalie Winters says, not retribution, justice. But you deserve what we call rough Roman justice, and we're prepared to give it to you."

- Mike Davis is a conservative Republican lawyer, former Senate aide, and founder of the Article III Project, a group focused on appointing conservative judges. He is among Trump "chief legal" defenders, and advising the transition team on DOJ matters. He often makes threats against the perceived left.
    - Nov. 7, 2024, Benny Johnson podcast, Mike Davis, who is advising the transition team on DOJ issues, said on New York AG James, "Let me just say this to Big Tish James, the New York Attorney General, I dare you, I dare you to try to continue your lawfare against President Trump in his second term, because listen here, sweetheart, we're not messing around this time, and we will put your fat ass in prison for conspiracy against rights. And I promise you that. So think long and hard before you want to violate President Trump's constitutional rights or any other American's constitutional rights. It's not going to happen again." On Jack Smith, he said: "Need an attorney general who's going to go over there and clean house. And get rid of these partisan actors. Like Jack Smith who should be fired on day one, on January 20 at noon, his entire office should get fired. … Right now you're the hunter. After today, Jack Smith, you're going to be the hunted: legally, politically and financially. So lawyer up, buddy!"
        - "We're not messing around this time, right, so proceed accordingly," he said to Democrat "prosecutors" and "hellholes."
    - Nov. 7, 2024 Newsmax interview, Mike Davis told "Big Tish James" that she "better be careful because when you politicize and weaponize law enforcement against your political enemies, you are engaged in a very serious federal civil rights felony called 'conspiracy against rights' under 18 U.S.C. Section 241. And I can imagine that the Trump 47 Justice Department is going to have any patience for this Democrat lawfare over the next four years."
    - Nov. 7, 2024, X post, Mike Davis said, "Trump's opponents attempted to bankrupt him for non-fraud. And imprison him for life for non-crimes. And take him off the ballot. And take off his head. Now they want 'unity'? Fuck them. Let's unify them in prison."

- Nov. 7, 2024 Newsmax interview, Mike Davis said Smith “should go to prison for engaging in a criminal conspiracy against President Trump.” Smith “certainly should go to hell,” Davis added.
- Nov. 7, 2024, X post, Mike Davis wrote: “Big Tish James needs to step away from the cameras and really reflect on how she violated the law by weaponizing the justice system against her political enemies. This isn't a game any of these Democrat prosecutors want to play with the incoming Trump administration.”
- Nov. 6, 2024, X post, Mike Davis wrote: “Here's my current mood: I want to drag their dead political bodies through the streets, burn them, and throw them off the wall. (Legally, politically, and financially, of course.)”
- Nov. 5, 2024. X post, Mike Davis said, “Dear Jack Smith: Lawyer up.”

○ Amid the numerous investigations into Trump, his allies have consistently made threats against those they allege responsible.

■ Following Trump’s conviction in New York for falsifying business records, several of his allies issued threats against his perceived political enemies.

- June 5, 2024, Mike Davis called for a counter-investigation into those prosecuting Trump, likening it to the Justice Department’s Durham investigation under Trump. “The Republican attorneys general in Georgia and Florida and the county attorney in Maricopa County, Ariz., need to open investigations into the prosecutors and investigators pursuing the indictments of Mr. Trump and his allies,” Davis said, adding, “Then on Day 1, when he wins, President Trump needs to open a criminal civil rights investigation.”
- May 31, 2024, Stephen Miller issued a fervent call to action on Fox News. “Is every House committee controlled by Republicans using its subpoena power in every way it needs to right now?” he demanded. “Is every Republican DA starting every investigation they need to right now?” He declared, “Every facet of Republican Party politics and power has to be used right now to go toe-to-toe with Marxism and beat these Communists.”
- May 31, 2024, Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), Trump’s nominee to lead the State Department, stated, “Our current President is a demented man propped up by wicked and deranged people willing to destroy our country to remain in power.” He added that it was now time to “fight fire with fire,” punctuating his statement with flame emojis to symbolize the fire.
- May 31, 2024, Laura Loomer appeared on the podcast "Timcast IRL." During the discussion, she stated, “Not just jail, they should get the death penalty,” referring to Democrats she accused of treason. This comment led to the abrupt termination of the live broadcast.

- May 30, 2024, Jeffrey Clark, a former DOJ official involved in Trump's 2020 election subversion efforts, urged "brave district attorneys in the United States to step forward and to take aggressive action." He advocated for filing civil rights lawsuits against those who prosecuted Trump to seek monetary damages.
- May 30, 2024, Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-TX) and close Trump ally, declared on the pro-Trump network Newsmax, "President Biden should just be ready because on Jan. 20 of next year, when he's former President Joe Biden, what's good for the goose is good for the gander." Jackson added, "I am going to encourage all of my colleagues and everybody that I have any influence over as a member of Congress to aggressively go after the president and his entire family, his entire crime family, for all of the misdeeds that are out there right now related to this family."

■ Members of the House Select Committee investigating the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol have faced numerous threats, as have those who provided testimony or cooperation with the committee's investigations.

- June 2, 2022, during an appearance on MSNBC's *The Beat* with Ari Melber, Trump's incoming senior trade adviser Peter Navarro—later jailed for contempt after failing to comply with a January 6 committee subpoena—pledged to target President Joe Biden, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and members of the January 6 committee if Republicans win the 2024 presidential election. Navarro vowed to push to issue subpoenas and pursue impeachment against Biden for "Ukraine, the southern border, [and] all manner of things he is guilty of." "You bet your ass that I will lead the charge," Navarro said, describing Democratic leaders as "clowns and kangaroos" and promising to "hit them back harder" in retaliation for their actions.
- May 31, 2022, in a lawsuit Navarro filed (and later dropped) against January 6th Committee members, he stated, "In this case, if the Committee and Joe Biden are able to pull this deadly game off and effectively establish the principle that an incumbent can strip his predecessor of both executive privilege and testimonial immunity, just imagine what will happen to Joe Biden and his advisers if Republicans win both the White House and House in 2024. In fact, I don't need to imagine this repeat of the strategic game. If I'm not dead or in prison. I will 'tit for tat' lead the charge." (emphasis in original). He repeated the threat elsewhere in his complaint.
- Republican members of Congress sought to thwart the Committee's evidence-gathering efforts, threatening retaliation against those who complied with its requests for records and documents. For example, some issued warnings to

telecommunications and social media companies who had received requests to preserve records related to the January 6 Capitol attack, including the records of Andy Biggs (AZ), Paul Gosar (AZ), Lauren Boebert (CO), Marjorie Taylor Greene (GA), Jody B. Hice (GA), Mo Brooks (AL), Madison Cawthorn (NC), Matt Gaetz (FL), Louie Gohmert (TX), Jim Jordan (OH), and Scott Perry (PA).

- August 31, 2021, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy warned in a statement on X (then Twitter) that if these companies complied with the committee's request, a future Republican majority "will not forget" their actions. "If these companies comply with the Democrat order to turn over private information, they are in violation of federal law and subject to losing their ability to operate in the United States," he said, adding, "If companies still choose to violate federal law, a Republican majority will not forget and will stand with Americans to hold them fully accountable under the law."
- Aug. 31, 2021, Greene told Fox News, "[T]hese cell phone companies, these telecommunications companies, they better not play with these Democrats because Republicans are coming back into the majority in 2022 and we will take this very serious. . . . [T]hese telecommunications companies, if they go along with this they will be shut down and that's a promise."
  - *CREW* filed an ethics complaint against McArthy and Greene for their statements, arguing that threatening retaliation for complying with lawful document demands violates 18 U.S.C. § 1505.
- At the beginning of September 2021, the 11 House Republicans being investigated by the Committee sent letters to telecommunications and social media companies threatening legal action against telecommunications and social media companies that complied with the Committee's records request. The letters, sent to companies like AT&T, Verizon, Facebook, Google, and Twitter, urged them to decline the request to preserve data related to Capitol riot defendants, warning that lawmakers would "pursue all legal remedies."

- Aug. 9, 2022, Sen.Rick Scott released a statement following the FBI's search of Mar-a-Lago, which read in part: "When Republicans retake the majority in the Senate, there will be a thorough and aggressive investigation. Everything needs to be on the table for AG Garland, including impeachment if he doesn't come out today and explain what happened. Today, the nation is watching and we demand answers."

- Steve Bannon has repeatedly called for the prosecution of those he believes have opposed Trump, invoking the concept of "Roman justice" during a livestream on election night. His extensive list of targets includes Special Counsel Jack Smith, President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, media outlets, the Department of Justice, Dr. Anthony Fauci, and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley, among others. In fact, he had made threats against an author of this tracker, "Norm Eisen and all these NGOs," who he warned "better be worried. You big billionaire donors, you better be worried. You better lawyer up. You should be worried."
    - June 2024, in a text message to The New York Times, Bannon called on Republican prosecutors nationwide to distinguish themselves by initiating legal actions against Democrats. He stated, "There are dozens of ambitious backbencher state attorneys general and district attorneys who need to 'seize the day' and own this moment in history."
    - June 2024, *War Room* podcast, Bannon said that Andrew McCabe is "damn scared because he understands the end is near."
    - December 2023, Bannon, speaking with Kash Patel on the War Room podcast, said, "the deep state … is going to be taken apart brick by brick, and the people that did these evil deeds will be held accountable and prosecuted, criminal prosecutions." He suggested that in Trump's "first couple of months," prosecutions will "get rolling." When asked about his plans as CIA Director in the first few months of a potential Trump administration, Patel didn't hold back, warning:

        > "Yes, we got the bench for it, Bannon, and you know those guys. I'm not gonna go out there and say their names right now so the radical left media can terrorize them. … The one thing we learned in the Trump administration the first go-round is we've got to put in all America patriots, top to bottom. And we've got them for law enforcement. We got them for intel collection. We get them for offensive operations, [Defense Department], CIA, everywhere. … We will go out and find the conspirators not just in government but in the media. Yes, we are going to come after the people in the media who lied about American citizens, who helped Joe Biden rig presidential elections. We're going to come after you, whether it's criminally or civilly, we'll figure that out … We're putting you all on notice."
- MAGA supporters, joined by some of Trump's administration picks and Republican lawmakers, have long called for targeted action against Dr. Anthony Fauci, often citing his role during the COVID-19 pandemic.
    - Aug. 16, 2024, Musk wrote on X: "My pronouns are Prosecute/Fauci. I feel so unrepresented!"
    - June 3, 2024, during a House subcommittee hearing on the US response to the coronavirus pandemic, Greene said Fauci "belongs in prison."

        - June 3, 2024, Laura Loomer wrote on X, “Dr. Fauci is a criminal and needs to be treated like one.”
        - May 17, 2024, Musk wrote on X:”Prosecute/Fauci”
        - April 2024, RFK Jr., on the The Glenn Beck Podcast, said, “Well he’s not in jail because Joe Biden is president.”
        - July 2023, Fox News, RFK Jr., who Trump has picked to serve as his secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, said: “If there were crimes that he committed, of course, I would tell the attorney general to prosecute him, not hold off,”
        - Dec. 11, 2022, Musk wrote on X, “As for Fauci, he lied to Congress and funded gain-of-function research that killed millions of people. Not awesome imo.”
        - Dec. 11, 2022, Musk wrote on X (then Twitter): "My pronouns are Prosecute/Fauci".
        - Dec. 5, 2022, Rep. Ted Cruz wrote: "Dr. Fauci flat-out lied to Congress. Yet Merrick Garland and the Biden DOJ won't prosecute."

- Trump’s words and actions suggest he would interfere with or stop prosecutions of his political allies, as well as pardon others.
    - As we detail above, one of Trump’s day one promises is to release from prison January 6th rioters sentenced to prison terms for their involvement in the Capitol Attack. He views many as “hostages” and “wrongfully imprisoned” and has said that he will also pardon many of them.
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said:
        - “The moment we win, we will rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner unjustly victimized by the Harris regime, and I will sign their pardons on day one.”
        - “I will end forever the weaponization of government and the abuse of law enforcement against political opponents under comrade Kamala. … People like Steve Bannon and Peter Navarro—good people were locked up for following the advice of their lawyers. … We expose their corruption. They go after the people that expose, not the people that do the corruption.”
    - July 26, 2024, Turning Point Action summit, FL, Trump said: “From the moment I win the election I will rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner who has been unjustly victimized by the Biden-Harris regime so we can get them out of prison and back to their families where they belong. There’s many of them out there.”
    - June 22, 2024, Faith and Freedom Coalition’s “Road to Majority,” Washington, DC, Trump said, “We will rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner who’s unjustly victimized by the Biden regime … so we can get them out of the gulags and back to their families where they belong.”
    - May 25, 2024, Libertarian Party National Convention, Washington DC, Trump said: “Right now, the Biden DOJ is trying to put Christians in prison for 11 years for

the crime of singing hymns. The moment I win the election, I will appoint a special task force to rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner who has been unjustly persecuted by the Biden administration, so that I can sign their pardons or commutations on day one."

- Sept. 15, 2023, "Pray, Vote, Stand Summit," Washington, DC, Trump revealed his plan to establish a special task force to "rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner" with the goal of issuing pardons and commutations on day one. Trump said: "To reverse these cruel travesties of justice, tonight I'm announcing that the moment I win the election, I will appoint a special task force to rapidly review the cases of every political prisoner who's been unjustly persecuted by the Biden administration. … Well, you know what's going on better than anybody, so that I can study the situation very quickly and sign their pardons or commutations on day one. I want to sign them on day one. I want to see what's going on. It's a horrible thing that's happening, 22 years, 18 years, 10 years."
- Trump harshly criticized the prosecutions of political allies Paul Manafort, his former campaign chairman, and campaign adviser Roger Stone. He later pardoned Manafort for bank and tax fraud, and he commuted Stone's sentence for lying to Congress, obstruction of justice, and witness tampering, to name just a few examples.

- As president, Trump tried to influence DOJ investigations despite knowing that he was not supposed to do so. A *Just Security* analysis found that Trump, while serving as president, repeatedly pushed—no fewer than a dozen times—for the prosecution of individuals he perceived as enemies.
  - Mueller Investigation. Trump has repeatedly accused former President Barack Obama of treason, specifically alleging that Obama was involved in initiating and supporting the Mueller investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election. Trump has also accused Hillary Clintion and President Biden of treason, alleging that Biden, while serving as vice president, was involved in spying on Trump's 2016 campaign. He publicly demanded the DOJ investigate the FBI for its investigation into his campaign's contacts with Russia. *CREW* analysis found that from February to September 2020, Trump referenced 50-year jail sentences for what he perceived as crimes by President Obama and others related to the Russia investigation, mentioning this at least eight times in tweets and public statements.
    - Oct. 8, 2020, Fox Business interview, Trump said: "Unless Bill Barr indicts these people for crimes, the greatest political crime in the history of our country, then we're going to get little satisfaction unless I win and we'll just have to go, because I won't forget it. But these people should be indicted, this was the greatest political crime in the history of our country and that includes Obama and it includes Biden."
    - Oct. 7, 2020, Twitter post, Trump wrote: "Obama, Biden, Crooked Hillary and many others got caught in a Treasonous Act of Spying and

Government Overthrow, a Criminal Act. How is Biden now allowed to run for President?"

- Oct. 7, 2020, Twitter post, Trump wrote: "Wow!!! NOW DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS, THE BIGGEST OF ALL POLITICAL SCANDALS (IN HISTORY)!!! BIDEN, OBAMA AND CROOKED HILLARY LED THIS TREASONOUS PLOT!!! BIDEN SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO RUN - GOT CAUGHT!!!"
- July 19, 2020, Twitter post, Trump wrote: "So we catch Obama & Biden, not to even mention the rest of their crew, SPYING on my campaign, AND NOTHING HAPPENS? I hope not! If it were the other way around, 50 years for treason. NEVER FORGET!!!!"
- May 17, 2020, Twitter post, Trump wrote: "My Campaign for President was conclusively spied on. Nothing like this has ever happened in American Politics. A really bad situation. TREASON means long jail sentences, and this was TREASON!"
- March 27, 2019, Sean Hannity interview, Trump said: "They wanted to do a subversion. It was treason. It was really treason. If the Republican Party had done this to the Democrats, if we had done this to President Obama, you'd have 100 people in jail right now and it would be treason. It would be considered treason and they'd be in jail for the rest of their lives." He later added: "We can never allow this treasonous -- these treasonous acts to happen to another president. This was an attempted takeover of our government, of our country, an illegal takeover. If it were the other way around, where I was doing it to President Obama or a Democrat, it would be virtually the maximum sentence that you can find no matter where you look in whatever legal book.
- In late November 2018, as Special Counsel Mueller's team was reportedly working on its final report into into ties between the Trump campaign and Russia, Trump retweeted an image from a pro-Trump Twitter account, which depicted several figures he had criticized, including former President Obama, Hillary Clinton, Robert Mueller, James Comey, and Bill Clinton, behind bars. The image, later deleted, suggested they should be tried for treason.

- May 20, 2018, Twitter: "I hereby demand, and will do so officially tomorrow, that the Department of Justice look into whether or not the FBI/DOJ infiltrated or surveilled the Trump Campaign for Political Purposes - and if any such demands or requests were made by people within the Obama Administration!"

- He publicly called for an investigation into Nancy Pelosi and her alleged links to Russia.
  - March 3, 2017, Twitter: "I hereby demand a second investigation, after Schumer, of Pelosi for her close ties to Russia, and lying about it."
- In March 2017, he publicly ridiculed Attorney General Jeff Sessions for recusing himself from the Russia investigation and asked him to reverse his decision.
- In the summer of 2017, Trump asked Sessions to "reverse his recusal so that Sessions could direct the Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute Hillary Clinton" (Mueller Report).
- He claimed the Mueller investigation was "an illegal investigation" and that "there never should have been a special counsel."
- He called for the Justice Department to investigate Hillary Clinton for "all of the dishonesty."
  - Nov. 3, 2017, Twitter, Trump said: "Everybody is asking why the Justice Department (and FBI) isn't looking into all of the dishonesty going on with Crooked Hillary & the Dems. New Donna B book says she paid for and stole the Dem Primary." "At some point the Justice Department, and the FBI, must do what is right and proper. The American public deserves it!"

        - In April 2018, Trump told White House counsel Donald McGahn that he wanted the Justice Department to prosecute Clinton.
    - He urged FBI Director James Comey to drop an investigation into Michael Flynn, his first National Security Advisor and staunch political ally.
    - Trump understood he was not supposed to get involved with Justice Department investigations: "[B]ecause I am the President of the United States, I am not supposed to be involved with the Justice Department. I'm not supposed to be involved with the FBI. I'm not supposed to be doing the kind of things I would love to be doing and I am very frustrated by it."

- Trump claimed in an interview with *The New York Times* in December 2017 to have "an absolute right to do what I want with the Justice Department."

- Trump has signaled he would curb the independence of the Department of Justice and FBI. (See above at *Section I*)

- Trump has also said he would consider firing a U.S. Attorney that does not follow his orders to prosecute a particular person.
    - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Asked if he would fire a U.S. Attorney for not following orders to prosecute someone, Trump said, "It depends on the situation, honestly."

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IX. Draconian Abortion Access Crackdown

- Trump has previously signaled his support for a national abortion ban.
    - Feb. 16, 2024: Trump reportedly said in a private conversation that such a ban would prohibit abortions starting at 16 weeks, "Know what I like about 16? It's even. It's four months."
    - During his Senate campaign in January 2022, JD Vance expressed support for a national abortion ban, saying it was necessary to prevent women, particularly Black women, from traveling to different states to have abortions. The podcast interview—hosted by a X user he follows, who advocates for putting "misogynists back in the Oval Office" and opposes the normalization of consent—is a significant shift from his more recent stance aligning with Trump's belief that abortion decisions should be left to the states. "I certainly would like abortion to be illegal nationally," Vance said. He further said: "Let's say Roe v. Wade is overruled. Ohio bans abortion…in…2024. And then…every day, George Soros sends a 747 to Columbus to load up disproportionately Black women to get them to go have abortions in California. And of course, the left will celebrate this as a victory for diversity…That's kind of creepy…If that happens, do you need some federal response to prevent it from happening, because it's really creepy? And, you know, I'm pretty sympathetic to that, actually."

- In a 4 minute video posted on Truth Social at the beginning of April, Trump said that abortion restrictions should be left to the states to decide.
    - April 8, 2024: “Under my leadership, the Republican Party will always support the creation of strong, thriving and healthy American families. We want to make it easier for mothers and families to have babies, not harder. That includes supporting the availability of fertility treatments like IVF in every state in America. Like the overwhelming majority of Americans, including the vast majority of Republicans, conservatives, Christians and pro-life Americans, I strongly support the availability of IVF for couples who are trying to have a precious baby. What could be more beautiful or better than that. Today I’m pleased that the Alabama Legislature has acted very quickly and passed legislation that preserves the availability of IVF in Alabama. They really did a great and fast job. The Republican Party should always be on the side of the miracle of life and the side of mothers, fathers, their beautiful babies, and that’s what we are. IVF is an important part of that, and our great Republican Party will always be with you in your quest for the ultimate joy in life. Many people have asked me what my position is on abortion and abortion rights, especially since I was proudly the person responsible for the ending of something that all legal scholars, both sides, wanted and, in fact, demanded be ended: Roe v. Wade. They wanted it ended. It must be remembered that the Democrats are the radical ones on this position because they support abortion up to and even beyond the ninth month. The concept of having an abortion in the later months, and even execution after birth — and that’s exactly what it is. The baby is born, the baby is executed after birth — is unacceptable, and almost everyone agrees with that. My view is now that we have abortion where everybody wanted it from a legal standpoint. The states will determine by vote or legislation or perhaps both, and whatever they decide must be the law of the land. In this case, the law of the state. Many states will be different. Many will have a different number of weeks or some will have more conservative than others, and that’s what they will be. At the end of the day this is all about the will of the people. You must follow your heart, or in many cases your religion or your faith. Do what’s right for your family and do what’s right for yourself, do what’s for your children, do what’s right for our country, and vote. So important to vote. At the end of the day it’s all about will of the people. That’s where we are right now, and that’s what we want. The will of the people. I want to thank the six justices — Chief Justice John Roberts, Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, Brett Kavanaugh, Amy Coney Barrett and Neil Gorsuch — incredible people, for having the courage to allow this long-term, hard-fought battle to finally end. This 50 year battle over Roe v. Wade took it out of the federal hands and brought it into the hearts, minds and vote of the people in each state. It was really something. Now it’s up to the states to do the right thing. Like Ronald Reagan, I am strongly in favor of exceptions for rape, incest and life of the mother. You must follow your heart on this issue, but remember, you must also win elections to restore our culture and in fact to have our country, which is currently and very sadly a nation in decline. Our

nation needs help. It needs unity, it needs all of us to work closely together. Democrat, Republican, liberal, conservative, everyone. We have to work together. We have to bring our nation back from the brink, and that's where it is. It's at the brink. And we will. We will do it. I promise you, we will do it. Always go by your heart, but we must win. We have to win. We are a failing nation, but we can be a failing nation no longer. We will make our nation great. We will make our nation greater than ever before. Thank you very much."

- Trump refused to say he would veto federal abortion restrictions.
    - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: When asked about if he would commit to vetoing a bill restricting abortion Trump said, But you have to remember this: There will never be that chance because it won't happen. You're never going to have 60 votes. You're not going to have it for many, many years, whether it be Democrat or Republican. Right now, it's essentially 50-50. I think we have a chance to pick up a couple, but a couple means we're at 51 or 52. We have a long way to go. So it's not gonna happen, because you won't have that. Okay. But with all of that being said, it's all about the states, it's about state rights. States' rights. States are going to make their own determination.
    - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Trump also said "I won't have to commit to it because it'll never—number one, it'll never happen. Number two, it's about states' rights. You don't want to go back into the federal government. This was all about getting out of the federal government. And this was done, Eric, because of—this was done, this issue, has been simplified greatly over the last one week. This is about and was originally about getting out of the federal government. The last thing you want to do is go back into the federal government. And the states are just working their way through it. Look at Ohio. Ohio passed something that people were a little surprised at. Kansas, I mean, places that are conservative and big Trump states, I mean, Ohio and way up Kansas, all these states, but they passed what they want to pass. It's about states rights."

- *The New York Times* has assessed that "Allies of former President Donald J. Trump and officials who served in his administration are planning ways to restrict abortion rights if he returns to power that would go far beyond proposals for a national ban or the laws enacted in conservative states across the country."
    - According to *The New York Times*, "Some of their proposals would rely on enforcing the Comstock Act." Leaders of the effort include "Jonathan F. Mitchell, the legal force behind a 2021 Texas law that found a way to effectively ban abortion in the state." Mitchell, who represented Mr. Trump before the Supreme Court in the Colorado ballot case, "indicated that anti-abortion strategists had purposefully been quiet about their more advanced plans, given the political liability the issue has become for Republicans."
    - "[T]he plans described by former Trump administration officials, allies and supporters propose circumventing Congress and leveraging the regulatory powers of federal institutions, including the Department of Health and Human Services,

the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Justice and the National Institutes of Health."

- The Project 2025 agenda would roll back abortion access expansions under the Biden administration and go even further by restricting abortion medication.
    - Project 2025 also proposes using the Comstock Act of 1873 to ban mail delivery of abortion pills.
    - Project 2025 proposes holding doctors criminally liable for sending abortion pills and patients criminally liable for using the pills.
    - Project 2025 proposes an executive order that would roll back a Biden-era policy allowing some VA hospitals to offer the procedure.
    - Project 2025 proposes rolling back the expansion of HIPAA privacy rules to cover abortions.

- Trump took credit for overturning *Roe v. Wade* and helping states institute abortion bans.
    - May 17, 2023, Truth Social: "After 50 years of failure, with nobody coming even close, I was able to kill Roe v. Wade, much to the "shock" of everyone, and for the first time put the Pro Life movement in a strong negotiating position over the Radicals that are willing to kill babies even into their 9th month, and beyond. Without me there would be no 6 weeks, 10 weeks, 15 weeks, or whatever is finally agreed to. Without me the pro Life movement would have just kept losing. Thank you President TRUMP!!!"

- Anti-abortion groups with ties to Trump and the conservative movement have plans to use the presidency to limit abortion access.
    - Anti-abortion group Students for Life wants the EPA to label abortion pill mifepristone as a "forever chemical" to increase rules around its use.

- Trump has expressed support for punishing women that receive abortions, though he later walked back his comments.
    - March 30, 2016: Trump said in an interview that "there has to be some form of punishment" for women who receive abortions if it is banned.

- Trump would allow states to prosecute women for violating abortion bans.
    - April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: When asked if he was comfortable with women being prosecuted for violating abortion bans, Trump said, "The states are going to say. It's irrelevant whether I'm comfortable or not. It's totally irrelevant, because the states are going to make those decisions. And by the way, Texas is going to be different than Ohio. And Ohio is going to be different than Michigan. I see what's happening."

- Trump would allow states to monitor women's pregnancies to determine if they have received an abortion after a ban.

- April 12, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Asked if states should monitor women's pregnancies, Trump replied, "I think they might do that. Again, you'll have to speak to the individual states. Look, Roe v. Wade was all about bringing it back to the states. And that was a legal, as well as possibly in the hearts of some, in the minds of some, a moral decision. But it was largely a legal decision. Every legal scholar, Democrat, Republican, and other wanted that issue back at the states. You know, Roe v. Wade was always considered very bad law. Very bad. It was a very bad issue from a legal standpoint. People were amazed it lasted as long as it did. And what I was able to do is through the choice of some very good people who frankly were very courageous, the justices it turned out to be you know, the Republican—"

- Trump has signaled that his administration may support restrictions on birth control/ contraception.
  - May 21, 2024, KDKA-TV, asked if he supports "any restrictions on a person's right to contraception," Trumps said, "Well, we're looking at that and I'm going to have a policy on that very shortly. And I think it's something that you'll find interesting. And I'd see — it's another issue that's very interesting." he went on to say, "Things really do have a lot to do with the states, and some states are going to have different policy than others," before again stating that he would soon release "a very comprehensive policy" on the issue.
    - Later that evening in a post on Truth Social, Trump went back on his statement to interviewer XX: "I HAVE NEVER, AND WILL NEVER ADVOCATE IMPOSING RESTRICTIONS ON BIRTH CONTROL, or other contraceptives. This is a Democrat fabricated lie, MISINFORMATION/DISINFORMATION, because they have nothing else to run on except FAILURE, POVERTY, AND DEATH. I DO NOT SUPPORT A BAN ON BIRTH CONTROL, AND NEITHER WILL THE REPUBLICAN PARTY!"

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X. Rigging Elections and Promoting Harmful Election Conspiracy Theories

- Trump has spent much of the past three-plus years falsely claiming that the 2020 election was stolen and perpetrating baseless and harmful conspiracy theories about election fraud. Returning to the White House, he is likely to continue his assault on American elections. A *Washington Post* analysis of Trump's social media posts from 2016 through 2024 found that "above all, he persists in spreading lies about his 2020 election loss, deep into his campaign for another term." Between Nov. 15, 2022, and March 15, 2024, *The Post* recorded at least 500 posts by Trump referencing election denialism. His content on Truth Social has "help[ed] fuel a feedback loop of false conspiracy theories and misinformation — particularly around the 2020 presidential election," *The Post* reported.

    - If he were reelected as president, he has said that he would "go down and indict" a rival presidential contender to keep them "out of the election."

- Trump and his transition team are considering creating investigative teams within the Department of Justice to search for evidence of fraud in battleground states from the 2020 election, *The Washington Post* reported on November 22, 2024. These investigations could potentially be led by Trump-appointed U.S. attorneys in key battleground states or assigned to a dedicated DOJ task force or special counsel. While the plan is not yet well-developed and not reportedly as high a priority as Trump's broader aim of restructuring the Justice Department, officials in battleground states who defended the 2020 election results are preparing for the possibility of such investigations.

- On December 5, 2024, during a speech accepting the Fox Nation "Patriot of the Year" award, Trump stated, "We are gonna do things that have been really needed for a long time. And we are gonna look at elections. We wanna have paper ballots, one-day voting, voter ID, and proof of citizenship."

- Trump ally Cleta Mithchell is pushing to reform federal election laws, including the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).
    - Nov. 13, 2024, Cleta Mitchell interview, said that NVRA, HAVA, UOCAVA are all "very problematic … Congress needs to fix it. I'm working with people" in Congress. They need to be "modernized and updated."
    - Nov. 10, 2024, Cleta Mitchell, X post, "There must be a major overhaul of the 3 federal laws that have wreaked havoc on our elections: NVRA, HAVA, UOCAVA. Congress and courts have broken our election systems. Election Integrity Network volunteers have become citizen experts and we know what must be fixed by Congress."

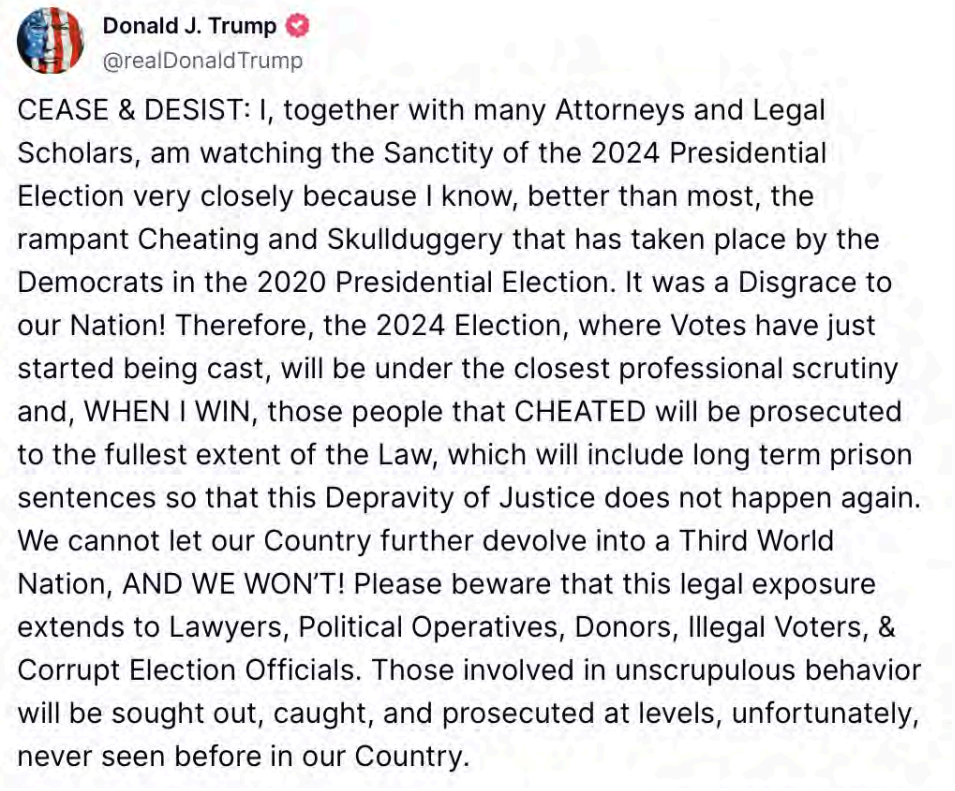
- For 2024, Trump and his allies, including those linked to Project 2025, ramped up his election integrity rhetoric and disinformation, insisting that cheating had already begun in the 2024 race, "laying the groundwork to challenge [the] 2024 election outcome." Efforts included tactics such as challenging voter rolls, initiating frivolous lawsuits, conducting baseless fraud investigations, intimidating voters, advancing partisan election rules and bills that seek to create alarm about noncitizen voting, and attempting to delay certification processes. Additionally, they pushed for flawed hand counts and stoking unfounded fears of illegal voting by non-citizens—all aimed at casting doubt on the integrity of the election.
    - To keep up-to-date on disinformation efforts, *see e.g.:* The 2024 Anti-Democracy Playbook (*American Oversight*); 2024 U.S. Election Misinformation Monitoring Center (*NewsGuard*); Misinformation Dashboard: Election 2024 (*News Literacy Project*).
    - New York University also offers a collection of useful information and resources from different organizations.

- Notably, during a press conference in Asheville, North Carolina, on October 21, 2024, Trump admitted that he had not seen any evidence of "cheating" indicating the 2024 election would not be fair. "I haven't," he said, adding, "Unfortunately, I know the other side, and they are not good. But I have not seen that." Trump then turned to RNC Chair Michael Whatley, asking if he'd seen anything "suspicious," while noting it's "still early in the [voting] process." Whatley replied that they were working to ensure "the systems we want to have in place are in place" across all 50 states and were "very happy with the initial results."

- According to the *Voting Rights Lab* litigation tracker, multiple states have enacted new laws aimed at restricting noncitizen voting, with numerous others currently considering additional restrictive measures

- A number of analyses have found that Trump, the GOP, and MAGA allies actively spread disinformation about the 2024 election.
    - An October 2024 analysis by *The Washington Post* revealed that nearly half of all Republican candidates for Congress or top state offices have used social media to question the integrity of the 2024 election. Between November 9, 2022, and October 11, 2024, at least 236 Republican candidates posted or promoted various falsehoods about the election. Two-thirds of these Republican candidates referenced noncitizen voting in connection with alleged election fraud in 2024, nearly half addressed Trump's ongoing legal troubles, while nearly a quarter framed Harris's nomination as a "coup" or an undemocratic move that disregarded the will of voters.
    - Elon Musk asserted without evidence that electronic voting machines are unreliable and should be "eliminated" and advocated for a return to hand-counting ballots. He has also spread deepfakes and other manipulated images. Musk's AI chatbot, Grok, available on X (formerly Twitter), contributed to misinformation by falsely informing users that the voting deadline had already passed in several states, as reported by *The Washington Post*.
        - CBS News and the *International Center for Journalists* collected over 48,000 of Musk's posts over the past four years and found that around 55% contained misleading or false statements regarding election security. According to their research, 40 of the accounts Musk replied to or reposted were identified as promoters of false claims. An analysis of approximately 17,000 of Musk's posts from 2024, including those he replied to or amplified, revealed 361 posts referencing election fraud. Each of these posts averaged 9.3 million views.
        - A study from the *Center for Countering Digital Hate* stated that between January 1 and July 31 2024, Elon Musk's 50 false or misleading claims about the U.S. election, debunked by independent fact-checkers, still reached nearly 1.2 billion views.

- The former president has threatened severe punishment if he returns to office, including long prison sentences, for those he accuses of election misconduct, listing targets such as “Lawyers, Political Operatives, Donors, Illegal Voters, & Corrupt Election Officials.” Indeed, Trump has persistently accused the Biden administration and Democrats of weaponizing the justice system as part of an “election interference” plot. He has also called on police officers to “watch” out for “voter fraud.”
    - Nov. 3, 2024, Lancaster County, PA, Trump said, “The ones that should be locked up are the ones that cheat on these horrible elections that we go through in our country."
    - Sept. 27, 2024, Truth Social, Trump wrote: “It has been determined that Google has illegally used a system of only revealing and displaying bad stories about Donald J. Trump, some made up for this purpose while, at the same time, only revealing good stories about Comrade Kamala Harris. This is an ILLEGAL ACTIVITY, and hopefully the Justice Department will criminally prosecute them for this blatant Interference of Elections. If not, and subject to the Laws of our Country, I will request their prosecution, at the maximum levels, when I win the Election, and become President of the United States!”
    - Since September 7, 2024, Trump has posted and reposted the exact same statement across Truth Social and X, warning that he and his team are vigilantly monitoring the 2024 election for any “fraud.” The message states that “those people that CHEATED will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law,” explicitly targeting lawyers, political operatives, donors, “illegal voters,” and election officials. Trump underscores that he, along with attorneys and legal scholars, is scrutinizing the election, asserting that those involved in “unscrupulous behavior” will face unprecedented legal consequences. The post reads:
        - “CEASE & DESIST: I, together with many Attorneys and Legal Scholars, am watching the Sanctity of the 2024 Presidential Election very closely because I know, better than most, the rampant Cheating and Skullduggery that has taken place by the Democrats in the 2020 Presidential Election. It was a Disgrace to our Nation! Therefore, the 2024 Election, where Votes have just started being cast, will be under the closest professional scrutiny and, WHEN I WIN, those people that CHEATED will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law, which will include long term prison sentences so that this Depravity of Justice does not happen again. We cannot let our Country further devolve into a Third World Nation, AND WE WON’T! Please beware that this legal exposure extends to Lawyers, Political Operatives, Donors, Illegal Voters, & Corrupt Election Officials. Those involved in unscrupulous behavior will be sought out, caught, and prosecuted at levels, unfortunately, never seen before in our Country.” (emphasis added)



- Sept. 6, 2024, Fraternal Order of Police address, Charlotte, N.C., Trump suggested that Democrats can only win the 2024 election by fraudulent means, and called on police officers to "[w]atch for the voter fraud, because we win without voter fraud." "And I hope you as the greatest people … I hope you watch for voter fraud. So it starts early. You know, it starts in a week. But I hope you can watch, and you're all over the place, watch for the voter fraud, because we win. Without voter fraud, we win so easily. Hopefully we're gonna win anyway. But we want to keep it down. You can keep it down just by watching, because, believe it or not, they're afraid of that badge. They're afraid of you people. They're afraid of that more than anything else. They're afraid. So, I hope you can watch."
  - As *The New York Times* noted, "If the police were to follow through on that appeal, their actions could conflict with multiple state laws and prompt accusations of voter intimidation."
- July 9, 2024, Truth Social, Trump threatened to "pursue Election Fraudsters at levels never seen before" and send them to "prison for long periods of time," name-checking Meta Platforms' Mark Zuckerberg as well as generally referring to cheating Democrats at "every level of government." He wrote: "Republicans must pass the Save Act, or go home and cry yourself to sleep. Non citizen Illegal Migrants are getting the right to vote, being pushed by crooked Democrat Politicians who are not being stopped by an equally dishonest Justice Department. Our whole voting system is under siege. Harmeet and David, go to court and get this stopped, NOW. The Dems can't win on their policies, the only

way they can win is to CHEAT. They do it at every level of government, and they do it well. That's how they get an incapacitated moron like Joe Biden elected. Get tough RNC (Michael W!), Speaker Johnson, and all State and Local Republican politicians. The Justice Department is CORRUPT and won't do a thing to help. They have no shame! All I can say is that if I'm elected President, we will pursue Election Fraudsters at levels never seen before, and they will be sent to prison for long periods of time. We already know who you are. DON'T DO IT! ZUCKERBUCKS, be careful!"

- March 2, 2024, Richmond, VA, Trump said: "But until then, Republicans must win. We have to win to get it done. And we won a landslide that is 'too big to rig, too big to rig.' That's what we need. Because they're going to be cheating and they're cheaters and we're gonna be watching them and we're gonna prosecute. We're gonna, if we get in, we're gonna catch them and we're gonna to do things that were never done before."
- February 26, 2023, Truth Social, Trump accused Meta Platforms' Mark Zuckerberg of election fraud and asked why he was not being prosecuted. "He cheated on the Election(s). The whole system is RIGGED. Why isn't he being prosecuted? The Democrats only know how to cheat. America isn't going to take it much longer!"

- A key lie driving doubt around the 2024 election—and laying the groundwork for future challenges—is the false claim that ineligible immigrants are, by design, voting in elections in numbers significant enough to impact the results. Our analysis shows th at Trump's allegations regarding immigrant voting trace back to as early as the midterm elections in October 2014, and he has continued to make such claims across the election cycles since. Indeed, the 2024 GOP platform states, "we must deport the millions of illegal Migrants who Joe Biden has deliberately encouraged to invade our Country. … We will implement measures to secure our Elections, including … proof of Citizenship … . We will not allow the Democrats to give Voting Rights to illegal Aliens." During his 2016 campaign and well into 2017, Trump repeatedly alleged that ineligible immigrants were casting votes. In 2020, as he attempted to challenge the election results, these claims resurfaced, reaching a peak on January 6, 2021, when his rally speech on The Ellipse included further assertions that "over 36,000 ballots were illegally cast by non-citizens" in Arizona. (As detailed below, Trump's baseless claims about voting in Arizona, as highlighted in Special Counsel Jack Smith's indictment, superseding indictment, and motion for "immunity determinations," were central to his broader attempt to overturn the 2020 election.)
  - In a November 2024 report, *The Big Lie of 2024 aka La Gran Mentira: Exposing Anti-Immigrant Election Lies*, the authors—State Democracy Defenders Action and, the nation's oldest Latino civil rights organization, LULAC— detail how Republicans are targeting Latino voters through disinformation about immigrant voting, calling it "The Second Big Lie." The report states, "The Second Big Lie is a disinformation campaign using falsehoods about immigrants to sow doubts about an election. It's a sad reboot of a very old story in U.S. politics: attacking

communities of color to suppress their vote. In this case, the narrative's power is rooted in reprehensible messaging on immigration: the falsehood around who is coming into this country and what they are doing." By debunking myths of ineligible immigrant voting, the report underscores extensive legal safeguards and minimal occurrences, with data proving such votes are so rare they have no impact on outcomes. It offers solutions like stronger legislation, public information campaigns, voter outreach, and legal measures to counter disinformation and reinforce confidence in election integrity.

- Despite consistent debunking and clear evidence that such voting is exceptionally rare, these baseless claims have only grown more intense. Since Trump's loss in 2020 and leading up to 2024, a broader network has steadily amplified and reinforced this narrative. Trump, his campaign, the GOP, and the wider MAGA network have repeatedly pushed these unfounded claims, portraying immigrant voting as a coordinated effort by Democrats and elites to dilute the white American population and strengthen electoral gains through increased non-white immigration. A *Washington Post* analysis of Trump's Truth Social media posts found that between Nov. 15, 2022, and March 15, 2024, "[s]ome of his posts about immigration also echo the 'great replacement theory.'" A *USA TODAY* review found, "At least three contributors to Project 2025 have supported the racist 'Great Replacement' theory." *The Marshall Project's* October 2024 review of Trump's public statements revealed he alleged that Democrats are registering noncitizens to vote on over 20 occasions.
- Today, claims of ineligible immigrant voting are bolstered by a wave of lawsuits by the GOP, including state officials, the RNC, and affiliated groups, aimed at challenging election results and shaping public perception around voter eligibility. So far, those seeking to spread lies through litigation and disenfranchise voters of color have been largely unsuccessful.
- Alongside these lawsuits, some Republican state and election officials have further amplified this narrative by asserting they have identified thousands of potential ineligible voters on the rolls, with some even referring individuals for criminal investigation. This surge in voter purges, as well as broader voter intimidation efforts, have had unsettling consequences for naturalized citizens across the country, a group that could sway the 2024 election. Some Americans accused of illegal voting increasingly face doxxing and intimidation, sometimes perpetuated by state officials, particularly in states like Texas.
- Some election officials have also been accused of engaging in voter intimidation efforts against racial minorities—most notably, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton.
- Trump and JD Vance statements on immigrant voting (2014 - present)
    - In October 2024, Trump targeted those challenging attempts to purge voters from registration rolls. For instance, after the Justice Department filed a lawsuit against Virginia over its voter purging practices, Trump criticized the action. More recently, on October 25, a federal judge in Alexandria, Virginia, ordered the state to restore close to 1,600 voters who

had been improperly removed from the rolls. Trump responded by attacking the judge and encouraging the U.S. Supreme Court to “fix” the decision.

- Oct. 25, 2024, Austin, TX, Trump said during a campaign rally: “Before we begin, I want to address the unconstitutional decision issued today by a radical judge appointed by Biden. And it just came down in Virginia, illegally allowing noncitizens to vote in our elections. In fact, a poll came out. 87% percent of the people disagree. … The outrageous decision goes against the very bedrock of our democracy. … They found thousands of illegal votes, and the judge said, ‘You didn't do it in a timely fashion.’ … Removing illegal voters off the voting rolls should be a big priority for this country, And yet, instead, we're scorned by a judge. This is blatantly un-American and it's election interference. And Kamala Harris is behind it, very much. And so I just wanted to bring that to your attention.” He later “ReTruthed” a clip of his campaign comments shared by the official “Team Trump” account on Truth Social.
- Oct. 25, 2024, Truth Social: “Sleepy Joe Biden and Comrade Kamala Harris ridiculously accuse me of wanting to “weaponize” the Justice Department, when they have done all of the weaponizing. Now, their truly Weaponized Department of “Injustice,” and a Judge (appointed by Joe), have ORDERED the Great Commonwealth of Virginia to PUT NON-CITIZEN VOTERS BACK ON THE ROLLS. This is a totally unacceptable travesty, and Governor Youngkin is absolutely right to appeal this ILLEGAL ORDER, and the U.S. Supreme Court will hopefully fix it! Only U.S. Citizens should be allowed to vote. Keep fighting, Glenn - AND REPUBLICANS IN VIRGINIA, KEEP VOTING EARLY! I will be calling in to Glenn’s Rally with Lara Trump tomorrow morning to talk about this crazy Ruling, and announce my final stop in Virginia before Election Day. TUNE IN!”
- Oct. 15, 2024, Bloomberg News interview, Trump criticized the Justice Department’s lawsuit stating, “I just haven’t gotten over something the Justice Department did yesterday, where Virginia cleaned up its voter rolls and got rid of thousands and thousands of bad voters, and the Justice Department sued them that they should be allowed to put those bad votes and illegal votes back in and let the people vote.”

- Sept. 18, 2024, Truth Social post: “If Republicans don’t get the SAVE Act, and every ounce of it, they should not agree to a Continuing Resolution in any way, shape, or form. Democrats are registering Illegal Voters by the TENS OF THOUSANDS, as we speak - They will be voting in the 2024 Presidential Election, and they shouldn’t be allowed to. Only American

Citizens should be voting in our Most Important Election in History, or any Election! A Vote must happen BEFORE the Election, not AFTER the Election when it is too late. BE SMART, REPUBLICANS, YOU'VE BEEN PUSHED AROUND LONG ENOUGH BY THE DEMOCRATS. DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN. Remember, this is Biden/Harris' fault, not yours!"

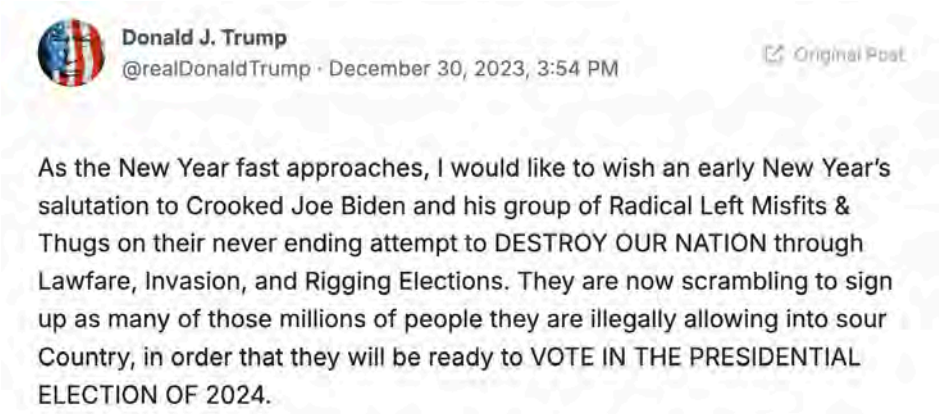
- Sept. 13, 2024, X, JD Vance, amid his false claims about Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, eating cats, dogs, and geese, promoted the "Great Replacement" narrative. The post read, in part: "'They are here legally,' they tell us. Yes, they are here legally because Kamala Harris granted Temporary Protective Status to 100,000 Haitians. But Kamala Harris waving the magic amnesty wand is not a justification for the presence of 20,000 newcomers in Springfield. It is an indictment of her despicable open border. … Yet it is Kamala Harris who is a threat to democracy. It is Kamala Harris who would rather import new voters than persuade the ones who are already here."
    - Also commenting on Haitians in the United States, on Sept. 12, 2024, Donald Trump Jr. appeared on *The Charlie Kirk Show*, stating, "You look at Haiti, you look at the demographic makeup, you look at the average I.Q. — if you import the third world into your country, you're going to become the third world."
- Sept. 10, 2024, presidential debate, Trump said, "The election, people should never be thinking about an election as fraudulent. We need two things. We need walls. We need -- and we have to have it. We have to have borders. And we have to have good elections. … Our elections are bad. And a lot of these illegal immigrants coming in, they're trying to get them to vote. They can't even speak English. They don't even know what country they're in practically. And these people are trying to get them to vote. And that's why they're allowing them to come into our country."
- Sept. 10, 2024, Truth Social: "If Republicans in the House, and Senate, don't get absolute assurances on Election Security, THEY SHOULD, IN NO WAY, SHAPE, OR FORM, GO FORWARD WITH A CONTINUING RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET. THE DEMOCRATS ARE TRYING TO "STUFF" VOTER REGISTRATIONS WITH ILLEGAL ALIENS. DON'T LET IT HAPPEN - CLOSE IT DOWN!!!"
- Sept. 1, 2024, Trump posted on Truth Social a Fox News story on the Ohio secretary of state claiming that 100 noncitizens had voted in recent elections.
- August 2024, JD Vance said in North Carolina, Kamala Harris's "party wants more power, and the way they're going to do it is she wants to give all those illegal aliens the right to vote."
- August 2024, *Monica Crowley Podcast*, Trump and Crowley discussed (14-20 min mark) "The SAVE Act to block non-citizens from voting, attaching it to the spending bill, getting reluctant Republicans to fight for it -

and if he supports shutting down the government to get it done." Trump "ReTruthed" the interview.

- Aug. 3, 2024, Atlanta, GA, Trump said, "And they're actually trying to get them to sign up and vote. They don't even speak the language. They don't even know where the hell they are. They want them to sign up and vote." He later added, "But I never really talked about the third reason because it's so sinister, but they wanna sign these people up to vote, and, if they do that, this country is destroyed. We've become a dumping ground for the entire world and we're not going to take it anymore."
- July 31, 2024, National Association of Black Journalists Convention, Trump said: "Right now, you have illegal aliens coming into our country, many from prisons and many from mental institutions, and they want to give them votes. I don't think they should have votes. They came into our country illegally and they're taking the vote away from all of the people in this room that have been here a long time, that have worked hard, that in many cases — and you'll see this happening."
- July 12, 2024, Truth Social: "REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS SHOULD ATTACH THE VERY IMPORTANT SAVE ACT TO THE NEXT CONTINUING RESOLUTION. STOP THE STEAL, GUARD THE VOTE. LET THE DEMOCRATS TRY TO EXPLAIN WHY THEY ARE AGAINST THIS - NOT DOABLE!!! DJT"
- July 10, 2024, Truth Social: "And they should pass the SAVE ACT immediately to stop illegals from voting in our elections. Republicans MUST GET TOUGH about stopping weaponization and cheating! They may just be coming for me and my elections today, but they will come for all the Republicans very soon if they succeed!"
- July 9, 2024, Truth Social post: "Republicans must pass the Save Act, or go home and cry yourself to sleep. Non citizen Illegal Migrants are getting the right to vote, being pushed by crooked Democrat Politicians who are not being stopped by an equally dishonest Justice Department. Our whole voting system is under siege. Harmeet and David, go to court and get this stopped, NOW. The Dems can't win on their policies, the only way they can win is to CHEAT. They do it at every level of government, and they do it well. That's how they get an incapacitated moron like Joe Biden elected. Get tough RNC (Michael W!), Speaker Johnson, and all State and Local Republican politicians. The Justice Department is CORRUPT and won't do a thing to help. They have no shame! All I can say is that if I'm elected President, we will pursue Election Fraudsters at levels never seen before, and they will be sent to prison for long periods of time. We already know who you are. DON'T DO IT! ZUCKERBUCKS, be careful!"
- July 7, 2024, Trump "ReTruthed" a post on a news article reporting that "Elon Musk embraces noncitizen voting ban, suggests opponents of proposed law are 'traitors.'"

- June 18, 2024, Truth Social, Trump shared a New York Post story on noncitizen voting, adding, “THE DEMOCRATS’ NEW FORM OF CHEATING!”
- June 17, 2024, Truth Social: “The New York Post: ‘HOW NON-CITIZENS ARE GETTING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS ACROSS THE U.S.—WELFARE OFFICES AND OTHER AGENCIES IN 49 U.S. STATES ARE PROVIDING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS TO MIGRANTS WITHOUT REQUIRING PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP…’ This is terrible, and the reason they want millions of people, many of them criminals, to pour into our Country. They are also using the big government agencies as campaign factories for ‘get out the illegal vote.’ WHERE HAS OUR COUNTRY GONE? IT IS SO SICK AND TIRED. THE DEMOCRATS HAVE NO SHAME. WE MUST STOP THIS IN THE COURTS, IMMEDIATELY!!!”
- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: “And the other thing is that they want those votes, you know, and you wouldn't think they could do them that quickly. But they're trying to sign people up that just got here that don't speak a word of English, that have lived in prisons and lived in mental institutions, they want the vote.”
- March 2, 2024, Richmond, VA, Trump said: “They’re trying to sign them up to get them to vote in the next election.” “Every day Joe Biden is giving aid and comfort to the foreign enemies of the United States. Biden's conduct on our border is by any definition, a conspiracy to overthrow the United States of America.”
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: “Biden’s conduct on our border is by any definition a conspiracy to overthrow the United States of America.” “Biden and his accomplices want to collapse the American system, nullify the will of the actual American voters and establish a new base of power that gives them control for generations.” “Joe Biden is giving aid and comfort to foreign enemies of the United States.”
- Feb. 29, 2024, Fox News interview, Trump said, “So there’s two things that you think of. Number one, they maybe want the votes. I think they’re gonna get these people registered to vote…Either they’re stupid or they hate our country.”
- Jan. 5, 2024, Mason City, Iowa, Trump said, “I think they really are doing it because they want to sign these people up to vote. I really do,” “They can’t speak a word of English for the most part, but they’re signing them up.”
- Dec. 30, 2023, Truth Social post, Trump said: “As the New Year fast approaches, I would like to wish an early New Year’s salutation to Crooked Joe Biden and his group of Radical Left Misfits & Thugs on their never ending attempt to DESTROY OUR NATION through Lawfare, Invasion, and Rigging Elections. They are now scrambling to sign up as many of those millions of people they are illegally allowing into sour [sic] Country, in

order that they will be ready to VOTE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 2024."



- Sept. 15, 2022, Truth Social: "The Radical Left desperately needs non-Citizens to vote, because they can't win on the issues with the American people. This November, the Great State of Ohio has the unique opportunity to stop this destructive campaign. Issue 2, the Citizenship Voting Requirement Amendment, will ensure 'ONLY a citizen of the United States...is entitled to vote at all elections.' Stop Foreign Election Interference, vote YES on Issue 2—it has my Complete and Total Endorsement!" Two days later, he shared a RSBN story covering his urging of Ohio voters to support the state's amendment.
- Jan. 6, 2021, during Trump's rally on The Ellipse, he claimed, "In the State of Arizona, over 36,000 ballots were illegally cast by noncitizens." (These were prepared remarks.)
    - D.C. Indictment (para 12e.): "The Defendant said that more than 30,000 non-citizens had voted in Arizona. The Defendant's own Campaign Manager had explained to him that such claims were false, and the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives, who had supported the Defendant in the election, had issued a public statement that there was no evidence of substantial fraud in Arizona." *See also id.,* paras 14-19; Superseding Indictment, paras 18-23.
    - Government motion for Immunity Determinations:
        - "The defendant and his co-conspirators also demonstrated their deliberate disregard for the truth—and thus their knowledge of falsity—when they repeatedly changed the numbers in their baseless fraud allegations from day to day. At trial, the Government will introduce several instances of this pattern, in which the defendant and conspirators' lies were proved by the fact that they made up figures from whole cloth. One example concerns the defendant and conspirators' claims about non-citizen voters in Arizona.

The conspirators started with the allegation that 36,000 non-citizens voted in Arizona: five days later, it was 'beyond credulity that a few hundred thousand didn't vote'; three weeks later, 'the bare minimum [was] 40 or 50,000. The reality is about 250,000'; days after that, the assertion was 32,000; and ultimately, the conspirators landed back where they started, at 36,000—a false figure that they never verified or corroborated." p. 15 (citations omitted).

- On November 22, 2020, Trump and Rudy Giuliani called the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives. Both "levied multiple four claims – including of non-citizen … voters that affected" the election. p. 19
- On November 13, 2020, Trump Campaign Manager Bill Stepien told Trump "directly that a false fraud claim that had been circulating—that a substantial number of non-citizens had voted in Arizona—was false." pp. 17-18
- *See also id.*, 75, 84, 122; Adam Klasfeld, *Who's Who in Jack Smith's Immunity Brief*, Just Security (Oct. 4, 2024)

- Jan. 4, 2021, Dalton, GA, Trump claimed during a rally, "In Arizona, more than 36,000 votes were cast by non-citizens."
- Dec. 26, 2020, Twitter post: "Time for Republican Senators to step up and fight for the Presidency, like the Democrats would do if they had actually won. The proof is irrefutable! Massive late night mail-in ballot drops in swing states, stuffing the ballot boxes (on video), double voters, dead voters," Adding, "....fake signatures, illegal immigrant voters, banned Republican vote watchers, MORE VOTES THAN ACTUAL VOTERS (check out Detroit & Philadelphia), and much more. The numbers are far greater than what is necessary to win the individual swing states, and cannot even be contested...."
- Dec. 2, 2020, in a pre-recorded speech on "voter fraud," Trump said: "It's a widely known fact that the voting rolls are packed with people who are not lawfully eligible to vote, including those who are deceased, have moved out of their state and even are non-citizens of our country. … It is a travesty that in the year 2020 we do not have any means of verifying the eligibility of those who cast ballots in an election, and such an important election it is, for determining who they are, whether they live in the state or whether they are even American citizens. … Most Americans would also be shocked to learn that no state in the country verifies United States citizenship as a condition for voting in federal elections. This is a national disgrace. … Throughout the Democrat effort to dramatically expand mail-in voting, the Democrat Party leaders were also feverishly working to block measures designed to protect against fraud, such as signature verification, residency verification, or voter ID. And citizenship confirmation was almost unthought of, that we should ask for it. … Can you believe this? These are

not the actions of people who want fair elections. These are the actions of people who want to steal elections, who are willing to create fraud. The only conceivable reason why you would block common sense measures to verify legal eligibility for voting is you are trying to encourage, enable, solicit, or carry out fraud."

- Nov. 3, 2018, Pensacola, FL, Trump said at a campaign rally, "As we speak, Democrats are openly encouraging millions of illegal aliens to break our laws, violate our sovereignty, overrun our borders and destroy our nation in so many ways and we can't let it happen. ... They want them voting because they believe they'll be voting for Democrats every single time.""
- June 19, 2018, Twitter post: "Democrats are the problem. They don't care about crime and want illegal immigrants, no matter how bad they may be, to pour into and infest our Country, like MS-13. They can't win on their terrible policies, so they view them as potential voters!"
- May 11, 2017, Trump signed an executive order creating the "Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity." As the *AP* wrote, "It disbanded without identifying a single case of a noncitizen casting a vote."
- Jan. 25, 2017, Trump tweeted that he would ask for a "major investigation into VOTER FRAUD." "I will be asking for a major investigation into VOTER FRAUD, including those registered to vote in two states, those who are illegal and...." He added: "even, those registered to vote who are dead (and many for a long time). Depending on results, we will strengthen up voting procedures!"
- Jan. 23, 2017, during a White House meeting with Democratic and Republican leaders, Trump is reported to have claimed he would have won the popular vote in the 2016 election if 3 to 5 million undocumented immigrants had not voted, offering no evidence for his assertion.
- Nov. 27, 2016, just 20 days after winning the 2016 election, Trump tweeted: "In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally." Reports suggest he was referring to noncitizen voting. *NPR* noted, "Trump's unfounded claim appears to have originated with the website Infowars and radio host Alex Jones," who had reported that "3 million votes in presidential election cast by illegal aliens." Trump was reportedly in close contact with Jones around this time, appearing on his radio show, and drawing inspiration from his conspiracy theories.
- Oct. 17, 2016, Greenbay, WI, during a campaign rally, Trump referred to an article by Jesse Richman and David Earnest in *The Washington Post*. The article was published not long before the pair, along with another co-author, published their study. Both the article and subsequent study were widely rebuffed; even Richman backpedaled.
    - Trump said: "Then there's the issue of illegal immigrants voting. The following comes from a 2014 report from *The Washington*

Post: … 'Non-citizen votes could have given Senate Democrats the pivotal 60th vote needed to overcome filibusters in order to pass health-care reform and many other reforms, and other Obama administration priorities.' Now, it continues: 'It is 'possible that non-citizen votes were responsible for Obama's 2008 victory in North Carolina. Obama won the state by 14,000 votes, so a turnout by 5.1 percent of North Carolina's adult citizens.'...We don't want noncitizen voters."

- Oct. 31, 2014, during the midterm elections in late 2014, Trump posted on Twitter that "[e]lection officials [were] saying that there is nothing stopping illegal immigrants from voting. This is very bad (unfair) for Republicans!"

- The Republican Party, Republican State Officials and Lawmakers
  - Prominent voices at the 2024 Republican National Convention amplifying these claims and scapegoating immigrants.
    - "We cannot allow the many millions of illegal aliens they've allowed to cross our borders, to harm our citizens, drain our resources, or disrupt our elections. We will not allow it." – House Speaker Mike Johnson
    - "How did we get here? It happened because Democrats cynically decided they wanted votes from illegals more than they wanted to protect our children." – Texas Senator Ted Cruz
    - "Just last week, Ruben Gallego voted to let the millions of people who have poured into our country illegally cast a ballot in this upcoming election." – Arizona Senate candidate Kari Lake
    - "I traveled to the future to an imaginary world where actually Joe Biden got reelected....in my dream I met the ghost of Biden's future…. It was easy for Democrats to rig the elections; they simply allowed all the noncitizens to vote." – Senator Rick Scott
  - In the lead-up to the 2024 election, lawmakers and state officials nationwide are intensifying false claims about noncitizen voting. An October 2024 analysis by *The Washington Post* found that nearly half of Republican candidates for Congress or top state offices have cast doubt on the 2024 election's integrity through social media, with about two-thirds specifically referencing noncitizen voting in connection with election fraud claims.
  - In Louisiana, Governor Jeff Landry signed an executive order in August 2024, requiring a disclaimer on voter registration forms stating noncitizens cannot vote, despite this already being prohibited.
  - In Georgia, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger has required polling places to display warnings against noncitizen voting.
  - Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's push to address purported noncitizen voting concerns has stirred strong criticism across the country. Over the years, he has targeted lawful voters—mainly Black or Latino voters and volunteers—under the guise of upholding election integrity.

With a long history of spreading lies of noncitizens voting, AG Paxton has taken broader steps, not only by setting up a reporting system for alleged noncitizen voting violations but also by spearheading efforts that critics say amount to voter intimidation. Paxton's approach includes frequent targeting of groups supporting Latino and Hispanic communities, creating a climate of fear through purges of voter rolls and investigations that disproportionately impact racial minorities.

- "The Biden-Harris Administration has intentionally flooded our country with illegal aliens, and without proper safeguards, foreign nationals can illegally influence elections at the local, state, and national level," he said in August 2024.
- While AG Paxton has long sought to prosecute alleged voter fraud, the 2020 election saw unprecedented efforts, including the creation of the Ballot Fraud Intervention Team in October 2020 and the formation of the Election Integrity Unit (EIU) in October 2021.
- Data released by AG Paxton's office in response to an FOIA request from American Oversight shows that between March 2016 and April 2024, Paxton opened at least 169 cases related to election integrity. Of these, only one resulted in a judgment for "illegal voting" during the 2018 General Election. The remaining cases were terminated for various reasons, including no further action, no violations found, insufficient evidence, prosecutors choosing not to pursue charges, or the courts dismissing cases. As reported by *The Washington Post*, "It is unclear how Paxton's office defines a 'judgment,' and they declined to clarify the records".
- In 2022, Attorney General Ken Paxton's EIU opened an investigation into alleged voter fraud and voter harvesting. That investigation culminated in widespread raids on August 20, 2024, primarily targeting the homes of Hispanic/Latino Democrats and election volunteers, including LULAC members and activists, some of whom are elderly individuals in their 70s and 80s. Among those affected was 87-year-old Lidia Martinez, who was confronted by nine officers in tactical gear at her home early in the morning.
- Separately, on August 21, 2024, Paxton announced his EIU had conducted undercover operations as part of a new investigation into reports of alleged unlawful voter registration efforts of noncitizens by "various nonprofit organizations." On August 30, Paxton sent to Jolt Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing Latino civic participation in Texas, "Request to Examine" records related to the group's voter registration efforts, including confidential information, such as the identities of volunteer registrars and private citizens, which Jolt argued in a lawsuit against Paxton could lead to intimidation, threats, and a chilling effect on their civic engagement activities if disclosed. The AG

threatened to terminate Jolt's registration to support voters if it failed to comply with the demand and even expose the group to potential misdemeanor charges. Some reports suggest Paxton's investigation was prompted by far-right media, including Fox News' Maria Bartiromo. On Oct. 24, 2024, a federal court granted the parties' joint motion to stay the lawsuit against AG Paxton, allowing Jolt to continue its civic engagement work while a separate case considers the constitutionality of the "request to examine" tool used in investigations.

- Paxton has also filed lawsuits against Bexar and Travis counties to block their efforts to mail voter registration forms to eligible but unregistered residents, actions perceived as attempts to suppress voter participation. Further, Paxton has sued the Biden administration in October 2024, alleging it failed to assist Texas in verifying the citizenship status of 450,000 registered voters.

- These actions are part of a broader narrative reinforced by attempts to pass the SAVE Act—introduced by Rep. Chip Roy (TX-21) and pushed by Speaker Mike Johnson—which purports to prevent alleged noncitizen voting but has faced criticism for perpetuating unproven narratives that could suppress eligible voters, particularly within Latino and Hispanic communities.
    - April 12, 2024, Mar-a-Lago, during a joint press conference with Trump, House Speaker Mike Johnson first announced that House Republicans were introducing new voter suppression legislation requiring all voters who wish to vote to submit proof of their citizenship. Johnson claimed that the Biden administration is, by design, pumping undocumented migrants into the United States to affect the election. Johnson said:

> "And election integrity is tied to border [sic], the lack of border security. President Biden has created a catastrophe and he did it by design. We documented 64 specific executive actions that he took from the day he walked into the Oval Office and that his agencies took under Secretary Mayorkas to open the border wide, to invite everybody from around the world to come here, including hardened criminals and dangerous persons. … [T]he actual number is probably close to 16 million illegals who have come into the country because they desired it. They designed it. They engineered it to be that way … But among the problems that flows from this open border catastrophe is directly related to this threat to our election integrity. … And so what we're going to do is, the House Republicans are introducing a bill that will require proof of citizenship to vote. It seems

like common sense. I'm sure all of us would agree, we only want US citizens to vote in US elections. But there are some Democrats who don't want to do that. We believe that one of their designs, one of the reasons for this open border, which everybody asked all around the country, 'Why would they do this? Why would they allow this chaos? Why the violence?' Because they want to turn these people into voters. Right now, the administration is encouraging illegals to go to their local welfare office to sign up for benefits. Well, guess what, when you go to a welfare office they also ask you if you would like to register to vote, and so many people, we think, are going to do that. And you know, what, the numbers are so high, there's so many millions of illegals in the country, that if only one out of 100 voted, they would cast potentially hundreds of thousands of votes in the election. That could turn an election. This could be a tight election in our congressional races around the country. It could, if there are enough votes, affect the presidential election. And so that's why House Republicans are going to act. I'm going to announce today, here stand alongside President Trump, that we will do everything within our power to ensure that we do have free and fair elections in this country. If we don't have that in a constitutional republic, we have nothing. It's the basis of who we are as a nation, and we owe that to the American people. And so what we're going to do is introduce legislation to require that every single person who registers to vote in a federal election must prove that they're an American citizen first. They have to prove it. That will be a new part of the federal law and a very important one. Our bill will establish new safeguards that will put us on par, by the way, with virtually every other democracy around the world that also prohibits non-citizen voting. And this is a critical thing for us to do at a very critical time. Our bill also will require states to remove non-citizens from their existing voter rolls. That's a big problem too. And, and it will provide access to databases from the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration to help the states administer this. As the entity that is responsible for regulating federal elections, Congress has this responsibility. We cannot wait for widespread fraud to occur or to occur, especially when the threat of fraud is growing with every single illegal immigrant that crosses that border. This is something most Americans are deeply concerned about. The latest poll says 78% of the

Americans who were polled say that preventing illegal immigrants from voting in our elections is a top priority. In every place I've gone around the country, whether it's out west, Midwest, Long Island, Deep South, it doesn't matter. Everybody is concerned about this, we have a job to do."

- 2020 election subversion backers
  - Cleta Mithchell
    - Cleta Mitchell stands as a central figure in the election denial movement, with a significant role in Trump's 2020 attempt to subvert the election, including by supporting lawsuits challenging the results. Mitchell was reportedly bringing lawyer John Eastman into Trump's campaign in August 2020.
    - Currently a senior legal fellow at the Conservative Partnership Institute (CPI), Mitchell is positioned in what *The New York Times* describes as "a breeding ground for the next generation of Trump loyalists and an incubator for policies he might pursue."
    - Since 2020, she has remained a prominent election denier, particularly through her position as chair of the Public Interest Legal Foundation (PILF), a right-wing group focused on litigating to purge voter rolls.
    - At CPI, she also leads the Election Integrity Network (EIN), where she has amplified claims that Democrats are purposefully allowing undocumented immigrants into the U.S. to register them as voters. *The New York Times* highlighted Mitchell and EIN as "a leading force acting on the theory, according to a review of documents and recordings."
    - In 2023, she collaborated with North Carolina Republicans to push for restrictive voting laws, citing concerns over noncitizen voting.
    - In July 2024, EIN organized a conference call with Republican activists, where proposals surfaced to monitor school enrollments to identify areas with large migrant populations, post signs in ethnic neighborhoods warning about the consequences of illegal voting, and target voter rolls by surname. The discussion also included strategies for in-person monitoring in Spanish-speaking communities at polling sites.
    - Mitchell leads the "National Only Citizens Vote" initiative, launched in September 2024 with backing from Ken Cuccinelli's Election Transparency Initiative, a group backed by far-right billionaire Dick Uihlein, and the conservative group Tea Party Patriots. The initiative, aimed at promoting noncitizen conspiracy theories and voter intimidation—especially in Spanish-speaking areas—has held multiple meetings, attracting hundreds of volunteers. (Note. Cuccinelli, a senior fellow at Russell Vought's Center for Renewing America, former visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation, former

Deputy Secretary of DHS, and author of Project 2025's DHS chapter, advocates for military intervention at the border (pp. 166-67) and reestablishment of USCIS's denaturalization unit (p.143).)

- Mitchell also backed GOP efforts on the SAVE Act, collaborating with figures like Rep. Chip Roy (TX) and Sen. Mike Lee (UT). She appeared with Speaker Mike Johnson at the Capitol press conference for the bill on May 8, 2024, alongside former Trump advisor Stephen Miller "and other GOP figures from various right-wing groups." Together, Mitchell and Miller aided Roy in drafting the bill, the Texas lawmaker said, along with other GOP allies like the Heritage Foundation's Hans Von Spakovsky

■ Jenna Ellis

- Ellis was a leading legal strategist in Trump's bid to overturn the 2020 election. In an attempt to keep Trump in power, Ellis "amplified … Trump's baseless claims of election fraud as part of what she called a legal 'elite strike force team'" (NYT) and wrote legal memos for Trump and his lawyers containing "widely disputed legal theories." (POLITICO). She had "connections to many of the central players in the plan to deploy fake electors … And she herself was deeply involved." (NYT) On Ellis' strike force, see NYT reporting.
- Ellis has been pushing baseless claims of voter fraud by undocumented immigrants. On May 9 and June 13, 2024, for example, Ellis hosted Cleta Mitchell on her radio show. During the episodes, Mitchell claimed Democrats have a "secret plan" involving such voting in the November 2024 election, and Ellis agreed, saying that such voting could "swing a lot of elections. Mitchell also mentioned left-wing groups "bringing illegals into communities" and registering them to vote, while Ellis cited over 21 million potential noncitizen voters.

■ Stephen Miller

- In the aftermath of the 2020 election, Miller was a vocal proponent of Trump's baseless claims of election fraud, playing an important role in pushing the false electors scheme. For instance, Miller appeared on Fox News' *Fox & Friends* in December 2020, where he publicly argued that there was "more than enough time to right the wrong of this fraudulent election result" and certify Trump as the winner.
- Feb. 12, 2017, as Trump's White House Senior Advisor, appearing on ABC's *This Week With George Stephanopoulos*, Miller claimed that "at a minimum" 14% of non-citizen were registered to vote, "according to academic research." When pressed on evidence to support his claim, Miller continued: "We know for a fact, you have

massive numbers of non-citizens registered to vote in this country. Nobody disputes that. … The White House has provided enormous evidence with respect to voter fraud … noncitizens being registered to vote .. It is a fact, and you will not deny it, that there are massive numbers of noncitizens in this country who are registered to vote. That is a scandal. … As a country we should be aghast about the fact that you have people who have no right to vote in this country, registered to vote, canceling out the franchise of lawful citizens of this country. That's the story we should be talking about. And I'm prepared to go on any show, anywhere, anytime and repeat it, and say, 'the President of the United States is correct 100 percent.'" He finished by saying, "The noncitizen voting issue is pervasive and widespread and we're gonna protect our country from voter fraud, we're gonna protect our borders from terrorism, and we're gonna protect innocent men, women and children from violent, criminal illegal immigrant that need to be removed from this country."

- Miller attended the May 8, 2024, Capitol press conference for the SAVE Act, appearing alongside Speaker Mike Johnson and other GOP figures from right-wing groups. According to Rep. Chip Roy (TX), Miller also contributed to drafting the bill.

- Heritage Foundation
  - Since at least 2008, the Heritage Foundation has been a key promoter of false narratives about ineligible immigrant voting, often through senior legal fellow Hans von Spakovsky. His rhetoric, such as claims that "every vote by an alien voids the vote of a citizen," has fueled baseless fears of widespread noncitizen voting.
  - Heritage operates a database tracking instances of alleged ineligible immigrant voting. However, reviews by *Immigration Impact* and *The Washington Post* have shown that even this database reveals only a negligible number of such voting cases, underscoring its rarity in U.S. elections.
  - In July 2024, Heritage-affiliated men visited an apartment complex in Atlanta under misleading pretenses, secretly recording residents about their citizenship and voter status. Despite Heritage's assertion that 14 percent of noncitizens in Georgia were registered to vote, state investigators found no supporting evidence.
- Public Interest Legal Foundation (PILF)
  - Founded in 2012, PILF has been promoting disinformation about mass election fraud for over a decade. J. Christian Adams, a close ally of Trump and an appointee of Trump's voter fraud commission, has served as the group's president since 2015. He is alo PILF's general counsel. Other key figures include Cleta Mitchell (Chair and Director), Hans von Spakovsky of the Heritage Foundation (Director) and John Eastman (director since PILF's inception and (now former) board member since 2015). (See

comprehensive details on PILF and its leaders here & here, and on Adams' and von Spakovsky's role in Trump's voter fraud commission here.)

- Recently, the PILF has concentrated on challenging states exempt from the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requirement to disclose voter rolls. This initiative began in January 2024, when PILF requested voter registration lists from Minnesota and Wisconsin, ultimately filing lawsuits against both states in April to argue that they should not be exempt from NVRA provisions. PILF also has ongoing cases in other states, including Colorado, Hawaii, Michigan and South Carolina. In March 2022, PILF secured a victory in Illinois, where a federal court judge ruled that the state's restriction on voter registration list disclosure violated the NVRA.
- PILF's legal campaigns are financed by right-wing dark money groups, such as the Leonard Leo-affiliated 85 Fund, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, and DonorsTrust, which is linked to the Koch brothers and often referred to as the "dark-money ATM of the conservative movement."

- Elon Musk
  - Between his purchase of Twitter in October 2022 and September 5, 2024, 52 posts or reposts about ineligible immigrant voting — one of the main topics of false or misleading election claims he made in that time period — drew almost 700 million views, according to an analysis by *The Washington Post*. "Musk's first tweet that The Post identified as explicitly referencing noncitizen voting came on Dec. 21, 2023."
  - A study from the *Center for Countering Digital Hate* found that between January 1 and July 31, Musk posted 42 false or misleading claims asserting that Democrats are "importing voters," which have collectively reached 747 million views.
- Far-right media
  - Fox News, Fox Business, and Newsmax aired a total of 141 claims about ineligible immigrant voting in the 2024 elections between September 6 and October 2, 2024, according to a *Media Matters review.* Newsmax led with 65 claims, followed by Fox News with 42, and Fox Business with 34. Of these claims, 37% (52 statements) were made by Republican members of Congress.

- Trump's former White House staff
  - Feb. 12, 2017, Trump's White House Senior Advisor Stephen Miller, appearing on ABC's *This Week With George Stephanopoulos*—see details above.
  - Jan. 24, 2017, during a press conference, Press Secretary Sean Spicer was asked what evidence the former president had to support his false claims about voter fraud, including immigrant voting. Initially, Spicer responded only that it was based on unidentified "studies and evidence

people have presented to him," but when pressed, he said, "I think there's been studies. There's one that came out of Pew in 2008 that showed 14 percent of people who voted were noncitizens. There's other studies that have been presented to him. It's a belief he maintains." As *FactCheck.org* noted, "It appears Spicer conflated two different studies," both of which have been widely debunked, including the 2014 study by Jesse Richman et al., that was cited by Mike Johnson in support of the SAVE Act. (See further reporting by *The Washington Post*.)

    - Trump's potential 2025 Cabinet and White House:
        - Sept. 8, 2023, on Fox News' *Hannity*, Pete Hegseth alleged that Democrats were "going to open the border" as part of a broader "plan … to turn Texas blue." He added, "There's a lot of failure but there's some intentionality there, too."
        - September 2021, on Fox News' *Primetime*, Pete Hegseth claimed that Democrats were "ignoring the border," asserting, "It doesn't affect them, except they hope in the future at the ballot box."

- Trump has endorsed the baseless theory that the vice president can block certification of the electoral votes.
    - December 20, 2022, Truth Social: Trump wrote, "I don't care whether they change The Electoral Count Act or not, probably better to leave it the way it is so that it can be adjusted in case of Fraud, but what I don't like are the lies and 'disinformation' put out by the Democrats and RINOS. They said the Vice President has 'absolutely no choice,' it was carved in 'steel,' but if he has no choice, why are they changing the law saying he has no choice?" He continued, "…Simply put, it is because the Vice President did have a choice, and looking back at it now, the 2020 Voting Fraud was far greater than anyone thought possible, with even our Government, through the FBI, changing the results of the Election by millions and millions of votes." Adding, "In other words, John Eastman and others were correct in stating that the Vice President of the United States had the right to do what should have been done. The only reason this change is being promulgated is to reform The Electoral Count Act so that the VP cannot do what they powerfully said he couldn't do, but if it couldn't be done, why are they making this law change? The whole thing is one big Scam!"

- Trump has supported election-deniers who have contested the results of and echoed his baseless conspiracy theories about the 2020 presidential election.
    - Trump is supporting Michael Whatley for RNC chair. Whatley worked with top election denier Jim Womack's group, North Carolina Election Integrity Team.
    - Trump supported Kari Lake, who has refused to acknowledge her loss in the 2022 race for Arizona's Governor and is now running for U.S. Senate.
    - For Speaker of the House, Trump supported Rep. Mike Johnson, who according to the Brennan Center for Justice was "the congressional architect of the effort to overturn the 2020 presidential election."

- Trump has made outlandish claims about automatic voter registration and mail ballots, often claiming they hurt Republicans.
    - Trump has opposed automatic voter registration because it would be a "disaster for the Election of Republicans, including your favorite President, ME!"
    - Trump has criticized the use of mail ballots, calling it "out of control" and "a whole big scam" and making wild claims that "MILLIONS OF MAIL-IN BALLOTS WILL BE PRINTED BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES."
    - Sept. 25, 2023, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "Pennsylvania is at it again! The Radical Left Governor, Josh Shapiro, has just announced a switch to Automatic Voter Registration, a disaster for the Election of Republicans, including your favorite President, ME! This is a totally Unconstitutional Act, and must be met harshly by Republican Leadership in Washington and Pennsylvania."

- Trump has said that he intends to clamp down on the ways that people can vote in the United States. To "ensure election integrity", the 2024 GOP platform states the GOP will "implement measures to secure our Elections, including Voter ID, highly sophisticated paper ballots, proof of Citizenship, and same day Voting."
    - In its claim to ensure "free, honest and lawful elections," Trump's campaign website states: "We will reform our election laws to verify the identity and eligibility of all voters to ensure faith and confidence in all future elections. We will pass a bold range of critical election integrity measures that include banning unsecure drop boxes and ballot harvesting. State and local officials cannot be permitted to make illegal and unconstitutional changes to election procedures without the required approvals by the state legislatures. Very importantly, we must ban private money from pouring into local election offices."
    - July 26, 2024, Turning Point Action summit, FL, Trump said: "We should have one-day voting, paper ballots, voter ID, and certification of citizenship."
    - June 4, 2024, Trump announced the "the launch of Swamp The Vote USA to promote the use of absentee and mail ballots and early in-person voting." He said: "I will, once and for all, secure our elections. We're going to go to paper ballots. We're going to have same-day voting, voter ID. We're gonna do it properly, we're gonna have good, secure, beautiful elections. We never want what happened in 2020 to happen again." The video was also played during the 2024 Republican National Convention.
    - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "Our goal will be one-day voting with paper ballots, proof of citizenship, and voter ID."
    - May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: "I will secure our elections because you know what happened in 2020. And our goal will be one-day voting with paper ballots, proof of citizenship, and voter ID."
    - March 2, 2024, Richmond, VA, Trump said: "And I will secure our elections. Our goal will be: one-day voting with paper ballots and voter ID."
    - March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "Our goal will be one-day voting with paper ballots and voter ID."

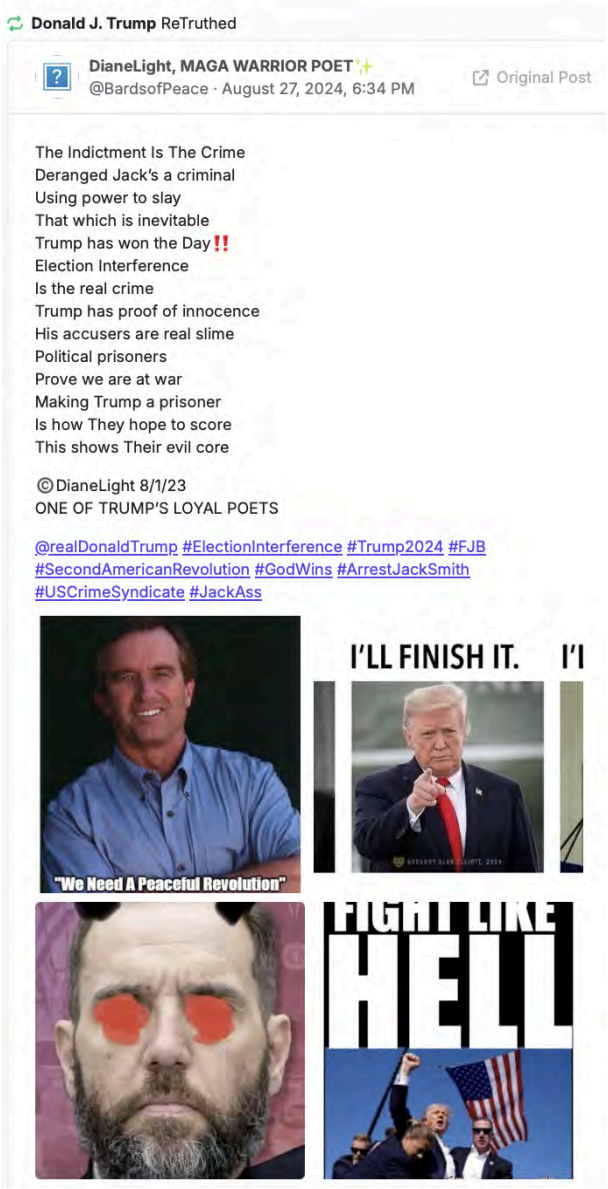
    - May 2023 CNN town hall, Trump said: “I hope we’re going to have very honest elections. We should have voter I.D. We should have one-day elections. We should have paper ballots, instead of these mail-in votes.”

- Trump and the GOP have promised to deploy swathes of MAGA poll workers to observe voting in battleground states in the 2024 election. Trump has a history of rallying supporters as poll watchers. In 2016, his campaign website asked for volunteers to “Help Me Stop Crooked Hillary From Rigging This Election!” In 2020, his team called for an “army” of poll watchers.
    - In March 2024, newly elected Co-chair of the Republican National Committee Lara Trump said in her first interview after having been elected that the RNC is calling for volunteers that will be trained as poll workers and be permitted to handle ballots. She noted that this is the first time in a longtime that the RNC has been permitted to do this. The expectation is a mass recruitment of MAGA supporters. She also said: “Once Donald Trump is president, once we have a huge majority in the House…and we take back the Senate, then we can change the voting laws. Then you could have one day of voting, you could have paper ballots, you could have voter ID all across this country.”
    - April 19, 2024, the Trump campaign and the Republican National Committee jointly announced a “historic…election integrity program” that seeks to deploy over “100,000 dedicated volunteers and attorneys deployed across every battleground state as part of the RNC’s commitment to ensuring transparency and fairness in the 2024 elections.” The announcement said that volunteers, with an emphasis on attorney-presence, will be sent to oversee various stages of the election process, including monitoring the testing of voting machines, early voting, voting on election day, the processing of mail-in ballots, and post-election activities like canvassing, auditing, and recounts. They will also have lawyers at mail-in voting processing centers and will establish a hotline for poll watchers and voters to report issues. Additionally, attorneys will be stationed at “every single target processing center where mail ballots are tabulated.” “Whenever a ballot is being cast or counted, Republican poll watchers will be observing the process and reporting any irregularity. In the event of an irregularity or problem, RNC lawyers and the volunteer attorneys that they have coordinated will provide rapid response services to resolve the issue using a sophisticated, tested action protocol,” the press release read.
        - President Trump said of the new program, “Having the right people to count the ballots is just as important as turning out voters on Election Day. Republicans are now working together to protect the vote and ensure a big win on November 5th!”
    - May 1, 2024, Freeland, MI, seemingly referring, at least in part, to plans to send MAGA observers to polling stations, Trump said that, in conjunction with the RNC, his campaign will be leading an “historic effort” to “protect the vote” alongside a “team of the most highly qualified lawyers and other professionals in the country to

ensure that what happened in 2020 will never happen again, we're not going to allow it to happen again."

- "We're going to have to make sure we have people watching [the election] very closely," Donald Trump Jr. said during an *Axios House* event at the 2024 Republican National Convention.

- Trump has signaled that he will only accept the 2024 election results if everything is "honest"—and has refused to rule out political violence if he loses again. His running mate, Sen. JD Vance as well as other top Republicans have also refused to commit to accepting the results. Trump has also reiterated his Jan. 6 speech phrase "fight like hell" and endorsed Truth Social posts advocating for a second American revolution. As detail in *Section XVI* below, key Trump allies have been preparing legal justifications—through policy briefs, draft executive orders, and potentially secretarial memos—for Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act on "day one" if he wins the election, enabling him to "deploy the military against civil demonstrations."
  - Oct. 26, 2024, Atlanta, GA, JD Vance: "We believe in two very important principles: one, yes, we are going to accept the results of the election, but two, we're also going to fight to make sure that every legal ballot and only every legal ballot is counted."
  - Oct. 15, 2024, Economic Club of Chicago interview, Trump refused to commit to "respecting and encouraging" a peaceful transfer of power, instead defending the Big Lie and insisting that there was a peaceful transition in 2021.
  - October 13, 2024, Trump told Fox News' Maria Bartiromo he would be willing to use the military, if necessary, against enemies "from within" and "radical left lunatics" who oppose him on Election Day. When Bartiromo asked if he anticipates "chaos on Election Day" from immigrants, Trump responded, "I think the bigger problem is the enemy from within. … But, I don't think they're the problem in terms of Election Day. I think the bigger problem are the people from within. We have some very bad people, we have some sick people, radical left lunatics ... And it should be easily handled by, if necessary, the National Guard, or, if really necessary, by the military."
  - Aug. 28, 2024, Trump "ReTruthed" a post featuring memes, including calling for a "Peaceful Revolution" and for Trump supporters to "FIGHT LIKE HELL". Among the hashtags on post were, "#ElectionInterference", "#Trump2024", and "#SecondAmericanRevolution".



- Aug. 21, 2024, Asheboro, NC, Trump said: "We are going to fight like hell to win this election. They are going to cheat like hell to win the election, because they have no bounds, they have no bounds."
- June 27, 2024, *CNN* presidential debate, Trump deflected answering clearly whether he would commit to accepting the 2024 election results. When asked a third time by CNN moderator Dana Bash, Trump said that he would accept results only if it is a "fair and legal and good election."
- May 12, 2024, CNN *State of Union*, JD Vance said he would accept the results of the election if the election is "free and fair." "I totally plan to accept the results of 2024. I think that Donald Trump will be the victory [*sic*]. And if it's a free and fair election, Dana, I think every Republican will enthusiastically accept the results," he said, adding, "Certainly, if we have a free and fair election, I will accept the

results … If it's a free and fair election, I will accept the results, Dana, whoever wins."

- May 1, 2024, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel interview, when asked whether he would accept the election results in Wisconsin, Trump said: "If everything's honest, I'd gladly accept the results. If it's not, you have to fight for the right of the country." "But if everything's honest, which we anticipate it will be — a lot of changes have been made over the last few years — but if everything's honest, I will absolutely accept the results," he added.
- April 27, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Trump was asked by reporter Eric Cortellessa, "You said you weren't worried about political violence in connection with the November election. You said, 'I think we're going to win and there won't be violence.' What if you don't win, sir?" Trump replied, "Well, I do think we're gonna win. We're way ahead. I don't think they'll be able to do the things that they did the last time, which were horrible. Absolutely horrible. So many, so many different things they did, which were in total violation of what was supposed to be happening. And you know that and everybody knows that. We can recite them, go down a list that would be an arm's long. But I don't think we're going to have that. I think we're going to win. And if we don't win, you know, it depends. It always depends on the fairness of an election. I don't believe they'll be able to do the things that they did the last time. I don't think they'll be able to get away with it. And if that's the case, we're gonna win in record-setting fashion."
- May 11, 2023 CNN town hall, Asked if he would accept the election results, Trump said, "Yeah, if I think it's an honest election, absolutely." Pressed if he would accept the election result regardless, he reiterated, "If I think it's an honest election, I would be honored to."
- December 7, 2019, remarks at the Israeli American Council National Summit 2019, President Trump said: "One of them said — one of them said, 'You know he's going to win, don't you? And you know, at the end of his second term, you know he's not leaving. He's not leaving. You know that.' And I thought, 'he's a comedian.' I thought he was kidding. He's for real. So now we have to start thinking about that, because it's not a bad idea. No, but these people are going crazy. When they all scream, 'Four more years, four more years,' I always say, 'Make it 12 years and you'll drive them crazy.' Twelve more years."

- Trump is reviving past claims of 2020 election interference by Georgia officials and now insists they are doing "everything possible" to obstruct his success in the 2024 election.
  - August 3, 2024, Atlanta, GA, during a campaign rally at Georgia State University Convocation Center, Trump suggested without evidence that Republican Georgia Governor Brian Kemp and Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger were "doing everything possible" to hamper his efforts to win the battleground state in November 2024, a claim that mirrored his previous efforts to reverse his 2020 loss to President Biden in Georgia.
    - "But your governor, Kemp, and Raffensperger they're doing everything possible to make 2024 difficult for Republicans to win. ….What are they

doing? I don't know. They've got something in mind, you know? They've got a little something in mind. Kemp is very bad for the Republican Party. He wouldn't do anything."

- Kemp is "the most disloyal guy I've ever seen," Trump said, adding, "somewhere he went bad."
- "He's the governor, he ought to support his Republican party because … if he doesn't have his Republican party, I could tell you where he came from and it wasn't good."
- "And Raffensperger ought to make sure that the vote is honest, and they don't want the vote to be honest. In my opinion, they want us to lose. That's actually my opinion, and we can't let that happen. Because if we lose Georgia we lose the whole thing and our country goes to hell."
- "He's a bad guy. He's a disloyal guy and he's a very average governor."

- Hours before his rally in Atlanta on August 3, 2024, Trump took to Truth Social, accusing Kemp and Raffensperger of not wanting the Republican Party to win the 2024 election.
  - "Congratulations to Georgia GOP Chair, Josh McKoon, for going after the failed former Lieutenant Governor of Georgia, who realized he could never win again, and quit his run for Office - His name is Geoff Duncan. He is a total lightweight, and went to work at a low salary for Fake News CNN. His sole function is to knock Donald J. Trump, but people don't want to hear him, or that, and it's one of the many reasons that CNN's Ratings are so low (although, Jake Tapper and Dana Bash were very fair to me on the Crooked Joe Biden Debate). Georgia should throw this "bum" out of the Party. He is unelectable and not respected by anyone, other than your lightweight Governor, Brian Kemp who, if it wasn't for me, would have never been Governor…." (Truth Social, Aug. 3, 2024)
  - "….Think of it, I got this guy elected and he did not want to do what the State Senate wanted on Election Integrity. He works with Raffensperger, he works with Geoff Duncan—It's all a team. I truly believe they would rather see the Republican Party lose than win!" (Truth Social, Aug. 3, 2024)
  - "Brad Raffensperger has to do his job, and make sure this Election is not stolen. Brian Kemp should focus his efforts on fighting Crime, not fighting Unity and the Republican Party! His Crime Rate in Georgia is terrible, his Crime Rate in Atlanta is the worst, and his Economy is average. He should be seeking UNITY, not Retribution, especially against the man that got him the Nomination through Endorsement and, without whom, he could never have beaten Stacey Abrams. He and his wife didn't think he could win. I said, 'I'm telling you you're going to win.' Then he won, he was happy, and his wife said, 'Thank you Sir, we'll never be able to make it up to you!' Now she says she won't Endorse me, and is going to 'write in Brian Kemp's name.' Well, I don't want her Endorsement, and I don't want his. They're the ones who got Fani Willis and her boyfriend all 'jazzed up' and ready to

go. He could have ended that travesty with a phone call, but he doesn't want to end it because he's a bad guy…." (Truth Social, Aug. 3, 2024)

- Trump has falsely suggested that his political opponents, as well as others running for presidential office, are ineligible to hold office under the Constitution's citizenship requirements, peddling a racist conspiracy theory ("Birtherism") he helped popularize over a decade ago. According to *The New York Times*, "[f]alse and racist attempts to sow doubt about a political rival's eligibility for the nation's highest office are part of the former president's playbook."
    - *The Atlantic* wrote that Trump's "political career began in advocacy" of the racist conspiracy theory and ideology known as "birtherism," which gained prominence in the late 2000s and falsely claimed that President Barack Obama was not born in the United States and was therefore ineligible to be president. While Trump did not originate "birtherism" or the "campaign to portray Mr. Obama as the insidious 'other'[,]" he "revived" the false theory in 2011, which *POLITICO* reported at the time as being the "latest and most enduring version of a theory in search of facts." Trump "embraced the birther theory wholesale, wielding his trademark innuendos and falsehoods" (*The Atlantic*), "repeatedly hawked the lies" (*The Atlantic*), and "rode birtherism directly to the prime-time promontories of cable TV" (*The New York Times*). According to *The Atlantic*, "Birtherism was a statement of values, a way to express allegiance to a particular notion of American identity, one that became the central theme of the Trump campaign itself: To Make America Great Again, to turn back the clock to an era where white political and cultural hegemony was unthreatened by black people, by immigrants, by people of a different faith. By people like Barack Obama." "[T]his lie was different from the start, an insidious, calculated calumny that sought to undo the embrace of an African-American president by the 69 million voters who elected him in 2008[,]" *the Times* wrote.

Kamala Harris

- In August 2020, Trump questioned then-Democratic vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris's eligibility for the vice-presidency and presidency, comments that *The New York Times* described as "spreading a race-based and anti-immigrant crusade he began nearly a decade ago, when he began sowing distrust in the background of Mr. [President] Obama." On August 13, when Trump was asked at a White House press briefing about an op-ed by (his ally and co-conspirator) John Eastman that claimed Harris, the daughter of immigrants, might not be a natural-born citizen despite her being born in Oakland, California, Trump said, "I heard it today that she doesn't meet the requirements and by the way the lawyer that wrote that piece is a very highly qualified, very talented lawyer."
    - That same day, Trump's campaign adviser at the time, Jenna Ellis reposted a tweet from Tim Fitton, the president of conservative group Judicial Watch, which shared Eastman's piece and asked whether Harris was "ineligible to be Vice President under the U.S. Constitution's

'Citizenship Clause'?" Ellis later doubled down on her comments to ABC News: "It's an open question, and one I think Harris should answer so the American people know for sure she is eligible."

- Reverting to birtherism rhetoric, Trump and his campaign have begun questioning Harris's racial heritage, suggesting she had until recently had only identified as Indian, not Black. (Harris is the daughter of an Indian mother and a Jamaican father.)
  - On July 31, 2024, During the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) Convention, Trump said: "So, I've known her a long time indirectly, not directly very much, and she was always of Indian heritage, and she was only promoting Indian heritage. I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black, and now she wants to be known as Black. So I don't know. Is she Indian, or is she Black? … I respect either one, but she obviously doesn't, because she was Indian all the way, and then all of a sudden she made a turn, and she went, she became a Black person. And I think someone should look into that too…"
  - Following the NABJ Convention, Trump continued by posting a clip from a 2019 video of Harris discussing her Indian heritage with Indian-American actress Mindy Kaling, calling her a "stone cold phony." "Crazy Kamala is saying she's Indian, not Black. This is a big deal. Stone cold phony. She uses everybody, including her racial identity!"
  - That evening, at his rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the Trump campaign displayed a Business Insider headline acknowledging Harris as the first Indian-American elected to the Senate. Before Trump took to the stage, speaker and Trump adviser Alina Habba said: "Unlike you Kamala, I know who my roots are, I know where I come from, and I don't play around with the Constitution."
  - Responding to Trump's comments made at the NABJ Convention, JD Vance said while traveling to a campaign rally in Arizona: "So what he said, I thought it was hysterical." "I think he pointed out the fundamental chameleon-like nature of Kamala Harris. And you guys saw yesterday, she was in Georgia, and she put on a southern accent for a Georgia audience. She grew up in Vancouver. What the hell is going on here? She is not who she pretends to be." When pressed on whether he questions whether Harris is Black, Vance said, "What I question is why she presents a different posture depending on which audience that she's in front of." At his July 31 rally speech in Glendale, Arizona, Vance said that "Kamala Harris is a phony who caters to whatever audience is in front of her … Earlier this week … she went down to Georgia and started talking with a fake Southern accent … What the hell was that all about? Kamala grew up in Canada. They don't talk like that in Vancouver or Quebec, or wherever she came from." (These were prepared remarks.)

        - August 1, 2024, Trump posted on his Truth Social account a photo of Harris as a child with her maternal family wearing traditional Indian clothing, sarcastically writing, "Thank you Kamala for the nice picture you sent from many years ago! Your warmth, friendship, and love of your Indian Heritage are very much appreciated. "

Barack Obama

- Beginning in 2011, Trump began promoting false “birther” claims about Barack Obama. In what *The New York Times* said was a “remarkable campaign of relentless deception that tried to undermine the legitimacy of the nation’s first black president[,]” Trump fanned lies that Obama was born in Kenya, not Hawaii, as well as that Obama had hidden his real birth certificate and publicly presented a fake version. He continued to spread these claims, including in a *Washington Post* interview five years after Obama released his long-form birth certificate. (Obama released his short-form birth certificate in 2008.) In 2016, Trump finally conceded that Obama was born in the United States, but he sought to falsely blame Democratic rival Hillary Clinton and her campaign for starting the rumors.
    - CNN and ABC News have documented some of Trump’s “most outrageous” statements against Obama, including inviting hackers in 2014 to “please hack Obama’s college records (destroyed?) and check ‘place of birth.’”

Ted Cruz

- As early as 2014, Trump had questioned whether Senator Ted Cruz was ineligible for the White House because he was born in Canada, despite his mother being a U.S. citizen. Trump used this birther claim to repeatedly attack Cruz and suggested that Cruz’s eligibility should be tested in the courts.

Marco Rubio

- In February 2016, Trump cast doubt on Senator Marco Rubio's eligibility to run for president, insinuating that Rubio, born in Miami to Cuban immigrant parents, might not meet the Constitution’s natural-born citizen requirement.

Nikki Haley

- In January 2024, Trump reposted a conspiracy theory by right-wing outlet The Gateway Pundit that then-Republican challenger Nikki Haley is “disqualifie[d] from presidential or vice-presidential candidacy under the 12th amendment” because her Indian immigrant parents “were not US citizens at the time of her birth” in South Carolina.

- Trump has touted introducing through law a requirement that anybody running for president must take an aptitude/cognitive test.
    - July 31, 2024, National Association of Black Journalists Convention, Trump said: "I want anybody running for president to take an aptitude test, to take a cognitive test. I think it's a great idea … People say it's not constitutional. I would like to have something passed where you can do it. I think we should know." He went on to suggest Kamala Harris might not pass the test.

- In a late-August 2024 interview on Fox News' *Life, Liberty & Levin*, Trump seemingly admitted to interfering in the 2020 election. "Whoever heard: you get indicted for interfering with a presidential election where you have every right to do it?" He later admitted, at least twice, to losing the election "by a whisker," but later said he was being sarcastic.

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XI. Rejecting the Constitution

- Trump has long indicated that he wants to hold onto the presidency for as long as he could, and has suggested that he would seek a third term, in violation of the 22nd Amendment. As the New York Times reported in November 2024, Trump has sent "mixed and cryptic messages about how long he could stay in office."
    - Nov. 3, 2024, Lancaster County, PA, Trump expressed regret, saying he "shouldn't have left" the White House after his term. "I shouldn't have left, I mean, honestly," Trump remarked, adding, "we did so well, we had such a great—" before cutting himself off. He then quickly pointed out, "so now, every polling booth has hundreds of lawyers standing there."
        - As *The New York Times* noted, "The remark echoed what Mr. Trump told some aides within days of his 2020 election loss: that he wasn't going to leave the White House. 'I'm just not going to leave,' Mr. Trump told one aide. He told another, 'We're never leaving," and added: "How can you leave when you won an election?'"
    - July 26, 2024, West Palm Beach, FL, at Turning Point Action's "Believers' Summit," Trump told Christians in his address: "And, again, Christians, get out and vote. Just this time. You won't have to do it anymore. Four more years. You know what, it'll be fixed, it'll be fine. You won't have to vote anymore, my beautiful Christians. I love you Christians, I'm a Christian. I love you, get out, you gotta get out and vote. In four years, you don't have to vote again. We'll have it fixed so good, you're not gonna have to vote."
    - May 18, 2024, National Rifle Association's Annual Meeting, Dallas, TX, Trump said: "FDR [Franklin D. Roosevelt]: 16 years. Almost 16 years. He was four-term. I don't know, are we going to be considered three-term or two-term, you tell me?"
    - Jan. 14, 2024, Trump said: "We have a good chance of staying for four years ... four years and beyond."

    - Aug. 17, 2020, Trump said, “We are going to win four more years.” “And then after that, we’ll go for another four years because ... they spied on my campaign. We should get a redo of four years.” He made similar comments at different times during the 2020 presidential campaign.
    - However, Trump has almost made comments saying that he would not seek a third term.
        - April 27, 2024, Time Magazine interview, Trump walked back on prior statements : “I don’t know anything about it [the 22nd amendment]. I mean, you're telling me now that somebody's looking to terminate. I wouldn't be in favor of it. I wouldn’t be in favor of a challenge. Not for me. I wouldn’t be in favor of it at all. I intend to serve four years and do a great job. And I want to bring our country back. I want to put it back on the right track. Our country is going down. We're a failing nation right now. We’re a nation in turmoil.”
    - Dec. 15, 2024: Former Trump advisor and White House chief strategist Steve Bannon suggested that Trump is eligible to run for a third term in 2028 during a speech to the New York Young Republicans.

- Trump called for the “termination” of provisions of the Constitution, provisions that he did not identify, as part of his claim to overturn the 2020 election.
    - Dec. 3, 2022, Truth Social: “A Massive Fraud of this type and magnitude allows for the termination of all rules, regulations, and articles, even those found in the Constitution. Our great ‘Founders’ did not want, and would not condone, False & Fraudulent Elections!”
    - Two days later, Trump denied that he suggested terminating the Constitution, posting, “The Fake News is actually trying to convince the American People that I said I wanted to ‘terminate’ the Constitution. This is simply more DISINFORMATION & LIES.”
    - April 27, 2024, Time Magazine interview, Trump denied he called for the termination of the Constitution, “I never said that at all. I never said that at all. When I talk about certain things, we are, there is nothing more important than our Constitution. But the Democrats have violated our Constitution with crooked elections and many other things. They violated it by using the FBI and the DOJ to go after people very unfairly, very unconstitutionally.”

- Trump has claimed that his political opponents “have broken the constitution” and that he would “end those violations” of the Constitution.
    - April 27, 2024, Time Magazine interview, denying that he had ever called for the termination of the Constitution, Trump said, “But the Democrats have violated our Constitution with crooked elections and many other things. They violated it by using the FBI and the DOJ to go after people very unfairly, very unconstitutionally.” He went on to state: “I’m in a court case. A Biden-inspired court case, where the judge has put a gag order on me where I’m not allowed to answer many very important questions. And so that's a violation of our Constitution. And I would end

those violations of Constitution. So that's what I was referring to. They have broken the Constitution. They have gotten very far astray from our Constitution. I'm talking about the fascists and the people in our government right now, because I consider them, you know, we talk about the enemy from within. I think the enemy from within, in many cases, is much more dangerous for our country than the outside enemies of China, Russia, and various others that would be called enemies depending on who the president is, frankly.

- Trump has promised to issue an executive order giving him "impoundment authority" to withhold funds appropriated by Congress–power that he could use to override Congress's budget authority and subvert the Constitutional separation of powers.

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XII. Demonizing Americans with Whom He Disagrees

- As noted in *Chapter VIII,* Trump has long demonized his opponents, both political and others—"enemies from within"—who he says pose a greater threat to America than foreign adversaries. He has pledged to "root" out the "vermin" from the United States, echoing past fascist leaders' rhetoric. An April 2024 a *Washington Post* analysis of Trump's social media posts from 2016 through 2024 found that "he's often on the warpath, lashing out at his perceived enemies in hundreds of aggressive, insult-filled screeds. At least 570 posts since he announced his presidential bid in November 2022 have contained insulting language directed at someone." An October 2024 *NPR* analysis revealed that since 2022, Trump has issued over 100 threats to investigate, prosecute, imprison, or otherwise retaliate against those he views as opponents.
    - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "I always talk about we have enemies on the outside and we have enemies from within. The enemies from within are more dangerous to me than the enemies of the outside. Russia and China, we can handle, but these lunatics within our government that are going to destroy our country, and probably want to, we have to get it stopped."
    - May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, alleging that there are plenty of "communists," "fascists," and "criminals," in the US government, Trump said: "I say the enemy from within and the enemy on the outside. I think that, frankly, the enemy from within is more dangerous to our country than China and Russia and others. I feel that, because if you have a president that knows what he's doing, he can handle China and Russia. But these people are crazy. And the enemy from within is very dangerous, criminals that nobody can believe and we will take care of business."
    - April 27, 2024, Time Magazine interview: Trump said, "They have broken the Constitution. They have gotten very far astray from our Constitution. I'm talking about the fascists and the people in our government right now, because I consider them, you know, we talk about the enemy from within. I think the enemy from within, in many cases, is much more dangerous for our country than the outside

enemies of China, Russia, and various others that would be called enemies depending on who the president is, frankly."

- He later said, "Because if you have the proper president, you'll be able to handle them very smartly, and everybody will be very satisfied. But if you don't have the proper president, I agree they would be strong enemies. But the enemy from within is a bigger danger to this country than the outside enemy, on the basis of having a president that knows what he's doing. Because if a President is good, solid, the proper person, and you're not gonna have a big problem with China, Russia or others, but you still have a problem from the sick people inside our country."

- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "Together we're taking on some of the most menacing forces and vicious opponents our people have ever seen. But no matter how hateful and corrupt the communist and criminals are, and they are hateful. We are fighting against some of the most vicious people in the world and they're not outside, they're inside…We can handle China, we can handle Russia, we can handle all of them."
- Nov. 11, 2023, Claremont, NH, during a rally, Trump said he would "root out" political opponents who "live like vermin within the confines of our country" warning that the greatest threats come "from within" (words that according to ABC News and others "echoed those of past fascist dictators like Hitler and Benito Mussolini," and alarmed historians).
- Nov. 15, 2022, Mar-a-Lago, while announcing his 2024 presidential bid, Trump said, "the gravest threats to our civilization are not from abroad, but from within."

- May 26, 2024, Truth Social, Trump reposted to his platform a video of a man who, in addition to verbally attacking MSNBC's Joe Scarborough, raged on about Trump getting rid of "blowjob liberals" if he is re-elected. "I can't wait for Uncle Donnie to win. I can't wait. He'll get rid of all you fucking liberals. You liberals are gone when he fucking wins. You fucking blowjob liberals are done. Uncle Donnie's gonna take this election—landslide…Landslide, you fucking half a blowjob. Landslide. Get the fuck out of here, you scumbag."

- He has called those who don't support his reelection "demonic forces, abolishing and demolishing–and happily doing so–our country."
  - He later described the opposition as "Marxist, fascist, and communist tyrants who want to smash our Judeo-Christian heritage."

- March 6, 2023, CPAC conference: Trump said, "If those opposing us succeed, our once beautiful U.S.A. will be a failed country that no one will even recognize. A lawless, open-borders, crime-ridden, filthy, communist nightmare. That's what it's going and that's where it's going ... Either they win or we win. And if they win, we no longer have a country."

- Oct. 22, 2023, Truth Social, Trump said: “Democrat politicians, mainstream media personnel and Hollywood actors and producers are brazen unapologetic Communists”

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XIII. Trump’s Effusive Praise of Autocrats

Trump has long praised many autocratic leaders, including:

Adolf Hitler

- Trump’s reported fascination with Hitler stems back decades, according to biographers, news articles and books about his presidency.
    - Trump’s former chief of staff, John Kelly, told *CNN*’s Jim Sciutto, for his new book, “The Return of Great Powers,” that the former president once praised Hitler’s ability to rebuild Germany’s economy, and admired his maintaining “loyalty” of his senior Nazi officers. “He said, ‘Well, but Hitler did some good things.’ I said, ‘Well, what?’ And he said, ‘Well, [Hitler] rebuilt the economy.’ But what did he do with that rebuilt economy? He turned it against his own people and against the world. And I said, ‘Sir, you can never say anything good about the guy. Nothing,’” Kelly recounted Trump as saying, according to Sciutto. “I mean, Mussolini was a great guy in comparison.” “He would ask about the loyalty issues and about how, when I pointed out to him the German generals as a group were not loyal to him, and in fact tried to assassinate him a few times, and he didn’t know that,” Kelly said to Sciutto, adding, “He truly believed, when he brought us generals in, that we would be loyal — that we would do anything he wanted us to do.”
        - The same comments were reported two years ago in Michael Bender’s book, “Frankly, We Did Win This Election: The Inside Story of How Trump Lost,” which said the conversation between Trump and Kelly took place while on a trip to Paris to commemorate the armistice after World War I. “Well, Hitler did a lot of good things,” Trump reportedly told Kelly. He remained “undeterred” in supporting his statement by claiming Germany made economic gains under Hitler’s rule. “Even if it was true that he was solely responsible for rebuilding the economy, on balance you cannot ever say anything supportive of Adolf Hitler,” Kelly is said to have told Trump. “You just can’t.” Trump denied ever having this conversation.
    - In a 1990 interview with Vanity Fair, Trump’s late wife Ivana Trump said he once kept on bedside table a copy of Hitler speeches entitled “My New Order,” a gift from a friend, which apparently she had seen him occasionally skim.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán

- Orbán and Trump have a long history stemming to 2019 when the Hungarian leader visited the Oval Office. Their respective positions on key policies appear to be further aligning by the day, especially on immigration and the Russian-Ukraine war. The pair have publicly praised each other as great leaders and seem to agree on a breadth of harmful issues. Trump is said to be seeking inspiration from Orbán's regime in Hungary for some of his own autocratic-influenced promises intended in 2025 and beyond. Meanwhile, Orbán is fully behind Trump winning the 2024 election—he often repeats it as a necessary precondition for future international security. During the 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump repeated Orbán's comments that Trump in office was necessary for international peace, to keep "everybody at bay."

- On July 11, 2024, Trump hosted Orbán at Mar-a-Lago for the second known time this year. Orbán had attended the NATO summit held by President Biden in Washington, D.C., but departed the summit early to visit Trump at Mar-a-Lago.
    - The visit came around a week after Orbán met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow—as part of his surprise 2-week, self-styled "peace mission" tour to Moscow, Kyiv, and Beijing—fanning concerns that Orbán could be acting as a "an intermediary" between Putin and Trump, and that Trump could thus be violating the Logan Act, which makes it a crime for American citizens without authorization to negotiate with foreign governments in disputes with the United States.
        - *Reuters* reported, however, that "[t]he Kremlin said on Friday that Orbán had not told Putin of his plans to meet with Trump, and that Putin did not convey any message to Trump via Orbán."
    - In a post on X later that day, Orbán called the visit, "Peace mission 5.0," adding: "We discussed ways to make #peace. The good news of the day: he's going to solve it!" Trump later reshared Orbán's post on his Truth Social account, adding, "Thank you Viktor. There must be PEACE, and quickly. Too many people have died in a war that should have never started! DJT"
        - The following day, Orbán added: "We continued the peace mission in Mar-a-Lago. President @realDonaldTrump has proved during his presidency that he is a man of peace. He will do it again!"
    - According to a letter to E.U. leaders penned by Orbán after his visit to Mar-a-Lago, Trump is poised to act "immediately" as a "peace broker" in the Russia-Ukraine war if he is elected in November, and has developed "well-founded plans" for doing so. "We can expect no peace initiative coming from [Trump] until the elections. I can however surely state that shortly after his election victory, he will not wait until his inauguration, but will be ready to act as a peace broker immediately. He has detailed and well-founded plans for this," Orban wrote in a letter addressed to European Council President Charles Michel and shared with all E.U. leaders. "I am more than convinced that in the likely outcome of the victory of President Trump, the proportion of the financial burden between the US

and the EU will significantly change to the EU's disadvantage when it comes to the financial support of Ukraine," Orbán added.
    - As with his previous visit, it appears Orbán did not meet with President Biden or the Biden administration.

- On March 8, 2024, Trump hosted Viktor Orbán at his Mar-a-Lago resort, Florida. Reports suggest that Trump and a small group of close advisers first met privately with the Hungarian prime minister for approximately an hour that evening, in what sources called a "friendly" "social meeting" with no agenda. A Trump campaign readout said the two "met…to discuss a wide range of issues affecting Hungary and the United States, including the paramount importance of strong and secure borders to protect the sovereignty of each nation." A "members only" concert followed that meeting, with Orbán in attendance.
    - Addressing the crowd and, at times, Orbán directly, Trump embraced Orbán: "There's nobody that's better, smarter or a better leader than Viktor Orbán. He's fantastic …. [He] does a great job …. [He's] "a noncontroversial figure because he said, 'This is the way it's gonna be, and that's the end of it,' right? He's the boss …. He's a great leader, fantastic leader. In Europe and all over the world, they respect him. It's an honor to have you with us, Viktor. Very great honor. Thank you." A video clip of Trump's address and the concert were shared by Orbán on his X account, along with the message: "Thank you for the invitation and the kind words, President @realDonaldTrump !"
    - March 9, 2024, Truth Social, Trump said the day after Orbán's visit to Mar-a-Lago: "It was an honor having Viktor Orbán and his lovely daughter, Flóra, as my guests last night at Mar-a-Lago. Viktor is a Great Leader, respected all over the World. Hungary is a Safe Country because of his Strong Immigration Policies, and as long as he is in charge, it always will be!"
    - March 11, 2024, Truth Social, Trump reposted a March 10 Twitter post by Orbán. The post was accompanied by an edited video of the pair's meeting on March 8, narrated by Orbán.
        - The original post reads: "President @realDonaldTrump was a president of peace. He commanded respect in the world, and created the conditions for peace. During his presidency there was peace in the Middle East and peace in Ukraine. We need him back more than ever! Thank you for the invitation, Mr. President!"
        - The subtitles to the narrated video read as Orbán stating, in part repeating the above post's text: "My meeting with President Donald Trump has come to an end. President Trump was a president of peace. He commanded respect in the world, and thus created the conditions for peace. During his presidency there was peace in the Middle East and peace in Ukraine. And there would be no war today if he were still the President of the United States. We agreed that there will be peace when there are world leaders who want peace. I am proud that Hungary is one of those countries. We also agreed that there still still much potential in US-Hungarian economic

relations. Although our trade turnover has grown to more than 9 billion dollars, we do not want to stop there. When the president returns, we will give him impetus [sic] to US-Hungarian trade relations. Here in America the campaign is in full swing, and indeed in rushing ahead. It is up to Americans to make their own decision, and it is up to us Hungarians to frankly admit that it would be better for the world – and better for Hungary too – if President Donald Trump were to return to power."

- Orbán's relationship with Trump allies and fellow Republicans has also flourished, particularly with The Heritage Foundation. According to CNN, "[t]he American right's growing embrace of Orbán builds upon millions of dollars that his government has spent on lobbying in the US, and new connections between Hungarian and American conservative think tanks."
    - In late April 2024, MAGA Republicans are reported to have flocked to Hungary's capital, Budapest, to attend the country's third annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC Hungary 2024).
        - Orbán delivered the keynote address, endorsing Trump's reelection bid, as he did at the conference the year prior. "Make America great again, make Europe great again!" Orbán said in English in a video of the conference he shared on X, before continuing in Hungarian, "Go Donald Trump! Go European sovereigntists! Let us saddle up, don our armor, take to the battlefield, and let the electoral battle begin."
        - Trump sent a pre-recorded video message to CPAC Hungary 2024 (which it shared on its platform), calling Orbán "a great man" and hailing "so many patriots in Hungary who are proudly fighting on the frontlines of the battle to rescue Western civilization."
    - On March 29, 2024, Heritage President Roberts said in a statement, "We are especially proud of our relationship with Prime Minister Orbán, whose leadership in Hungary on immigration, family policy, and the importance of the nation-state is a model for conservative governance."
    - On March 7, 2024, a day prior to meeting with Trump at Mar-a-Lago, Orbán spoke at a closed-door Heritage panel discussion entitled, "The Future of Relations between the United States and Hungary," alongside Heritage President Roberts. The pair were introduced by Vivek Ramaswamy, who unsuccessfully ran for the Republican presidential nomination before dropping out and endorsing Trump. (Ramaswamy also met separately with Orbán on March 7 following the Heritage event.)
        - March 6, 2024, Roberts said of Orban's scheduled meeting with Heritage: "The world needs a movement that fights for Truth, for tradition, for families, and for the average person. Hungary has taken up that mantle with much success. Looking forward to welcoming @PM_ViktorOrban to Heritage tomorrow!"
        - Following his appearance, Orbán wrote in posts on X:

- March 7: “Supporting families, fighting illegal migration and standing up for the sovereignty of our nations. This is the common ground for cooperation between the conservative forces of Europe and the US. I talked about this and many other topics with @KevinRobertsTX at the @Heritage Foundation. Thank you for the invitation!”
- March 8, “The greatest fight in international politics is between the globalists and those who believe in national sovereignty. I was happy to see at the @Heritage Foundation that we sovereignists have many friends in the US as well.” Clips from the concert were shared in a video accompanying Orbán’s post.

    - Zoltán Kovács, Hungary’s Secretary of State for International Communication, said in a post on X that “[t]he dialogue explored the successes and challenges of Hungarian conservative family and economic policies, the war in Ukraine, American-Hungarian relations, and reflections on President @realDonaldTrump's tenure. Prime Minister Orbán also shared his political convictions, emphasizing the need for a movement committed to truth, tradition, families, and people.”

- In a January 2024 interview with *The New York Times*, Heritage’s Roberts praised Orbán as a “very impressive leader” whose efforts to “caus[e] a conservative Christian political turn” in Hungary “should be celebrated.”
- In May 2023, Roberts and other Heritage members spoke at CPAC Hungary, where Orbán decried “woke culture.”
    - Following the conference, Roberts wrote on X: “I was honored to speak at CPAC Hungary this week and see good friends again, including @PM_ViktorOrban, @JuditVarga_EU, @BalazsOrban_HU and many more. Hungary is no country for woke men — that’s just as it should be.”
- In November 2022, Orbán hosted members of The Heritage Foundation in Budapest, discussing “core values” such as family, sovereignty, liberty and faith.
    - Following the meeting, Orbán posted on X: “We must not shy away from fighting for our culture. We must not give up on our core values: #family, #sovereignty, #liberty and #faith. This was at the heart of our discussion with @Heritage president @KevinRobertsTX today.”
    - Roberts reposted Orbán’s post, adding: “It was an honor, @PM_ViktorOrban , to meet with you. One thing is clear from visiting Hungary and from being involved in current policy and cultural debates in America: the world needs a movement that fights for Truth, for tradition, for families, and for the average person.”
    - James Jay Carafano, Heritage Fellow and Senior Counselor to Roberts, also commented under Orbán’s post: “Thank you for hosting us for wide ranging and productive discussions on all the key foreign policy issues and the future of transatlantic conservatives committed to making their nations secure, free, and prosperous.”

    - Heritage Foundation also has close ties to Hungary's conservative think tank Danube Institute, which is financially supported by the Hungarian government, and Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA), a state-run research organization, led by President Gladden Pappin, a conservative political theorist who moved from Dallas to Budapest.
        - July 11, 2024, Heritage and HIIA held a closed-door event at Heritage's offices in Washington, DC.
        - May 4, 2023, HIIA "hosted a delegation from The Heritage Foundation in a private workshop[.]"

- Trump has embraced Orbán and his leadership style.
    - During the 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump embraced Hungary as a "strong country" and Orbán as a "very powerful, tough leader."
    - March 16, 2024, Daytona, OH: "Viktor Orbán, the prime minister of Hungary, very tough man, probably the toughest guy there is, frankly, toughest in Europe. A lot of people don't like him because he's tough. He says, 'I don't want to have criminals in my country if that's okay with you.'"
    - Nov. 18, 2023, Fort Dodge, Iowa: "One of the strongest leaders, Viktor Orbán from Hungary ... he's a very strong man, very strong, powerful man, and one of the most respected leaders in the world. It's tough. No games, right? Hungary."

- Trump's running mate, Sen. JD Vance (OH) has also championed Orbán's leadership style and some of his controversial policies.
    - In May 2024, Vance told "Face The Nation" that the United States "could learn from" certain "smart decisions" by Orbán, including controversial policies on university dissidents.
    - In February 2024, in an interview with the European Conservative, Vance said: "You know, the closest that conservatives have ever gotten to successfully dealing with left-wing domination of universities is Viktor Orbán's approach in Hungary. I think his way has to be the model for us: not to eliminate universities, but to give the a choice between survival or taking a much less biased approach to teaching." He added, "Orbán is so effective… In some ways, I think Orbán is taking an American liberal insight and using it for conservative purposes. And whether it's the incentives that you put into place, funding decisions that are made, and the curricula that are developed, you really can use politics to influence culture. And we should be doing more of that on the American Right."

Russian President Vladimir Putin

- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump referred to the leaders of Russia, China, and North Korea as "tough" and "smart," "a lot smarter than what we have now. We have, we have a bunch of dumb people."
- August 2024, *The Shawn Ryan Show*, Trump said, "And I knew Putin very well. Got along with him, actually great."

- July 20, 2024, Grand Rapid, MI, speaking about autocratic leaders such as President Putin, Chinese President Xi, “all of them,” Trump said, “they're all smart, tough, they love their country, or they want to do well with their country, whatever it is, all ideology.”
- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: “And Putin once told me, he said, ‘you know, if you're supposed to be like a guy, a nice guy, I'd hate like hell to see you as a bad guy. You have been brutal.’...I got along with Putin very well.”
- March 25, 2023, Waco, Texas: “President Putin: Smart. Very smart people.”
- May 3, 2019, Twitter: “Had a long and very good conversation with President Putin of Russia. As I have always said, long before the Witch Hunt started, getting along with Russia, China, and everyone is a good thing, not a bad thing....”
- July 18, 2018, Twitter: “So many people at the higher ends of intelligence loved my press conference performance in Helsinki. Putin and I discussed many important subjects at our earlier meeting. We got along well which truly bothered many haters who wanted to see a boxing match. Big results will come!”
- March 21, 2018, Twitter: “I called President Putin of Russia to congratulate him on his election victory (in past, Obama called him also). The Fake News Media is crazed because they wanted me to excoriate him. They are wrong! Getting along with Russia (and others) is a good thing, not a bad thing.....”
- Sept. 7, 2016: “The man has very strong control over a country. Now, it's a very different system and I don’t happen to like the system, but certainly in that system, he’s been a leader. Far more than our president has been a leader.”
- Dec. 20, 2016: “Great move on delay (by V. Putin) - I always knew he was very smart!”

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Chinese leadership

- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump referred to the leaders of China, Russia, and North Korea as “tough” and “smart,” “a lot smarter than what we have now. We have, we have a bunch of dumb people.”
- August 2024, The “Shawn Ryan Show,” Trump said: “I had a great relationship with President Xi, and I will again.”
- July 20, 2024, Grand Rapid, MI, Trump recounted telling the media that President Xi of China is a “brilliant man,” “very smart,” and a “fierce person.” “He controls 1.4 billion people with an iron fist.” Trump said of autocrat leaders such as President Xi, Russian President Putin, “all of them,” Trump said, “they're all smart, tough, they love their country, or they want to do well with their country, whatever it is, all ideology.”
- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: “I got along with President Xi of China very well.”
- Feb. 4, 2024, Fox News, “I want China to do great. I do. And I like President Xi a lot. He was a very good friend of mine during my term.”
- March 25, 2023, Waco, Texas: “President Xi: Smart, top of his game.”
- Nov. 18, 2023, Fort Dodge, Iowa: “A man who looks like a piece of granite, right? He’s strong like granite. He’s strong. I know him very well, President Xi of China. … He runs 1.4 billion people with an iron hand. … I got along well with Putin. That’s a good thing.”

- June 30, 2019: “And I like President Xi a lot. I consider him a friend, and – but I like him a lot. I've gotten to know him very well. He’s a strong gentleman, right? Anybody that – he’s a strong guy, tough guy.”
- In John Bolton’s White House memoir, he recalled that “[a]t the opening dinner of the Osaka G-20 meeting in June 2019, with only interpreters present, Xi had explained to Trump why he was basically building concentration camps in Xinjiang. According to our interpreter, Trump said that Xi should go ahead with building the camps, which Trump thought was exactly the right thing to do. The National Security Council’s top Asia staffer, Matthew Pottinger, told me that Trump said something very similar during his November 2017 trip to China.”
- April 2, 2019: “President Xi, who is a strong man, I call him King, he said, ‘But I am not King, I am president.’ I said, ‘No, you’re president for life and therefore, you’re King.’ He said, ‘Huh. Huh.’ He liked that.”
- April 12, 2018: “I had President Xi, who’s a friend of mine, who’s a very, very good man.”
- In 1990, Trump said China had shown the “power of strength” when its troops killed hundreds, possibly thousands, of pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square the year before. “When the students poured into Tiananmen Square, the Chinese government almost blew it. Then they were vicious, they were horrible, but they put it down with strength,” Trump said. “That shows you the power of strength. Our country is right now perceived as weak … as being spit on by the rest of the world.”
    - During the 2016 presidential debates, Trump said of his prior comment, "I was not endorsing it. I said, 'that is a strong, powerful government' ... it was a horrible thing. It doesn't mean at all I was endorsing it."

North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un

- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump referred to the leaders of North Korea, Russia, and China as “tough” and “smart,” “a lot smarter than what we have now. We have, we have a bunch of dumb people.”
- 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump said he “got along very well with” Kim Jong-un. He added that the North Korean dictator would “like to see me back too. I think he misses me, if you want to know the truth.”
- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: “[I] got along with Kim Jong-un of North Korea very well.”
- June 30, 2023, Philadelphia: “We did a fantastic job with Kim Jong-un. You know, I got along with him very well. The fake news said, ‘it’s terrible that he gets along with him.’ I said, ‘Really? It’s not terrible, it’s a very good thing.’ You know, it’s a positive thing.”
- May 27, 2019: “Well, first of all, let me say that I think that Kim Jong-un, or Chairman Kim, as some people say, is looking to create a nation that has great strength economically. I think he’s very much – I talk to him a lot about it, and he’s very much into the fact that – he believes, like I do, that North Korea has tremendous economic potential like perhaps few other developing nations anywhere in the world.”

- April 11, 2019: “Kim Jong Un has been, really, somebody that I’ve gotten to know very well and respect, and hopefully — and I really believe that, over a period of time, a lot of tremendous things will happen.”
- Sept. 29, 2018: “And then we fell in love. Okay. No really. He [Kim] wrote me beautiful letters. And they’re great letters. We fell in love.”
- Sept. 24, 2018: “Chairman Kim has been really very open and terrific, frankly. And I think he wants to see something happen. So we have done — I think, mutually, we’ve done very well with respect to North Korea.”
- In August 2018, Trump wanted to invite Kim Jung-un to the White House. “I should meet with Kim Jong Un. We should invite him to the White House,” John Bolton’s White House memoir recalled Trump saying.
- June 15, 2018, Trump said of Kim Jong-un, “He’s the head of a country, and I mean, he’s the strong head, don’t let anyone think different. He speaks and his people sit up at attention. I want my people to do the same.” Later that day, Trump told reporters, “I was kidding,” “You don’t understand sarcasm.”

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

- June 29, 2019, Osaka, Japan: “President Erdogan. He’s tough, but I get along with him. And maybe that’s a bad thing, but I think it’s a really good thing.”
- June 29, 2019, Osaka, Japan: “Well, thank you very much. It’s my honor to be with a friend of mine, somebody I’ve become very close to, in many respects, and he’s doing a very good job: the President of Turkey”
- Sept. 21, 2017, New York: “Thank you very much. It’s a great honor and privilege — because he’s become a friend of mine — to introduce President Erdoğan of Turkey. He’s running a very difficult part of the world. He’s involved very, very strongly and, frankly, he’s getting very high marks.”

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XIV. Enriching Himself and His Family

- The Constitution’s Foreign Emoluments Clause protects against foreign interference in our political system by ensuring the President and other federal officeholders do not have financial entanglements with other countries. President Trump repeatedly violated the Emoluments Clause while in office and is likely to repeat such violations if he continues to commingle his private business with his public service.
    - A 2017 lawsuit filed by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington detailed violations from (i) entities owned by foreign governments leasing Trump property, (ii) foreign government officials patronizing Trump properties, including staying at a Trump hotel, (iii) broadcasters owned by foreign governments paying for broadcast rights for Trump’s “The Apprentice” television show, and (iv) property interests tied to foreign governments outside of the United States.

        - The lawsuit was dismissed as moot after Trump left office without resolving the merits of the alleged legal violations.
    - As the Brennan Center for Justice described, Trump violated the Foreign Emoluments Clause "from day one, in part because he never truly relinquished his businesses, and in fact could 'withdraw profits' from his not-so-blind trust whenever he pleased. This presented ongoing conflicts of interest."

- Trump abused his office for the financial benefit of his family.
    - As the Boston Globe reported, Trump "exploited loopholes to build a White House rife with nepotism," including hiring his daughter Ivanka and her husband Jared Kushner as senior advisors.
    - Although neither Ivanka nor Kushner took a salary for their positions, their financial disclosures reveal they earned between $172 million and $640 million in outside income while working in the White House.

- Use of political contributions to pay for personal expenses (e.g. legal) and to enrich himself and his family members.
    - Trump has a history of enriching himself from political donations. He was forced to repay millions to donors who were tricked into signing up for recurring payments.
    - In January 2024 alone, Trump's leadership political action committee (PAC), Save America, spent around $ 2.9 million in legal consulting costs, with around half a million dollars going to the law firm of John Lauro, the lawyer representing Trump in the Jan. 6 case. Save America also owes another $1.9 million in outstanding legal costs.
    - Trump's legal costs for 2023 set his political fundraising committees back over $50 million, millions more than the committees made in the same year.
    - In 2022, Trump spent around $10 million of his PAC's money to fund his personal legal bills, according to federal election filings.

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XV. Creating an Unconstitutional Criminal Justice System

- Donald Trump's criminal justice plans for a potential second term threaten to dramatically increase punitive measures and roll back years of progress. His proposals include the militarization of police forces, expanding the use of the death penalty, and reinstating harsh sentencing practices. While Trump has long branded himself as the candidate of "law and order," his proposed policies for a second term reflect a harsh and punitive approach that threatens to undo criminal justice reforms. If Trump returns to office, "there is no higher priority than quickly restoring law and order and public safety in America," according to his campaign platform. Indeed, in August 2024 he made clear that crime is among his top priorities.

- Trump has endorsed the use of violence, including by law enforcement, against Americans suspected of committing crimes.
    - Sept. 29, 2024, Erie, PA: Trump called for “one real rough, nasty” and “violent day” of police retaliation, suggesting it would “immediately” eliminate crime. “One rough hour, and I mean real rough, the word will get out and it will end immediately.”
    - Oct. 29, 2023, CA: Trump has suggested shooting shoplifters on sight. He said: “We will immediately stop all of the pillaging and theft. Very simply: If you rob a store, you can fully expect to be shot as you are leaving that store,” Trump said, before again loudly shouting, “shot,” for emphasis. “The word that they shoot you will get out within minutes and our nation, in one day, will be an entirely different place,” he added. “There must be retribution for theft and destruction and the ruination of our country.”
    - July 28, 2017, Long Island, NY: In a speech to law enforcement officers, Trump encouraged officers to rough up arrestees, telling them “don’t be too nice” and that they can bang a person’s head when putting them in a police car.

- Trump has vowed to “indemnify” or offer “immunity” to police officers in their fight against crime, including what he calls “Biden migrant crime.”
    - July 31, 2024, National Association of Black Journalists Convention, Trump was questioned about Sonya Massey, a 36-year-old Black woman who was shot and killed by a police officer in her Illinois home, and whether that officer should have immunity. Trump admitted he was not familiar with the specific case but stated, “I’m talking about people that are much different cases than that …didn’t look good to me." Despite this, he continued to advocate for his policy of indemnifying police officers, suggesting that officers making “innocent mistakes” should receive support. Pressed on how to differentiate between innocent mistakes and misconduct, Trump did not provide a clear answer and instead emphasized the challenging nature of police work.
    - July 27, 2024, St. Cloud, MN, Trump said: “We’re going to give immunity to police so they can do their jobs. I’m giving federal immunity to police officers so they can do their jobs.”
    - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: “We're going to give back our police…back the protection and the respect that they need. We’re gonna give them immunity so they don't get sued and lose their families, lose their homes, lose their pensions.”
    - May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: “We're going to give our great police, they are great, their power back, and they're going to protect us again…They're great and they can do the job. But we have to give them their power back.” Later he added, “Again, we're gonna give our police their power back, and we're gonna give them immunity from prosecution. So they're not prosecuted for doing their job.”
    - April 2, 2024, Grand Rapids, MI, Trump said: “And we’re gonna work out a federal immunity for police so they’re allowed to do their job without losing their house

and their pension and everything else when the…liberal governors and mayors don't back them."

- April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: "We will, very importantly, restore law and order to our country. And I'm going to indemnify all police officers and law enforcement officials throughout the United States to protect them from being destroyed by the radical left for taking strong actions on crime."
- March 16, 2024, Daytona, OH, Trump said: "We will restore law and order to our country, and I'm going to indemnify all police officers and law enforcement officials throughout the United States to protect them from being destroyed by the radical left for taking strong action on crime."
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "First of all, we're giving our policemen immunity from prosecution because when they stop crime, they get prosecuted. They take away their house, their pension, their family, they lose their wife or husband." He later added: "This week, Joe Biden once again declared his intention to strip our police officers of their qualified immunity by passing a radical anti-police bill through Congress. By contrast, I am going to indemnify all police officers and law enforcement officials throughout the United States to protect them from being destroyed by the radical left for taking strong action on crime."
- Feb. 29, 2024, Fox News interview, Trump said: "We have the greatest police. They don't get the respect they have to get. They are treated so badly. They do something and they end up losing their pension, even if it's a good thing. If they stop crime nowadays they lose their pension, their family, their house. And we're gonna give immunity to police. And we're gonna let the police do the job they have to do…they understand who these migrants are."
- Feb. 17, 2024, MI, "I'm also going to indemnify all police officers and law enforcement officials throughout the United States to protect them from being destroyed by the radical left…You can stop that [significant shop looting] in one day, in one hour. If you got really nasty and really tough. Once they [criminals] see things happening that they never thought would happen to them. And I mean tough. It'll all stop overnight."

- As early as 2017, Trump and his administration have supported the death penalty for those who deal drugs, drawing inspiration from "zero tolerance" drug policies in some Asian countries and elsewhere. In addition to Trump's broader 2024 campaign agenda to tackle drug cartels, Trump's newly proposed criminal justice policies intend to legislate for draconian sentencing measures.
  - March 2, 2024, Greensboro, Trump said: "We have become a drug-infested, crime-ridden nation, which is incapable of solving even the simplest of problems. We will institute the powerful death penalty for drug dealers."
  - Nov. 14, 2023, Mar-a-Lago: Trump said that he would be asking Congress for legislation to introduce the death penalty for human traffickers and "everyone who sells drugs, gets caught selling drugs, to receive the death penalty for their heinous acts. Because it's the only way."

- Nov. 11, 2023, New Hampshire: Trump said: “President Xi in China controls 1.4 billion people, with an iron hand, no drug problems, you know why they have no drug problems?” “Death penalty for the drug dealers.” “You want to solve your drug problem, you have to institute a meaningful death penalty for… a drug dealer.”
- June 20, 2023, Fox News: Trump warned that the country might not be ready for the “only way” to stop drug selling: “the death penalty,” making reference to China and Singapore. “That’s the only way you’re going to stop it.” “If you want to get rid of it – now, I don't know that this country is ready for it. I just don't know...You know, every time I say it, I sort of like – it's – it's not easy to say the death penalty.”
- March 19, 2018, New Hampshire: Trump said: “But if we don't get tough on drug dealers, we're wasting our time, just remember that, we’re wasting our time. And that toughness includes the death penalty.”
- Early 2018, Trump was speaking behind closed doors on how drug dealers were as bad as serial killers and all deserved the death penalty. He would reference countries such as Singapore and the Philippines.
  - “He says that a lot … He says, ‘When I ask the prime minister of Singapore do they have a drug problem [the prime minister replies,] ‘No. Death penalty’,” said a source who’d spoken at length to Trump about the matter.
  - “He often jokes about killing drug dealers... He’ll say, ‘You know the Chinese and Filipinos don’t have a drug problem. They just kill them’,” a senior administration official told *Axios*.
- April 29, 2017, Trump congratulated Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte for doing“an unbelievable job on the drug problem” in the Philippines, according to a leaked transcript of the conversation.

- Trump “will require local law enforcement agencies receiving DOJ grants to return to proven policing measures such as stop-and-frisk,...cracking down on the open use of illegal drugs, and cooperating with ICE to arrest and deport criminal aliens.”

- Trump said he plans to “ask Congress to send a bill to my desk ensuring that anyone who murders a police officer will receive immediately the death penalty.”

- Trump has advocated for a mandatory minimum one-year prison sentence for those who burn the American flag, directly contradicting the Supreme Court’s decision in *Texas v. Johnson* (1989), which ruled that flag burning is a form of protected speech under the First Amendment.
  - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said: “I would like to put forward a bill .. that .. if you burn the American flag one year in jail.”
  - August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump said: “I want to get a law passed. Everyone tells me, ‘Oh, sir, it's very hard.’ You burn an American flag, you go to jail for one year. Got to do it. We got to do it. They say, ‘It's not constitutional’ They say, ‘Sir, that's unconstitutional.’ We'll make it

constitutional. We're gonna make it constitutional. But, you burn an American flag, you go to jail for one year."

- July 27, 2024, St. Cloud, Minnesota, Trump said: "I know they say it's unconstitutional. Well, make it not unconstitutional. You burn our American flag, you should get immediately mandatory one year in jail."
- July 24, 2024, Fox & Friends, speaking on those who burned American flag in the wake of anti-Israel protests over the war in Gaza outside Union Station in Washington, D.C. on July 24, Trump said, "You should get a one-year jail sentence if you do anything to desecrate the American flag," adding, "Now, people will say, 'Oh, it's unconstitutional.' Those are stupid people. Those are stupid people that say that." "We have to work in Congress to get a one-year jail sentence. When they're allowed to stomp on the flag and put lighter fluid on the flag and set it afire, when you're allowed to do that — you get a one-year jail sentence, and you'll never see it again."
- June 24, 2020, Twitter post, Trump said: "It is ashame *[sic]* that Congress doesn't do something about the lowlifes that burn the American Flag. It should be stopped, and now!"
- June 20, 2020, Tulsa, Oklahoma, during a rally Trump said: "We ought to come up with legislation that if you burn the American flag you go to jail for one year. … We oughta do it. They talk about freedom of speech—I'm a big believer in freedom of speech—but that's desecration. That's a terrible thing they're doing."

- Trump has hinted at reinstating measures that advocated for a strong stance against monument vandalism.
  - In June 2020, Trump signed Executive Order 13933: Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence, directing federal prosecutors to "prioritize" monument vandalism cases under existing laws, including a law that allowed a sentence of up to 10 years in prison for willfully damaging federal property. Although the order did not impose a mandatory 10-year sentence, as Trump has sometimes suggested, it reinforced federal penalties and threatened to withhold funding from jurisdictions that refused to prosecute such crimes.
  - August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump praised an early "1900's bill," which was "beautifully stated" and inspired EO 13933. He said that EO 13933 quickly stopped efforts to destroy monuments when he announced it in the summer 2020 during racial justice protests. Although he did not explicitly say he would bring back the executive order, his admiration for its impact suggests he might consider reinstating similar measures.
  - CPAC 2023, Trump said: "I passed and signed an executive order. Anybody that does that gets 10 years in jail, with no negotiation – it's not '10' but it turns into three months.'" He added: "But we passed it. It was a very old law, and we found it – one of my very good legal people along with [adviser] Stephen Miller, they found it. They said, 'Sir, I don't know if you want to try and bring this back.' I said. 'I do.'"

- As noted in the following section, *Section XVI*, Trump intends to use federal law enforcement, the National Guard, and even the military to address crime and restore "law and order."

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XVI. Wielding the Military to Suppress Civil Dissent and Crime

- If Trump returns to the White House, "he has made clear that he intends to use the military for a range of domestic law enforcement purposes, including patrolling the border, suppressing protests that he deems to have turned into riots, and even fighting crime in big cities run by Democrats," *The New York Times* highlighted. (See further reporting by *The Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *AP*.) Key Trump allies have been drafting legal justifications—in the form of policy briefs, draft executive orders, and, likely, secretarial memos—for Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act if he wins the election, including on his "first day in office to allow him to deploy the military against civil demonstrations." As *The New York Times* noted in August 2024, "In public, they have talked about this in the context of border states and undocumented immigrants. But an internal email from a group closely aligned with Mr. Trump, obtained by *The Times*, shows that, privately, the group was also exploring using troops to 'stop riots' by protesters." In October 2024, Trump told Fox News he would be willing to use the military against enemies "from within" and "radical left lunatics" who oppose him on Election Day.
    - October 13, 2024, Fox News interview, Trump told Maria Bartiromo he would be willing to use the military, if necessary, against enemies "from within" and "radical left lunatics" who oppose him on Election Day. When Bartiromo asked if he anticipates "chaos on Election Day" from immigrants, Trump responded, "I think the bigger problem is the enemy from within. … But, I dont think they're the problem in terms of Election Day. I think the bigger problem are the people from within. We have some very bad people, we have some sick people, radical left lunatics ... And it should be easily handled by, if necessary, the National Guard, or, if really necessary, by the military."
    - Trump campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said in a statement for an August 2024 *The New York Times* report: "'As President Trump has always said, you can't have a country without law and order and without borders. In the event where an American community is being ravaged by violence, President Trump will use all federal law enforcement assets and work with local governments to protect law-abiding Americans.' She added that Trump was committed to 'using every available resource to seal the border and stop the invasion of millions of illegal aliens into our country.'"
    - April 27, 2024, Time Magazine interview, asked if he would use the military against protesters, Trump said, "Well, I would use certainly the National Guard, if the police were unable to stop. I would absolutely use the National Guard…I don't think you'd ever have to use much more than that."

- March 13, 2023, Davenport, Iowa: Trump suggested he would not seek authorization from state officials before intervening in Democrat-run cities to deal with crimes. While he did not specify the intervention, *The New York Times* reported this suggested using "federal forces." Trump said: "You look at any Democrat-run state, and it's just not the same. It doesn't work. You look at these cities, our great cities are… New York City is a crime den. Chicago is a crime den. You look at these great cities, Los Angeles, San Francisco, you look at what's happening to our country, we cannot let it happen any longer. And one of the other things I'll do, because you're supposed to not be involved in that, you just have to be asked by the governor or the mayor to come in, the next time, I'm not waiting. One of the things I did was let them run it, and we're going to show how bad a job they do. Well, we did that. We don't have to wait any longer. We got to get crime out of our cities."
- Under a February 2023 plan to "End Crime and Restore Law and Order" in cities, the Agenda47 platform states: "Trump has committed to deploying federal assets, including the National Guard, to restore law and order when local law enforcement refuses to act." In an accompanying video, Trump promised, "in cities where there has been a complete breakdown of law and order, where the fundamental right of our citizens are being intolerably violated, I will not hesitate to send in federal assets including the National Guard."
- In a January 2023 video on his campaign platform, speaking about protests in Atlanta, Georgia, Trump said that when he is in charge, "If Marxist prosecutors betray their oaths and refuse to protect our citizens, I will not hesitate to send in federal law enforcement to restore peace and public safety."
- On August 6, 2022, at CPAC, in Dallas, TX, Trump said: "In places where there is a true breakdown of the rule of law, such as the most dangerous neighborhoods in Chicago, the next president should use every power at his disposal to restore order — and, if necessary, that includes sending in the National Guard or the troops. … But the president is not supposed to be doing that. The president is supposed to do it at the request of the governor. Well, when the governor was a Democrat or the mayors are Democrats, they don't want any help under any circumstances. … But the president is not supposed to be sending in it at will. I think the next time either we're going for a very quick change or we're sending them in, because we're not going to let Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Portland." (emphasis added)
- As noted in *Chapter III* above, Trump has suggested using military forces to address inland "migrant crime." For instance, in an April 12, 2024, interview with *Time Magazine*, Trump expressed openness to using the National Guard and possibly the military to address border issues and "migrant crime" in Democrat-run states. He questioned the applicability of the Posse Comitatus Act, suggesting that migrants aren't civilians. Trump cited his past use of the National Guard in Minneapolis and emphasized his willingness to take further steps, including military deployment, if necessary. He highlighted concerns about the increasing number of migrants, particularly from China, as justification for his stance.

- Jeffrey Clark and Russell Vought's think tank, the Center for Renewing America (CRA), are reported as leading work to justify using military troops to police dissent and secure the border. In November 2023, *The Washington Post* reported that Clark is "leading the work on the Insurrection Act under Project 2025," drafting documents alongside other advisers and associates to potentially invoke the Act on Trump's "first day in office to allow him to deploy the military against civil demonstrations." "The proposal was identified in internal discussions as an immediate priority," *The Post* said. *The New York Times* later reported that an early 2023 email from a CRA employee outlined 10 agenda topics for papers on legal and policy frameworks. "The third category was 'day one' ideas, meaning those whose legal frameworks were already well established, and which could be put into effect by a president unilaterally. No. 4 on the list: 'Insurrection — stop riots ** — Day 1, easy.'"
    - Vought and an aide confirmed in July 2024 that Vought heads Project 2025's "180-Day transition Playbook," a team of staffers drafting regulations, executive orders, and secretarial memos for Trump's return to the White House. "George Floyd obviously was not about race. It was about destabilizing the Trump administration. We put out, for instance, a 50-page paper designed for lawyers to know that the President has, you know, the ability, both along the border and elsewhere, to maintain law and order with the military. And that's something that, you know, it's going to be important for him [Trump] to remember and his lawyers to affirm, but we've given them the case for that," Vought said.
    - Heritage spokesperson denied any "plans within Project 2025 related to the Insurrection Act," but *The Post* later said it stood by its reporting.
    - The *Washington Post* has described Clark as "a rising legal star" in the GOP. Paul Dans said in a statement about Clark, "We are grateful for Jeff Clark's willingness to share his insights from having worked at high levels in government during trying times."
    - In June 2022, Clark joined CRA, as a senior fellow and director of litigation, where staffers are working on a catalog of draft documents for Trump's hoped-for return. Among those plans are draft executive orders to support invoking the Insurrection Act, which Vought supports using also.
    - The D.C. federal indictment against Trump alleges that during a January 2021 White House meeting Clark proposed using the Insurrection Act if riots occurred due to Trump's refusal to step down.
        - On January 3, 2021, hours after Trump had offered Clark the position of Acting Attorney General, Clark spoke with Patrick Philbin, deputy White House counsel, who told him that "there had not been outcome-determinative fraud in the election and that if" Trump "remained in office nonetheless, there would be 'riots in every major city in the United States.'" The indictment alleges Clark responded, "Well, that's why there's an Insurrection Act."

- During a July 2023 appearance on Steve Bannon's *War Room* podcast, Clark suggested he had advised the Justice Department to use the Insurrection Act in response to the summer 2020 racial justice protests.
    - "I wish I could give you the full story" on the insider conversations being had in government on responding to racial justice protests in summer 2020, Clark said in response, "but the Justice Department has taken the position that it is 'law enforcement privileged.'"
    - Clark said he wrote a "memo" while at the Justice Department to Attorney General Bill Barr "about what to do about the attacks on the Portland courthouse and other Antifa attacks in that summer of love." "That memo had some very creative ideas about how to enforce the law against, you know, those rioters," Clark continued, adding, "If you want to see the legal advice I gave, in detail, it's all blacked out," strongly implying that he backed deploying troops to confront civilian protests. "I was actually summoned up to a meeting, you know, to discuss how to proceed … in terms of that — what I would call, 'an insurrection,' because it was happening night after night," Clark recalled to Bannon.
    - "Remember that Barr is the one who had participated, when he was attorney general, in using the Insurrection Act against the L.A. riots, after the Rodney King case," Clark said. "Why wasn't that same aggressiveness used against the riots that, that were all across the country in the summer of 2020?"
- CRA published a policy brief in March 2024 by former Trump administration officials Ken Cuccinelli and Adam Turner, titled, "The U.S. Military May Be Used To Secure The Border."
    - The paper argues that the President has the constitutional and statutory authority to use the military to secure the U.S.-Mexico border, even under the constraints of the Posse Comitatus Act (PCA). It challenges the conventional view that the PCA limits military involvement in domestic law enforcement, particularly regarding immigration and border security. The paper is structured into four parts: analyzing the PCA, highlighting exceptions like the Insurrection Act, emphasizing the President's constitutional powers, and concluding that military action at the border would not threaten Americans' rights but rather protect them from criminal threats. (In July 2024, CRA published a summary of the policy brief.)
        - It cited a far-reaching Justice Department memorandum drafted after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, by John Yoo, a Bush administration lawyer with a notably broad stance on presidential powers.
    - Cuccinelli is a senior fellow at CRA and former visiting fellow at Heritage Foundation, and served as Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS) and Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) under Trump. Turner, according to what appears to be his *LinkedIn* profile, served as a senior legislative officer for the Department of Labor under

Trump, and is now Deputy Director of Government Relations & Columnist at the Zionist Organization of America. He contracted with CRA as a researcher between August 2023 and March 2024, "[r]esearching and writing a legal policy issue paper."
        - Vought referenced the brief in his July 2024 interview with the Centre for Climate Reporting, saying it is "designed for lawyers."

- Project 2025 has denied any plans that involve the Insurrection Act. As noted above, in response to reporting in November 2023 by *The Washington Post*, a Heritage spokesperson denied any "plans within Project 2025 related to the Insurrection Act," but *The Post* later said it stood by its reporting. Indeed, Project 2025's "Mandate" does make reference to using active-duty troops to secure U.S. borders, and so too have at least two of its authors (Vought and Cuccinelli) advocated elsewhere for use of the Act, including via CRA, an organization on Project 2025's advisory board.
    - For instance, Ken Cuccinelli writes in the "Mandate" that the Defense Department should "explicitly acknowledge and adjust personnel and priorities to participate actively in the defense of America's borders, including using military personnel and hardware to prevent illegal crossings between ports of entry and channel all cross-border traffic to legal ports of entry." (pp. 166-67)
    - Most notably, Gene Hamilton, a senior Justice Department official under Trump and current Vice President and general Counsel of Stephen Miller's America First Legal, wrote, "In addition to finalizing the southwestern land border wall, the next Administration should take a creative and aggressive approach to tackling these dangerous criminal organizations at the border. This could include use of active-duty military personnel and National Guardsmen to assist in arrest operations along the border—something that has not yet been done." (p. 555)

- Trump considered invoking the Insurrection Act while in office in the past. According to *The New York Times*, "During the turbulent summer of 2020, [he] raged at his military and legal advisers, calling them 'losers' for objecting to his idea of using federal troops to suppress outbreaks of violence during the nationwide protests over the police murder of George Floyd. It wasn't the only time Mr. Trump was talked out of using the military for domestic law enforcement … He repeatedly raised the idea of using troops to secure border states, and even proposed shooting both violent protesters and undocumented migrants in the legs, former aides have said."
    - Crack down on Black Lives Matter protests in Washington DC.
        - May 30, 2020, Twitter: Trump posted that if demonstrators had breached the White House perimeter, they would "have been greeted with the most vicious dogs, and most ominous weapons, I have ever seen."
        - June 1, 2020, Rose Garden, Trump threatened to deploy the military in response to protesters clashing with law enforcement outside the White House and across the nation amid demonstrations following the death of Georgia Floyd:

Today, I have strongly recommended to every governor to deploy the National Guard in sufficient numbers that we dominate the streets. Mayors and governors must establish an overwhelming law enforcement presence until the violence has been quelled.

If a city or a state refuses to take the actions that are necessary to defend the life and property of their residents, then I will deploy the United States military and quickly solve the problem for them.

I am also taking swift and decisive action to protect our great capital, Washington, D.C. What happened in this city last night was a total disgrace. As we speak, I am dispatching thousands and thousands of heavily armed soldiers, military personnel, and law enforcement officers to stop the rioting, looting, vandalism, assaults, and the wanton destruction of property.

We are putting everybody on warning: Our seven o'clock curfew will be strictly enforced.

- *The New York Times* reported that on June 1, 2020, White House aides, responding to Trump's request that day to send thousands of active-duty trips onto the streets of Washington D.C., drafted a proclamation to invoke the Insurrection Act, allowing the deployment of troops to suppress protests. During a tense meeting in the White House on June 1, Trump expressed his desire to Attorney General William P. Barr, Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley to have thousands of troops on the streets. However, the three officials convinced Trump to abandon the plan, though a separate group of aides kept the option open by drafting the necessary document in case the situation escalated or D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser did not impose a curfew, which she eventually did. (See further reporting by *The Times*: "Members of his legal team drew up an order invoking the Insurrection Act in case it became necessary … But senior aides opposed such a move, and he never signed it.")
- Former Defense Secretary Mark Esper wrote in his memoir that President Trump asked whether demonstrators gathering around the White House following the death of George Floyd could be shot. "Can't you just shoot them? Just shoot them in the legs or something?" *Axios* reported that the book was thoroughly vetted at the highest levels of the Pentagon, with nearly three dozen 4-star generals, senior civilians, and Cabinet members reviewing it (in whole or in part) as part of the clearance process. Some of these reviewers had firsthand experience with the events described by Esper.

        - Esper confirmed Trump's ask in a March 2024 MSNBC interview: "He wanted to deploy active-duty troops on the street of Washington, D.C., and suggested actually that we…shoot…Americans in the street…That's kind of more what you'll see: this hyper-aggressive behavior."
    - Wall Street Journal reporter Michael Bender wrote in his book, "Frankly, We Did Win This Election: The Inside Story of How Trump Lost," that a number of heated confrontations took place in the Oval Office over how to respond to demonstrators in summer 2020, where Trump called for military violence against protestors. "That's how you're supposed to handle these people," Trump told his top law enforcement and military officials, highlighting videos which displayed a strong use of force by law enforcement, according to Bender. "Crack their skulls!" Trump wanted the military to "beat the f–k out" of protesters, Bender wrote. "Just shoot them," Trump reportedly said multiple times inside the Oval Office. After resistance from his officials, Trump did temper his language, but only slightly, Bender wrote. "Well, shoot them in the leg—or maybe the foot," Trump said, adding, "But be hard on them!"
- Effort to stay in office after losing the presidency in 2020.
    - Sept. 10, 2020, Fox News, Trump said in response to how he would stop potential riots on election night if he won: "We'll put them down very quickly if they do that. We have the right to do that, we have the power to do that if we want." "Look, it's called insurrection. We just send in and we do it, very easy. I mean, it's very easy. I'd rather not do that because there's no reason for it, but if we had to we'd do that and put it down within minutes."
    - The D.C. federal indictment against Trump alleges that during a January 2021 White House meeting, Jeffrey Clark suggested the Insurrection Act as an option if riots occurred due to Trump's refusal to step down. On January 3, 2021, hours after Trump had offered Clark the position of Acting Attorney General, Clark spoke with Patrick Philbin, deputy White House counsel, who told him that "there had not been outcome-determinative fraud in the election and that if" Trump "remained in office nonetheless, there would be 'riots in every major city in the United States.'" The indictment alleges Clark responded, "Well, that's why there's an Insurrection Act."

- As *The New York Times* noted, in 2020 protests subsided without Trump deploying regular troops or federalizing a state's National Guard. However, during his 2024 campaign, Trump has misleadingly claimed that he personally sent troops to Minneapolis to quell the unrest. In reality, it was Minnesota Governor Tim Walz who ordered the National Guard's brief deployment, with no involvement from Trump in the operation.

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XVII. Purging and Transforming the Military

- The return of Donald Trump to the Oval Office raises significant concerns regarding the future of the U.S. military and its role in American society and international peace and security. Analysts fear that Trump aims to transform the military from a nonpartisan institution committed to upholding the Constitution into a tool for his political ambitions, purging its ranks in replacement of his loyalists and sycophants. Trump's return could be marked by a concerted effort to retaliate against the officer corps, whom he perceives as having betrayed him.

- Many are concerned that among Trump's "highest priorities" is to turn U.S. service members into "praetorians loyal not to the Constitution, but only to him," according to *The Atlantic*. If successful, this shift aims to "convert the nonpartisan U.S. military into the muscular arm of his political agenda," firing generals and admirals who fail to meet his ideological standards and replacing them with Trump loyalists, MSNBC warned. Trump, his defense secretary nominee Pete Hegseth, and the wider MAGA world, including the Heritage Foundation, all plan to clamp down on "wokeness" and the alleged "DEI" agenda, targeting military academies and banning transgender individuals from serving. If successful, Trump would "break the military as one of the few institutions able to constrain his attempts to act against the Constitution and the rule of law," *The Atlantic* wrote. Once the military is fully under Trump's control, it would become a tool to enforce his personal agenda—including immigration crackdowns, policing civil dissent, and executing foreign policy—with Hegseth, if confirmed by the Senate, aligning with these objectives, including likely purging military leadership and clamping down on groups linked to civil demonstrations in 2020.

- Trump has a long history of attacking the U.S. military and firing military leaders, including his top military officials, generals, and administration advisers. In its latter months, the Trump administration "carried out sweeping changes atop the Defense Department's civilian leadership structure, removing several of its most senior officials and replacing them with perceived loyalists to the President," CNN reported. But those efforts, according to The Atlantic, "came too late to bring the military under his full political control. The president and his advisers were slow-footed and disorganized, and lacked familiarity with Washington politics. They were hindered as well by the courage and professionalism of the military officers and civilian appointees who, side by side, serve in the Defense Department. Trump now nurses deep grudges against these officers and civilians, who slow-rolled and smothered his various illegal and autocratic impulses[.]"

- In addition to a "long history of warmongering," Secretary of Defense nominee Hegseth has a long record of targeting the military with plans to shake up its leadership, roll back inclusive policies, and push his divisive political agenda if confirmed by the Senate.
    - He has called for targeted action such as purging defense leadership ranks; labeled some as "woke," or proponents of the "DEI" agenda; called for the firing of

any general or admiral promoting "woke" policies; criticized Ret. Gen. Mark A. Milley; and demanded the firing of Joint Chiefs Chair, Air Force Gen. C.Q. Brown.

- Hegseth has advocated for ending combat roles for women and loosening restrictions on troop conduct in combat. "He has little patience for the moral questions surrounding war," *AP* reported.
- In January 2021, Pete Hegseth was barred from serving as a National Guard member for Joe Biden's inauguration and flagged as a possible "insider threat" after concerns were raised about a tattoo on his bicep. The tattoo reads "Deus Vult," a Latin phrase linked to the Crusades that has been appropriated by extremist groups like the Proud Boys and Three Percenters. While the phrase is also used by some Catholics, an intelligence officer flagged it as a potential "insider threat." Hegseth later claimed his removal was due to a cross tattoo on his chest, but reports and an email from the Guard's security manager confirmed the focus was on the "Deus Vult" tattoo on his bicep.
- Hegseth has dismissed extremism as a significant issue in the military, downplaying both the role of military members and veterans in the Capitol attack and criticizing the Pentagon's subsequent efforts to address it. In his June 2024 book The War on Warriors, Hegseth claimed that only "a few" or "a handful" of active-duty soldiers and reservists were present at the Capitol, ignoring the hundreds of veterans later arrested and charged. Hegseth criticized the Pentagon's actions to combat extremism, calling the problem "fake" and "manufactured" while accusing military leadership of "peddling the lie of racism in the military." He argued that such efforts had forced "rank-and-file patriots out of their formations." Hegseth further claimed that addressing extremism had weakened national security, writing, "America is less safe, and our generals simply do not care about the oath that they swore to uphold. The generals are too busy assessing how domestic 'extremists' wearing Carhartt jackets will usurp our 'democracy' with gate barriers or flagpoles."
    - According to an *AP* investigation in October 2024, over 480 individuals with military backgrounds were accused of ideologically motivated extremist crimes between 2017 and 2023, including more than 230 linked to the January 6 insurrection. The data was compiled and analyzed by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland.
- In 2019, Hegseth successfully lobbied President Trump to pardon several service members accused or convicted of war crimes, using his Fox News platform to advocate for their cases and interview their families. Among those pardoned were an Army commando charged with killing a suspected Afghan bomb-maker and a lieutenant convicted of ordering deadly fire on three Afghan men. Critics, including the ACLU, condemned the pardons as undermining the military justice system, disregarding the rule of law, and trivializing the victims' lives. Hegseth's influence was pivotal, with a lawyer for one service member crediting him for securing Trump's attention to the cases.

- Hegseth served as Executive Director of the Koch-funded Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) from 2012 to 2016, which *The Washington Post* described in 2016 as "one of the most vocal critics of the [Department of Veterans Affair] since the wait time scandal that unfolded in 2014." Under his tenure, the group advocated for reducing the independence of the Department of Veterans Affair—including privatizing the VA into an "independent, government-chartered nonprofit corporation"—and making it easier to fire VA employees as part of an effort to, in Hegseth's words, "overhaul[ ] a dysfunctional and bureaucratic culture that has infected VA at all levels."

- Trump has pledged a sweeping purge of the military and federal government. Central to this effort is the removal of top military leaders he deems "woke," signaling a broader attempt to reshape the armed forces to align with his agenda. As part of its pledge to modernize the military, the 2024 GOP platform states, "get woke Leftwing Democrats fired as soon as possible." Reports in November 2024 revealed plans for an executive order to expedite these removals, with a proposed "warrior board" to review senior officers and recommend dismissals based on vague criteria. Additionally, his transition team has reportedly compiled a list of military officers for potential dismissal, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chair and those connected to former Chair Mark Milley.
  - The Trump transition team is preparing an executive order to expedite the removal of top military leaders, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on November 12. The draft order proposes a "warrior board" of retired generals and noncommissioned officers to review three- and four-star officers and recommend the removal of those deemed "lacking in requisite leadership qualities." Reviews would focus on "leadership capability, strategic readiness, and commitment to military excellence," although specific criteria were not provided. See further: *The Hill* & MSNBC.
  - Members of Trump's transition team are reportedly creating a list of military officers for potential dismissal, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Reuters* reported on November 14, 2024. This unprecedented Pentagon shakeup would likely target officers connected to former Joint Chiefs Chairman Mark Milley, with current Chairman Air Force General C.Q. Brown potentially among those to be replaced, according to sources familiar with the planning.
  - As noted in *Section VI*, Ivan Raiklin, a Trump activist with ties to key allies, has proposed mobilizing up to a million service members—whom he claims oppose the COVID-19 vaccine mandate—to seek "retribution" against Pentagon leaders. Self-described as Trump's "secretary of retribution," Raiklin has reportedly compiled a "Deep State target list" with apparently over 1,500 names, including government officials, members of Congress, journalists, and others he claims deserve "lawful justice."
  - November 2024, on Shawn Ryan podcast, Trump's pick for defense secretary, Hegseth, said one of the first actions the Trump administration should take is to fire Joint Chiefs Chair Brown. "Well, first of all you've got to fire the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and you've got to fire — I mean obviously you've got to bring in a

new Secretary of Defense, but any general that was involved — general, admiral, whatever — that was involved in any of the DEI woke shit has gotta go."

- July 24, 2024, Charlotte, NC, Trump suggested replacing America's military generals with NASCAR drivers. "We should send you into – I've always said, we should get some of those guys. I have a lot of friends in that world. I don't know, I think, isn't Roger Penske, like, a great guy, too? Guy won, he won 20 Indianapolis 500s. This guy wins all the time. 'I mean, we appreciate talent,' I said, 'let me use these guys to guide our military a little bit." "When you can win so many races, that's okay, you know, you guide. Same thing with coaches, you take some of the great football coaches, you put them at the table. 'What do you like, coach?' Because, in its own way, it's not so much really different." "I mean, we appreciate talent, I said, let me use these guys to guide our military a little bit," Trump told his rally supporters. "When you can win so many races, that's okay, you know, you guide. Same thing with coaches, you take some of the great football coaches, you put them at the table. 'What do you like, coach?' Because, in its own way, it's not so much really different."
- June 2024, Hugh Hewitt radio show interview, Hegseth stated that around one-third of the military's top officers are "actively complicit" in the political agenda infiltrating the U.S. military. While discussing his latest book, Hegseth criticized what he referred to as "woke, CRT, DEI things, gender stuff" that he claims have "seeped into" the military.
- June 2024, in Pete Hegseth's book, "The War on Warriors," he wrote, "The next president of the United States needs to radically overhaul Pentagon senior leadership to make us ready to defend our nation and defeat our enemies. Lots of people need to be fired." On Joint Chiefs Chair, Air Force Gen. C.Q. Brown, Hegseth said: "Was it because of his skin color? Or his skill? We'll never know, but always doubt - which on its face seems unfair to CQ. But since he has made the race card one of his biggest calling cards, it doesn't really much matter."
- June 2, 2024, Fox News interview, Trump said he would "get rid of," "fire" top military generals he deems as "woke." "Yes, I would get rid of them. Yeah. But see, now I know them. I didn't know them before. But, you know, I came in, what do I know? I was a New York real estate person. But no, I'd fire. I would fire them. You can't have woke military."
- July 18, 2023, Agenda47, Trump said: "As Biden's call up of reserve troops show, we also clearly need to address the embarrassing recruitment situation in the USA. Joe Biden's woke policies and political purges have repulsed many great patriots from serving. They don't want to serve in our military, frankly, they disrespect our president. That's a big factor. I will restore the proud culture and honor traditions of America's armed forces. And there will be no Marxism allowed, no communism allowed, and we'll get rid of the fascists."
- March 2, 2023, Agenda 47, Trump said, "Every institution in America is under attack from this Marxist concept of 'equity.'… I will get this extremism out of the White House, out of the military, out of the Justice Department, and out of our government."

    - Recently, Trump has attempted to backpedal on calling the military 'woke.'
        - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said:
            - "We have the greatest military, I got to tell you. They're not 'woke.' Don't worry about when you hear they're 'woke.'"
            - "We have great generals. We have great leaders. We have great military and they're not going 'woke.' You could put them in a room for two years and scream, 'woke crap' to 'em, and they'd walk out and they wouldn't be, they would be changed. They're not going 'woke,' don't worry about our military."

- Trump and his transition team are reportedly planning to target senior military leadership involved in the 2021 Afghanistan withdrawal. In addition to long pledging to fire all generals involved in the Afghanistan withdrawal, NBC News reported on November 16, 2024, that Trump's transition team is intensifying efforts to hold those responsible for its mismanagement accountable, including exploring whether they should face court-martial on charges as severe as treason. They are compiling a list of senior current and former military officials involved in the withdrawal and exploring whether they should face court-martial on charges as severe as treason. Transition team officials are also considering establishing a commission to investigate the decision-making processes and execution of the withdrawal, tasking it with exploring applicable charges. Additionally, the team is considering the option of recalling retired officers to active duty for potential court-martial. This initiative is partly led by Matt Flynn, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for counternarcotics and global threats during the Trump administration.
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: "You know, it's amazing, though. Not one person from that horrible tragedy of Afghanistan, not one general, not one leader, in any way, got fired, not one person. By you know, Biden never fired anybody because they have the goods on him. So I fired people like crazy. I love to fire people. I love to fire people that didn't do their job. I fired a lot of people that didn't do that. I fire 'em. 'You didn't do your job.' 'I'm sorry.' 'Say hello to your family. You're fired. Get out.'"
    - August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump said: "Our country will never be safe again until we have fired those responsible for this disaster. Nobody fired. … [W]hen I take office, we'll ask for the resignations of every single official. We'll get the resignations of every single senior official who touched the Afghanistan calamity to be on my desk at noon on inauguration day. You know, you have to fire people. You have to fire people when they do a bad job. We never fire anybody. You got to fire them like on 'The Apprentice:' 'you're fired.' You did a lousy job. You did a terrible, terrible disservice to our country. You get fired. When that happens, nobody got fired. Nobody ever gets fired in this administration. It's amazing all the bad things that have happened. Nobody ever gets fired."
    - August 2024, *The Shawn Ryan Show,* speaking on the Afghan withdrawal, Trump said:
        - "We have some really stupid people at the top"

        - "And we have great generals, and we have great military, and they're not woke … the people that are woke are the people, the top people. They should all get out. And I'll tell you another thing, I fired a lot of people. When they don't do a good job, I fire them. I think it's important. Biden's never fired anybody. She's [Harris] never fired anybody, everybody involved in that horrible, most embarrassing day. You understand that? I think it's the most embarrassing day in the history of our country."
        - "But whoever worked on Afghanistan should be fired. The generals should all be fired. That was the most incompetent thing."
    - June 2024, in Pete Hegseth's book "The War on Warriors," he criticizes the withdrawal, describing it as a "humiliating retreat" and blaming military leaders for violating their oath, mismanaging the operation, and causing unnecessary deaths, including the Abbey Gate attack and a botched airstrike that killed 10 civilians. In his book "The War on Warriors," Hegseth accuses these leaders of lying, disgracing the military, and capitulating to civilian agendas, calling for decisive action to restore accountability and integrity within military leadership. "These generals lied. They mismanaged. They violated their oath. They failed. They disgraced our troops, and our nation. They got people killed, unnecessarily," he wrote. "And, to this moment, they keep their jobs. Worse, they continue to actively erode our military and its values — by capitulating to civilians with radical agendas. They are an embarrassment, with stars still on their shoulders," he wrote. "The next president of the United States needs to radically overhaul Pentagon senior leadership to make us ready to defend our nation and defeat our enemies. Lots of people need to be fired. The debacle in Afghanistan, of course, is the most glaring example."

- Likely utilizing executive orders, "Trump is preparing on Day One to overturn … travel reimbursement for military members seeking abortion care and to restrict transgender service members' access to gender-affirming care," according to a November 21, 2024, report by NBC News.

- On day one, Trump has said he will revoke Biden's Marxist DEI executive order, and reinstate the Trump 2020 executive order banning stereotyping based on race and sex in the federal government. He also plans to remove critical race theory and gender-related policies from the United States military.
    - August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump said: "We will get critical race theory and left wing gender insanity out of the armed forces and totally out of the United States military."
    - March 2, 2023, Agenda 47, Trump said, "Every institution in America is under attack from this Marxist concept of 'equity.'… I will get this extremism out of the White House, out of the military, out of the Justice Department, and out of our government."
    - March 2, 2023, Agenda47 & June"

        - "Under Biden's order, within 30 days, over 20 agencies including the Treasury, the Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Defense will be required to implement an 'Agency Equity Team.'"
        - "I will immediately terminate all staffers hired to implement this policy, and eliminate all offices and initiatives connected to it. We will not allow it to happen."
        - "I will create a special team to rapidly review every action taken by federal agencies under Biden's "equity" agenda that will need to be reversed. We will reverse almost all of them. Maybe, in fact, all of them."
        - "I will get this extremism out of the White House, out of the military, out of the Justice Department, and out of our government. We don't want it in our country."
    - Project 2025 recommends:
        - "Eliminate Marxist indoctrination and divisive critical race theory programs and abolish newly established diversity, equity, and inclusion offices and staff." (Chris Miller, p. 103).
        - The National Security Council "should rigorously review all general and flag officer promotions to prioritize the core roles and responsibilities of the military over social engineering and non-defense related matters, including climate change, critical race theory, manufactured extremism, and other polarizing policies that weaken our armed forces and discourage our nation's finest men and women from enlisting." (Russ Vought, p. 52).

- Trump allies have increasingly targeted military academies and academic institutions they view as oppositional.
    - November 2024, on Shawn Ryan podcast, Hegseth said the military must "get DEI and CRT out of military academies"
    - In October 2024, Professor Ruth Ben-Ghiat, an author of this Threat Tracker, was blocked from delivering a speech to the U.S. Naval Academy following pressure from the Heritage Foundation and allied groups. This incident reflects a broader campaign by Trump and his supporters to challenge and influence service academies (and, generally, education institutions) they see as ideologically incompatible.
    - Project 2025 recommends:
        - "Audit the course offerings at military academies to remove Marxist indoctrination, eliminate tenure for academic professionals, and apply the same rules to instructors that are applied to other DOD contracting personnel." (Chris Miller, p. 104)
        - "Audit all curricula and health policies in DOD schools for military families, remove all inappropriate materials, and reverse inappropriate policies." (*Id*.)

- Trump has suggested he plans to reinstate his 2019 ban on transgender people in the military, a move also advocated by Project 2025.
    - Aug. 8, 2023, Windham, NH, Trump said at a rally:
        - "I will ban the Department of Veterans Affairs from wasting a single cent to fund transgender surgeries or sex change procedures."
        - "Those precious taxpayer dollars should be going to care for our veterans in need, not to refund radical gender experiments for the communist Left."
        - "I'll also restore the Trump ban on transgender in the military,"
    - Project 2025's "Mandate" states: "Reverse policies that allow transgender individuals to serve in the military. Gender dysphoria is incompatible with the demands of military service, and the use of public monies for transgender surgeries or to facilitate abortion for servicemembers should be ended." (Chris Miller, p. 104)

- President-elect Trump's Secretary of Defense nominee, Pete Hegseth, advocates for women to be cut from from combat role
    - November 7, 2024, Hegseth on *The Shaw Ryan Show*, said, "I'm straight up just saying we should not have women in combat roles," adding, "It hasn't made us more effective, it hasn't made us more lethal, has made fighting more complicated."
    - November 2024, asked whether he "like[d] women in combat," Hegseth said, "No … because everything about men and women serving together makes the situation more complicated, and complication in combat means casualties or worse."

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XVIII. Undermining America's Stature Abroad and Eroding International Alliances

- Trump did not criticize Vladimir Putin's jailing of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny or question Navalny's highly-suspicious death on Feb. 16, 2024 while in Russian custody. Instead, Trump repeatedly compared himself to Navalny by suggesting his ongoing legal problems were the result of political persecution.
    - Feb. 18, 2024, Truth Social: "'Biden:Trump::Putin:Navalny.'"
    - Feb. 19, 2024, Truth Social: "The sudden death of Alexei Navalny has made me more and more aware of what is happening in our Country. It is a slow, steady progression, with CROOKED, Radical Left Politicians, Prosecutors, and Judges leading us down a path to destruction. Open Borders, Rigged Elections, and Grossly Unfair Courtroom Decisions are DESTROYING AMERICA. WE ARE A NATION IN DECLINE, A FAILING NATION! MAGA2024"

- Trump has long threatened to leave NATO**.** He has long criticized NATO and suggested he would seek to leave the military alliance, and also suggested that the U.S. would help defend a NATO ally only if certain conditions are met, usually financial. His campaign

website contains a single sentence on Agenda47 and NATO: “Finally, we have to finish the process we began under my Administration of fundamentally reevaluating NATO's purpose and NATO's mission.”

- August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump recalled telling a NATO president that the United States would not protect their country from Russia unless they contributed more toward settling their debts with the United States. “Absolutely not,” Trump said.
- August 27, 2024, *The Shawn Ryan Show,* Trump recounted telling a NATO president that their country would not receive U.S. defense support against Russia unless they contributed more toward settling their debts with the United States. “No, we won't even think, you mean you're delinquent. If you're delinquent, we are not going to defend you if you're delinquent. As soon as I said that, the money came in by the billions.”
- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump boasted that while in the Oval Office: “I was tough on our allies, too, because our allies always took advantage of us. But once I got them straightened out, it was fine. I mean, we had NATO, and they weren't paying their bills. And they said, ‘Well, what are you going to do?’...But I said, ‘I'll be back in about six months.’ And when I came back, I said, ‘You're not paying your bills.’ And they looked at me, they said, ‘Well, you mean to tell me,’ because I said, ‘You got to pay your bills, or we're not going to protect you with NATO.’...So I said, ‘No, you have to pay your bills.’ And one of the presidents from one of the countries, 28 countries at the time, 28 countries, only seven of them were paid up. The rest of them didn't pay. And the United States was paying much more than they should have, like by about 10 times. We were carrying NATO. So we get screwed on trade and we carry NATO. And I said, ‘If you don't do this, we got problems.’ And one of them stood up and said, ‘Sir, do you mean to tell me that if I'm attacked…as a country, by Russia, you will not defend me?’ I say, ‘Are you delinquent?’ He said, ‘Well, let's say I was.’ I said, ‘If you're delinquent, I would not protect you.’”
- Feb. 10, 2024, Conway, SC: Trump boasted that while president he had once told a counterpart of a “big” NATO country that if that country failed to satisfy its “bills,” the United States would not protect the country from a Russian invasion and would in fact “encourage” Russia “to do whatever the hell they want.”
  - March 2023, CPAC Conference: Trump bragged to the crowd that he had told NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg and other NATO ally leaders that he would not protect them from Russia if they were “delinquent” in spending. “This was a round table with nobody in the room, but the presidents, prime ministers, and dictators, okay? Some of them are all the same, but they stood up and he stood up and said, ‘Sir, can I ask you a question? If we don’t pay up and if we get attacked by Russia, will you protect us, sir?’ I said, ‘Now you’re not paid up, right?’ ‘That’s right.’ ‘You’re delinquent, right?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘I will not protect you from Russia.’ ‘Sir, we’ll send you a check tomorrow, sir. We’ll send you a check tomorrow. It’ll be sent by overnight mail, sir, I promise you’ll have it tomorrow.’”

        - He made similar comments in July 2023 during a Fox News interview.
    - Since late summer 2023, Trump has been privately touting, "NATO on standby," drawing inspiration from a February 2023 Center for Renewing America policy brief, titled "Pivoting the US Away from Europe to a Dormant NATO." He has also made clear that the ranks of a second administration would not be "NATO lovers."
    - In his 2000 book, "The America We Deserve," Trump wrote that "[p]ulling back from Europe would save this country millions of dollars annually."
    - July 20, 2016: Trump said he would come to the aid of a NATO ally attacked by Russia only after reviewing whether they had "fulfilled their obligations to us."
    - In July 2018, Trump questioned whether he would come to the defense of NATO ally Montenegro.
    - During the 2018 NATO summit, those present said that Trump warned that the U.S. would "go it alone" if allies, particularly Germany and Canada, did not meet their defense budgets for next year. He had similar conversations with his administration officials.
    - In July 2018 he denounced the E.U. as a "foe" because of "what they do to us in trade."
    - At a rally in 2018, Trump said that he had threatened NATO allies with leaving if all countries did not spend 2% of their GDP on defense.
    - In August 2019, Trump said, "I don't give a shit about NATO," according to John Bolton, Trump former National Security Advisor.

- Although Trump's intended policies on the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine are not all totally clear (at this point), some would endorse violations of international law, seriously jeopardize Ukraine's security, and are expected to align with policies of his autocrat ally Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.
    - During his 2016 campaign he said that he would consider recognizing Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea:
        - July 2016, ABC News interview, Trump said of Russia's plans to annex parts of Crimea, "I'm going to take a look at it. But you know, the people of Crimea, from what I've heard, would rather be with Russia than where they were. And you have to look at that, also."
    - Trump has said that he would somehow end the Russia-Ukraine war in "24 hours," but has been unclear as to how exactly he would do so with such speed. In fact, he has suggested that he would have prevented Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine territories, including by making a deal in which Ukraine simply ceded to Russia its eastern territories, despite Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy having made clear he would never do so. (note: he has also recently claimed that the October 7 Hamas attack would never have happened if he were President. *See e.g.*, Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI; August 26, 2024, *The Shawn Ryan Show;* March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC; May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI; May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ)

- Nov. 6, 2024, Fox News, Trump national press secretary Karoline Leavitt described the President-elect's "resounding" win over Kamala Harris as giving him a "mandate" to exact his "day one" plans, which include "bringing Ukraine and Russia to the negotiating table to end this war."
- Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said,
  - "Russia would have never happened, if I were president. Attacking Ukraine, would have never happened. I knew Putin. I knew him well,"
  - "And I'll tell you what, I will have that war finished and done and settled before I get to the White House as President Elect, I will get that done. We'll get it done. … We're going to get it done very quickly. I know both of them. I know Zelinsky and I know Putin. I'm going to get it done very quickly."
  - "And I will settle the war in Ukraine. I will end the chaos in the Middle East."
- August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump said: "Before I even arrive at the Oval Office, shortly after I win the presidency, I will have the horrible war between Russia and Ukraine settled. I'll get it settled very fast."
- August 2024, *The Shawn Ryan Show*, Trump suggested multiple times that the Russia-Ukraine war would have never happened under his presidency. He went further, stating that: "I will have that war settled when I'm President-elect, meaning before I get to office on January 20."
- May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "Before I even arrive at the Oval Office shortly after we win the presidency, I will have the horrible war between Russia and Ukraine settled."
- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: "Before I even arrive at the Oval Office shortly after we win the presidency, and it's 'we' all together, it's a 'we,' it's not me, I will have the horrible war between Russia and Ukraine settled. I will get it settled quickly. Horrible war. Would have never happened if I was president."
- April 12, 2024, Mar-a-Lago, during a joint press conference with House Speaker Mike Johnson, Trump said: "The Ukraine situation would have never happened if I was president, would have never ever happened." He made the same claim later in response to media questions.
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "And we are a nation that allowed Russia and Ukraine to fight, killing hundreds of thousands of people. And it will only get worse. It would never have happened with me as your president."
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "Before I even arrive at the Oval Office shortly after we, we win the presidency, I will have the horrible war between Russia and Ukraine settled."
- Feb. 1, 2024, Trump campaign video, he stated: "If I were president, the Russia-Ukraine War would never have happened," President Trump said.

"Never in a million years. But even now, if I were president, I'd be able to negotiate an end to this horrible and rapidly escalating war within 24 hours." He went on to say ending the war would be "easy."

- May 10, 2023 CNN town hall, Trump said: "If I'm president, I will have that war settled in one day, 24 hours." "I'll meet with Putin, I'll meet with Zelenskyy. They both have weaknesses and they both have strengths. and within 24 hours that war will be settled. It'll be over, it'll be absolutely over."
- May 3, 2023, GB News, in a sit-down interview with British politician Nigel Farage, Trump said: "If I were president … I [would] end that war in one day. It'll take 24 hours. I know Zelenskyy well, I know Putin well. I will get that ended… That deal would be easy. That deal would be easy. But I would get that deal done within 24 hours. That war has to be stopped. That war is a disaster."
- March 27, 2023, Fox News interview with Sean Hannity, Trump said of Russia's invasion of Ukraine: "I'd be able to work that out. It would have never happened in a million years, and even the Democrats admit that. But if this thing isn't solved by the time we have the [2024] election, which it's possible it won't be … if it's not solved, I will have it solved in 24 hours with with Zelensky and with Putin, and there's a very easy negotiation to take place, but I don't want to tell you what it is because then I can't use that negotiation, it'll never work. But there's a very easy negotiation to take place. I will have it solved within one day—a peace between them."
- March 6, 2023, radio interview with Sean Hannity, Trump said Russian president Vladimir Putin would have "never" tried to take over anything in the region while Trump was in office, but that he could have "made a deal to take over something." "He [Putin] would have never done it. That's without even negotiating a deal. I could have negotiated. At worst, I could've made a deal to take over something … there are certain areas that are Russian-speaking areas, frankly, but you could've worked a deal."

- Trump's plans to end the war *could* include cutting off U.S. funding to Ukraine or significantly paring it back. For months, Trump, via his Republican allies, has "been undermining...effort[s]" by the Biden administration to boost military aid to Ukraine. Most recently he said that any funds should be loaned to Ukraine and repaid "*if* they make it" through the war. Indeed, behind closed doors it seems Trump is toying with the idea of totally cutting funding, according to his close ally Orbán who recounted a conversation with Trump while at Mar-a-Lago.
  - Orbán has long attempted to disrupt the flow of funding and aid into Ukraine coming from the European Union and United States. He met with Republicans and Heritage Foundation members in Washington in December 2023, and has repeatedly advocated that international peace and security, including in Ukraine, rests on Trump returning to office.
    - March 10, 2024, M1 TV, Orbán is reported to have told state television that during his March 8 visit to Mar-a-Lago Trump told him if he regains the White House he "will not give a penny into the

Ukraine-Russia war and therefore the war will end." The Trump campaign readout of the meeting made no such mention of discussing Ukraine. Orbán is reported to have said:

  - "He has a very clear vision that is hard to disagree with. He says the following: first, he will not give a single penny for the Russo-Ukrainian war. That's why the war will end, because it's obvious that Ukraine cannot stand on its own two feet. If the Americans don't give money and weapons along with the Europeans, the war will end. And if the Americans don't give money, then the Europeans won't be able to fund this war alone. And then the war will end."
  - "If Europeans are afraid of the Russians or want to have a high level of security in general, they have to pay for it. Either by building their own army and their own equipment, or if they use the Americans for this, by paying the Americans a price, the price of security. So he [Trump – ed.] is speaking directly and clearly."

- Orbán has said that he believes Trump must win the 2024 election for international peace and security to be restored, and, of course, Trump has seized the opportunity to repeat Orbán's support during rallies.
  - August 26, 2024, National Guard Association conference, Detroit, MI, Trump said: "You know, Victor Orbán from Hungary, Prime Minister. He's known as a very tough leader, tough man. Good man, but a tough man. One of the toughest in Europe. And they asked him a little while ago, 'why is it that the whole world is blowing up?' He says, 'Because President Trump isn't the President of the United States. If he were the president of the United States, none of this stuff would be happening right now, none of it, none of it at all.' And I believe that's true."
  - March 10, 2024, M1 TV, Orbán told state television: "So we already know about him, we already know from his presidency, that he is a man of peace. And he is not hiding his views now: he has made it clear that his goal is to bring peace to the Russo-Ukrainian war. We want a ceasefire as soon as possible. We want an early end to this war, which is slowly coming to an end. I don't see anyone else who has more determination and strength to do that than Donald Trump."
  - March 4, 2024, Orbán told an economic forum: "It is not gambling but actually betting on the only sensible chance, that we in Hungary bet on the return of President Trump." "The only chance of the world for a relatively fast peace

deal is political change in the United States, and this is linked to who is the president."

- As noted in *Chapter XIII* above, on March 11, 2024, Trump shared on his Truth Social a March 10 Twitter post by Orbán, which was accompanied by an edited video of the pair's meeting on March 8 at Mar-a-Lago, narrated by Orbán. The subtitles read: "My meeting with President Donald Trump has come to an end. President Trump was a president of peace. He commanded respect in the world, and thus created the conditions for peace. During his presidency there was peace in the Middle East and peace in Ukraine. And there would be no war today if he were still the President of the United States. We agreed that there will be peace when there are world leaders who want peace. I am proud that Hungary is one of those countries. We also agreed that there still still much potential in US-Hungarian economic relations. Although our trade turnover has grown to more than 9 billion dollars, we do not want to stop there. When the president returns, we will give him impetus [sic] to US-Hungarian trade relations. Here in America the campaign is in full swing, and indeed in rushing ahead. It is up to Americans to make their own decision, and it is up to us Hungarians to frankly admit that it would be better for the world – and better for Hungary too – if President Donald Trump were to return to power."
- April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: "You know, if you look at Prime Minister Orbán of Hungary, he said, 'the only way you're going to clean up this world is if Trump becomes president again.' I said, 'that's nice.'... They asked him, 'What's going on.' He said, 'You gotta have Trump, get Trump back. You gotta get Trump back."

- March 16, 2024, Daytona, OH, suggesting that Ukraine might not make it through the war, Trump said: "We should loan them the money, not send them the money. We should loan them the money so that if they do make it—*if* they make it, they're against tremendous odds, but if they make it—they pay us back. Loan them the money. Give it to them as a loan. Let them be a little bit like they have to be a little nice. Loan them the money, don't just hand them a check for $ 60 billion."
- May 3, 2023, GB News, Trump said: "If I were president…I [would] end that war in one day. It'll take 24 hours…A lot of it has to do with the money. A lot of it has to do with the military…that we're giving. But I would get that deal done within 24 hours. That war has to be stopped. That war is a disaster. And I'm talking more than money; I'm talking about the human life."

- Trump has also made flippant comments about thousands who have died during the Russia-Ukraine war, and has suggested that Ukraine might not make it through the conflict.
  - March 17, 2024, Fox News interview, Trump said: “Hundreds of thousands of people are dead now that would be alive. With that being said, It is what it is. It's a terrible situation."
  - As noted above, during his speech in Daytona, March 16, Trump said: “We should loan them the money, not send them the money. We should loan them the money so that if they do make it—*if* they make it, they’re against tremendous odds, but if they make it—they pay us back. Loan them the money. Give it to them as a loan. Let them be a little bit like they have to be a little nice. Loan them the money, don’t just hand them a check for $ 60 billion.”

- Trump intends to use military personnel and assets, including the U.S. Navy, to “wage war” on drug cartels. As early as early 2020, Trump was asking his aides and top administration officials if they could shoot missiles into Mexico to “destroy the drug labs” and take out drug cartels, in violation of international law.
  - Trump’s defense secretary Mark Esper recounts Trump asking him if: “We could just shoot some Patriot missiles and take out the labs, quietly,” adding that “no one would know it was us.” Trump raised the idea to Esper at least twice during 2020, asking whether they could blame another country for it.
  - December 2023, Agenda47, a policy video on the Trump campaign website titled, “President Donald J. Trump Declares War on Cartels,” saw Trump promise to “deploy all necessary military assets, including the U.S. Navy, to impose the full Naval embargo on the cartels” and demand the Department of Defense “to make appropriate use of special forces, cyber warfare, and other overt and covert actions to inflict maximum damage on cartel leadership, infrastructure, and operations.” Trump’s administration would also designate cartels as foreign terrorist organizations, a move he previously considered.
  - The 2024 GOP platform pledges to “mobilize Military personnel and assets as necessary to crack down hard on the cartels that traffic drugs and people into our Country.”

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XIX. Discriminating Against LGBTQ+ Americans

- Trump believes gender transition among youth is “left wing gender insanity” and said he would pass a bill establishing that there are “only two genders.” Specifically, he plans to use the powers of the federal government to reduce gender transition at any age and to ban the use of hormone therapies and surgeries for gender transition among youth.
  - Trump plans to announce that medical facilities providing hormone therapies or surgeries for transition will be deemed non-compliant with federal health and

safety regulations, resulting in the loss of federal funding, including Medicaid and Medicare. Additionally, he aims to urge Congress to ban hormonal and surgical treatments for transgender minors across all 50 states.

- June 30, 2023, Moms for Liberty Event, Trump said, “On Day One, I will sign an executive order instructing every federal agency to cease the promotion of sex or gender transition at any age. They’re not gonna do it anymore. I will declare that any hospital or health-care provider that participates in the chemical or physical mutilation of minor youth no longer meets federal health and safety standards—they will be terminated from receiving federal funds effective immediately.”
- Agenda47, Feb. 1, 2023: “I will declare that any hospital or health-care provider that participates in the chemical or physical mutilation of minor youth will no longer meet federal health and safety standards for Medicaid and Medicare and will be terminated from the program immediately.”

- Trump intends to revoke gender affirming care.
  - Agenda47, Feb. 1, 2023: “The Left wing gender insanity being pushed in our children is an act of child abuse. On day one, I will revoke Joe Biden's cruel policies on so-called gender affirming care. Ridiculous. A process that includes giving kids puberty blockers, mutating their physical appearance and ultimately performing surgery on minor children. Can you believe this? I will sign a new executive order instructing every federal agency to cease all programs that promote the concept of sex and gender transition at any age. I will then ask Congress to permanently stop federal taxpayer dollars from being used to promote or pay for these procedures…No serious country should be telling its children that they were born with the wrong gender, a concept that was never heard of in all of human history. Nobody's ever heard of this. What’s happening today. It was all when the radical left invented it just a few years ago.”

- Trump has called for establishing that there are only two genders through the Department of Education and legislation.
  - June 30, 2023, Moms for Liberty Event, “I will also take historic action to defeat the toxic poison of gender ideology, to restore the timeless truth that God created two genders: male and female.”
  - Agenda47, Feb. 1, 2023: “My Department of Education will inform states and school districts that if any teacher or school official suggest to a child that they could be trapped in the wrong body, they will be faced with severe consequences. I will ask Congress to pass a bill establishing that the only genders recognized by the United States government are male and female, and they are assigned at birth.”

- Trump refers to gender affirming care as “child sexual mutilation” and says he will impose a national ban..

- Agenda47, Feb. 1, 2023: I will "pass a law prohibiting child sexual mutilation in all 50 states."
- Agenda47, Feb. 1, 2023: "The left-wing gender insanity being pushed at our children is an act of child abuse. Very simple. Here's my plan to stop the chemical, physical and emotional mutilation of our youth."

- Trump has criticized allowing transgender athletes to compete, saying he will prohibit "men from participating in women's sports." He has made similar remarks many times.
  - Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: Trump said, the American people "don't want to see a girl be beat up in a boxing ring by a man, as happens. They don't want to see somebody in a weight lifting contest, a woman against a man. It makes no sense. They don't want to see, you know, men playing in women's sports. They don't."
  - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said, "We will keep men out of women's sports."
  - Oct. 24, 2024, Tempe, AZ, Trump said: "We will keep men out of women's sports."
  - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said, "We will keep men out of women's sports."
  - July 24, 2024, Charlotte, NC, Trump, after telling a crude transphobic joke, said: "It's so crazy, men playing in women's sports."
  - 2024 Republican National Convention, Trump said: "We will not have men playing in women's sports. That will end immediately."
  - June 2023, speaking on transgender people in sports, Trump said: "These people are sick; they are deranged."
  - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "And I will keep men out of women's sports."
  - March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "I will keep men out of women's sports."
  - Agenda47, Feb. 1, 2023: "The bill will also make clear that Title 9 prohibits men from participating in women's sports."

- Trump has suggested he plans to reinstate his 2019 ban on transgender people in the military, a move also advocated by Project 2025.
  - Aug. 8, 2023, Windham, NH, Trump said at a rally:
    - "I will ban the Department of Veterans Affairs from wasting a single cent to fund transgender surgeries or sex change procedures."
    - "Those precious taxpayer dollars should be going to care for our veterans in need, not to refund radical gender experiments for the communist Left."
    - "I'll also restore the Trump ban on transgender in the military,"
  - Project 2025's "Mandate" states: "Reverse policies that allow transgender individuals to serve in the military. Gender dysphoria is incompatible with the demands of military service, and the use of public monies for transgender surgeries or to facilitate abortion for servicemembers should be ended." (Chris Miller, p. 104)

- To "end left-wing gender insanity", the 2024 GOP platform pledges to "keep men out of women's sports, ban Taxpayer funding for sex change surgeries, and stop Taxpayer-funded Schools from promoting gender transition, reverse Biden's radical rewrite of Title IX Education Regulations, and restore protections for women and girls."

- The Project 2025 agenda advocates rescinding federal "regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender status, and sex characteristics."
    - In a training video for Project 2025's "Presidential Administration Academy", Katie Sullivan, an acting assistant attorney general at Trump's DOJ, called for "the removal of all the equity plans from all" federal government websites.

- In his November 25 Interview with *Time*, Trump said he would consider reversing protections for transgender children under Title 9.

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XX. Attacking the Free Press

- Trump has a long and bitter history with the media, especially those he disagrees with, and has made no apologies for his pointed criticism of certain news outlets as "fake news" and the "enemy of the people." He has recently called their actions "treason" and vowed to investigate them if he returns to office.
    - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said: "they're the enemy of the people the press."
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: "The fake news is … a threat to this country. They are just horrible. These are horrible people. … Most of them are just absolutely terrible human beings. … They are just so bad. … They're the police force for opposite. They're a police force for bad. They're bad, they're bad people, and they're very dishonest."
    - Aug. 13, 2024, Truth Social post: "I absolutely HATE the Fake News Media. So bad for our Country!"
    - Jan. 15, 2024, Truth Social: Trump has called the mainstream the "LameStream Media, which is merely a subsidiary of the Democrat [sic] Party."
    - Nov. 29, 2023, Truth Social: "Our so-called 'government' should come down hard on them and make them pay for their illegal political activity. Much more to come, watch!"
    - Sept. 24, 2023, Truth Social: "They are almost all dishonest and corrupt, but Comcast, with its one-side and vicious coverage by NBC NEWS, and in particular MSNBC, often and correctly referred to as MSDNC (Democrat National Committee!), should be investigated for its 'Country Threatening Treason.; Their endless coverage of the now fully debunked SCAM known as Russia, Russia, Russia, and much else, is one big Campaign Contribution to the Radical Left

Democrat Party. I say up front, openly, and proudly, that when I WIN the Presidency of the United States, they and others of the LameStream Media will be thoroughly scrutinized for their knowingly dishonest and corrupt coverage of people, things, and events. Why should NBC, or any other of the corrupt & dishonest media companies, be entitled to use the very valuable Airwaves of the USA, FREE? They are a true threat to Democracy and are, in fact, THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE! The Fake News Media should pay a big price for what they have done to our once great Country!"

- Trump has a history of filing defamation suits against the media and, since the election, favorably settled a suit with ABC and has threatened suits against other media outlets.
    - Dec. 16, 2024: Trump sued *The Des Moines Register*, its parent company Gannett, pollster J. Ann Selzer, and her polling firm over a poll it published showing Trump trailing Kamala Harris by 3 points in Iowa. The suit alleges violations of the Iowa Consumer Fraud Act for "brazen election interference" from a "leaked and manipulated" poll. Trump won Iowa by 13.3 points. At a news conference earlier that day in Palm Beach Florida, Trump announced the suit would be coming, calling the poll "fraud" and "election interference."
        - At the same news conference, Trump threatened to file additional defamation lawsuits against other newspapers as well as social media platforms and influencers.
    - Dec. 14, 2024: ABC News agreed to contribute $15 million to Trump's future presidential foundation and museum, as well as $1 million in attorney's fees, to settle a defamation suit based on anchor George Stephanopoulos's comments about E. Jean Carroll's lawsuit against Trump. A federal jury in New York ruled in favor of E. Jean Carroll, finding that Trump sexually abused and defamed her. While the jury determined Trump was liable for sexual abuse, it did not find him liable for rape as defined by New York penal law. In denying Trump's motion for a new trial, however, the presiding judge explained: "The finding that Ms. Carroll failed to prove that she was 'raped' within the meaning of the New York Penal Law does not mean that she failed to prove that Mr. Trump 'raped' her as many people commonly understand the word 'rape.' Indeed, as the evidence at trial recounted below makes clear, the jury found that Mr. Trump in fact did exactly that." Mr. Stephanopoulos used the term rape to describe the events.

- Nov. 3, 2024, Lancaster County, PA, referring to the bulletproof glass positioned in front of his lectern, Trump remarked that, for a bullet to reach him in an attempted assassination, a shooter would need to "shoot through the fake news, and I don't mind that so much."

- Trump and his allies, including Project 2025, have pledged to launch investigations, revoke broadcasting licenses, and proposed cuts to public broadcasting funds. A CNN review of Trump speeches and social media posts over the past two year found that he "has called for every major American TV news network to be punished" and "imprecisely

but repeatedly invoked the government's licensing of broadcast TV airwaves and has said on at least 15 occasions that certain licenses should be revoked."

- Nov. 3, 2024, Lancaster County, PA, Trump said that CBS's license should be "bid out."
- Oct. 20, 2024, speaking on CBS News, Trump told Fox News, "We're going to subpoena their records."
- Oct. 10, 2024, X post, Trump called for CBS's broadcast license to be revoked, accusing the network of editing interview footage to favor Vice President Kamala Harris. He wrote: "A giant Fake News Scam by CBS & 60 Minutes. Her REAL ANSWER WAS CRAZY, OR DUMB, so they actually REPLACED it with another answer in order to save her or, at least, make her look better. A FAKE NEWS SCAM, which is totally illegal. TAKE AWAY THE CBS LICENSE. Election Interference. She is a Moron, and the Fake News Media wants to hide that fact. An UNPRECEDENTED SCANDAL!!! The Dems got them to do this and should be forced to concede the Election? WOW!"
- Oct. 10, 2024, Truth Social: "60 Minutes is a major part of the News Organization of CBS, which has just created the Greatest Fraud in Broadcast History. CBS should lose its license, and it should be bid out to the Highest Bidder, as should all other Broadcast Licenses, because they are just as corrupt as CBS — and maybe even WORSE!"
- In a video uploaded onto YouTube October 8, 2024, Trump told Ben Shapiro, "The New York Times is one of the most dishonest of all. I watched this, New York Times, and it's a classic. Wait until you see what I'm going to do with them, you're going to have so much fun."
- Sept. 24, 2024, Truth Social: They are almost all dishonest and corrupt, but Comcast, with its one-side and vicious coverage by NBC NEWS, and in particular MSNBC, often and correctly referred to as MSDNC (Democrat National Committee!), should be investigated for its 'Country Threatening Treason.' Their endless coverage of the now fully debunked SCAM known as Russia, Russia, Russia, and much else, is one big Campaign Contribution to the Radical Left Democrat Party. I say up front, openly, and proudly, that when I WIN the Presidency of the United States, they and others of the LameStream Media will be thoroughly scrutinized for their knowingly dishonest and corrupt coverage of people, things, and events. Why should NBC, or any other of the corrupt & dishonest media companies, be entitled to use the very valuable Airwaves of the USA, FREE? They are a true threat to Democracy and are, in fact, THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE! The Fake News Media should pay a big price for what they have done to our once great Country!"
- Sept. 11, 2024, Fox News, following his presidential debate with Harris, Trump also called for ABC's broadcast license to be revoked. When Fox News host Ainsley Earhardt asked why ABC moderators hadn't "corrected" Harris during the debate, Trump replied, "They're a news organization. They have to be licensed to do it. They ought to take away their license for the way they did that."

    - June 12, 2024, former Trump adviser Steve Bannon warned of potential "investigations under the Constitution and by the rule of law" into the media for allegedly "colluding with the Justice Department." He stated, "It's coming and we're going to be unrelenting in it because you tried to destroy the American republic and you came very close."
    - Dec. 5, 2023, former Trump Department of Defense and National Security Council staffer Kash Patel appeared on Bannon's podcast and declared, "We will go out and find the conspirators, not just in government but in the media."

- May 26, 2024, Truth Social, Trump reposted to his platform a video of a man who was verbally attacking MSNBC's Joe Scarborough and raging on about Trump getting rid of "blowjob liberals" if he is re-elected. "I can't wait for Uncle Donnie to win. I can't wait. He'll get rid of all you fucking liberals. You liberals are gone when he fucking wins. You fucking blowjob liberals are done. Uncle Donnie's gonna take this election—landslide … Landslide, you fucking half a blowjob. Landslide. Get the fuck out of here, you scumbag." Reports have pointed to the "dangerous turn" this could signal for the press.

- As President, Trump proposed ending federal funding for nonpartisan media, e.g. NPR & PBS, which exist to ensure Americans have universal access to educational and informational programming.

- In December 2023, former Trump Pentagon official Kash Patel vowed in an interview with Steve Bannon that a second Trump administration would prosecute people in the media who "helped Joe Biden rig presidential elections." "We're gonna come after you ... we're putting you all on notice."

- Trump would attack federal whistleblowers.
    - Trump's Agenda47 plan calls for a "major crackdown on government leakers who collude with the media to create false narratives, pressing criminal charges when appropriate."
    - In 2019, in connection with asking Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate then-Vice President Biden, Trump compared the people who gave information to the whistleblower to spies and said the U.S. should "handle" them like they did "in the old days," a reference to capital punishment.

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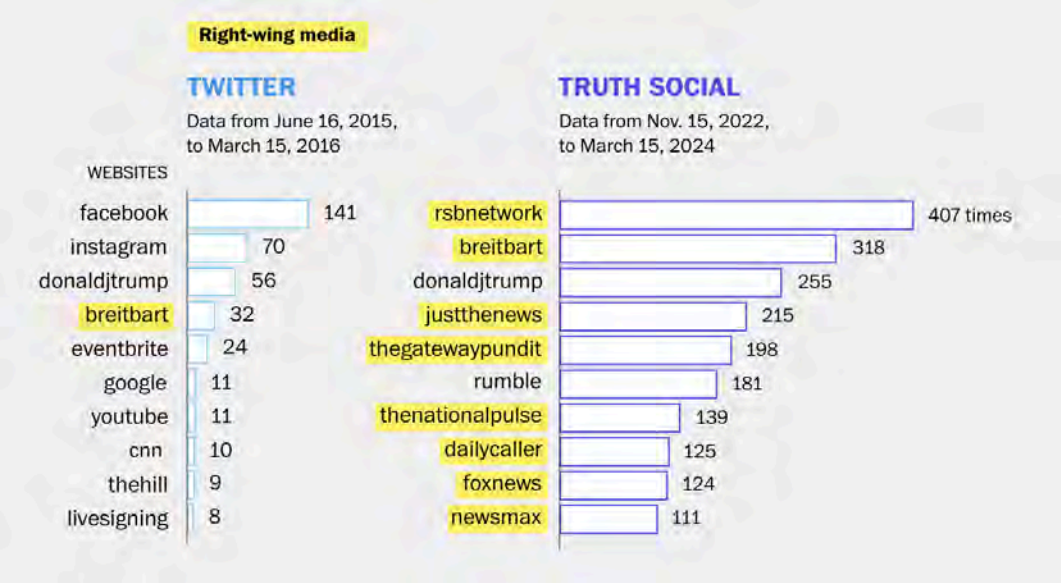
XXI. Endorsing Harmful Conspiracy Groups and Theories

- The former president's close ties to a network of far-right activists, conspiracy theorists, and individuals with well-documented histories of bigotry and extremist views has helped mainstream these harmful ideologies, legitimizing their agendas. (WaPo)

- Trump's recent online activity reflects an increasingly isolated and aggressive stance, marked by a pattern of promoting falsehoods and conspiracy theories that align with far-right narratives, fueling a dangerous cycle of misinformation. According to a *Washington Post analysis* published on April 22, 2024, which "analyzed all of Trump's online posts from the official launches of his presidential campaigns in 2016 and 2024," "[m]any of Trump's Truth Social posts in this story contain falsehoods, misleading statements or baseless claims," which has "help[ed] fuel a feedback loop of false conspiracy theories and misinformation." "Trump has become angrier and more isolated on Truth Social," offering "an intimate view of what his second term could look like: isolated, vitriolic and vengeful," *The Post* warned.
    - *The Post's analysis* found that Trump's "media diet has become almost exclusively right-wing." "It wasn't always this way," *The Post* noted. For example, "[o]n Twitter, he used to link to a mix of mainstream and partisan sources. Now, his "feed is packed with links to right-wing news sites and conservative influencers," posting "a blend of polarized riffs on the news, fawning op-eds and interviews, and content from far-right accounts."
    - 

    - https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/2024/trump-truth-social-posts/
- Research by Nature concluded in February 2021 that Trump's engagement with conspiracy theories, especially regarding QAnon, upended traditional research on disinformation. It concluded that how Trump's amplification of fringe ideas and false narratives led to the mainstreaming of once-marginal conspiracy theories, such as claims of a "deep state," during his presidency. The piece also noted that Trump's use of social media reshaped how such conspiracy theories spread and how researchers now study disinformation in the digital age.

- Trump has extensively promoted QAnon-related conspiracies—initially using his Twitter account and later ramping up his involvement on Truth Social, where his engagement with the group's slogans and content "stark[ly] increase[d]"—further fueling the

movement's influence. (According to Axios in August 2024, "Trump and some of his most ardent supporters are consuming" a "stew of rage and conspiracy theories.")

- Truth Social and its leadership have "actively courted QAnon supporters to the platform" as part of a broader strategy to grow its user base. For instance, Kash Patel, an adviser to Trump and former director of the company behind Truth Social, admitted in a June 2022 podcast interview that the platform's embrace of QAnon-friendly content was a calculated business move. Patel acknowledged that the then financially struggling platform deliberately included such content to capture a large and devoted audience. "We try to incorporate it into our overall messaging scheme to capture audiences because whoever that person is has certainly captured a widespread breath of the MAGA and the America First movement. And so what I try to do is -- what I try to do with anything, Q or otherwise, is you can't ignore that group of people that has such a strong dominant following," Patel explained.
- Trump's amplifications of QAnon-promoting accounts on Truth Social have been well-documented.
  - During his presidency, Trump amplified QAnon-promoting accounts on Twitter more than 300 times, and also offered public praise for the QAnon community multiple times, analysis by *Media Matters* found
  - According to a report released on August 29, 2022, by *NewsGuard*, an independent watchdog analyzing the trustworthiness of various news outlets, 88 users promoting the QAnon conspiracy theory were identified on Truth Social, each with more than 10,000 followers. Of these accounts, 32 had previously been banned by Twitter. Trump amplified content from 30 of these QAnon-promoting accounts, reposting their messages 65 times since joining the platform in April 2022. Additionally, Truth Social had verified 47 of these QAnon accounts, all with more than 10,000 followers. Cumulatively, the QAnon-promoting accounts boosted by Trump had approximately 772,000 followers.
  - Trump ramped up his support of QAnon on Truth Social, which *The Washington Post* said "is packed with links to right-wing news sites and conservative influencers."
  - Trump amplified QAnon-promoting accounts more than 800 times during his first two years of active posting on Truth Social, *Media Matters* states. Between April 28, 2022, when Trump began actively posting on his platform, and April 28, 2023, he boosted QAnon-promoting accounts nearly 500 times, including instances of sharing explicit QAnon content. An *Associated Press* analysis in September 2022 found that over a third of the nearly 75 accounts Trump had reposted on Truth Social in the past month had "promoted QAnon by sharing the movement's slogans, videos or imagery. About 1 in 10 include QAnon language or links in their profile bios."
  - This trend continued into Trump's second year on the platform, according to *Media Matters*: between April 29, 2023, and April 29, 2024, Trump

endorsed QAnon-related accounts nearly 350 additional times, bringing the total to over 800. These second-year amplifications also included explicit QAnon content.

- More recently, on the morning of August 28, 2024, Trump amplified on Truth Social "at least 6 different QAnon-promoting accounts a total of 15 times," *Media Matters* found.
  - These posts included images featuring the conspiracy slogan "Where We Go One, We Go All," and references to the group's belief that "the storm is coming," as well as that "NOTHING CAN STOP WHAT IS COMING."

https://trumpstruth.org/statuses/25524

https://trumpstruth.org/statuses/25510

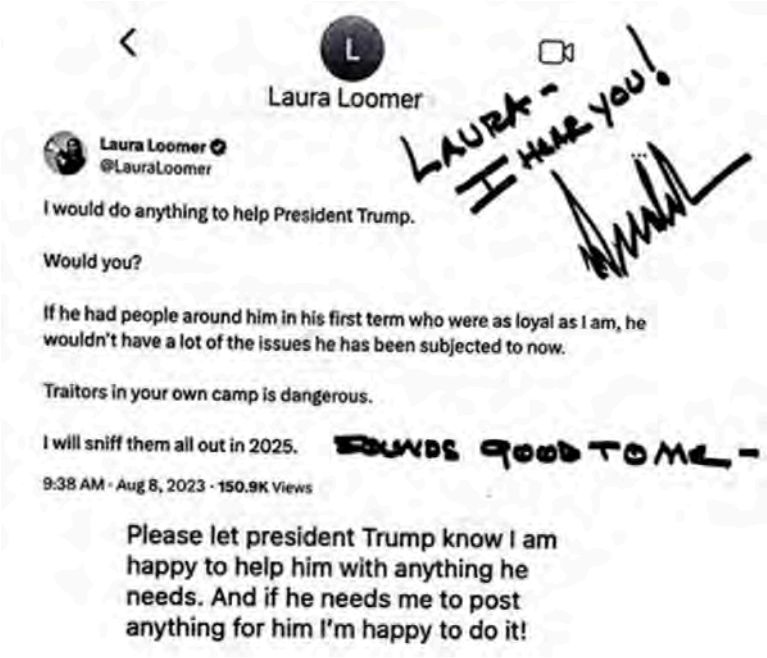
https://trumpstruth.org/statuses/25512

- Trump has close associated himself with Laura Loomer, a far-right activist notorious for spreading harmful disinformation. He is reportedly a "huge fan" of her, wanted to offer her a position in his 2024 campaign, and he has repeated her baseless claims and promoted her content on his social media platform. According to *The Washington Post*, "He's 're-truthed' dozens of her 'truths,' many of which evoke the former president's own posting style: one calling Republican Rep. Tom Emmer (Minn.) a 'communist enabler' beholden to 'the Uniparty' (a disparaging term for the political establishment); one about how 'President Trump was 100% right to FIRE THAT DIRTY COP JAMES COMEY!!! #WitchHunt #LockComeyUp'; one calling for a 'MISTRIAL!' in Trump's New York civil fraud trial based on the social media activity of the judge's wife." (See further reporting by *Media Matters* on Trump's "Retruthing" of Loomer's content.) He has also responded to

Loomer's social media posts with handwritten notes on at least two occasions, including accepting her offer to sniff out traitors, as well as to a request for a birthday dinner with him. CNN reported that Loomer "knows his personal number and has utilized it, one source familiar with the relationship told CNN. (Another source insisted she is respectful of his team and goes through the regular channels when she's trying to reach him.) She's been on a handful of trips with him, appears often at events where he is speaking and there have been times her bombastic social media posts have appeared to preview Trump's next line of attack." She told *The Washington Post* that she "routinely plays golf" with Trump at Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach. Despite having no official role in Trump's campaign, Loomer has reportedly accompanied Trump on at least five official events between January and September 2024. Indeed, Loomer has made apparent her desire to serve in a Trump administration, including as House press secretary. According to CNN, Loomer's "sway with the Republican nominee … cannot be discounted. … [T]he Trump stalwart has managed nearly unrestricted access to the former president as he seeks the country's highest office once again."

- Below are a selection of the confirmed encounters and interactions, direct and indirect, between Trump and his campaign and Loomer (in chronological order).
  - January 31, 2020, Trump's 2020 presidential campaign reportedly utilized an email list associated with Laura Loomer's media company to raise funds. According to *Mediaite*, a fundraising email sent by the Trump campaign in January 2020 indicated that it was sent through "2020 Illoominate Media," a media company owned by Loomer, which also operates her news site, 'LOOMERED.com.'
  - August 24, 2020, during a virtual Florida tele-rally, Trump said: "We had some incredible races and some incredible people winning; Anna Paulina Luna, Byron Donalds, Carlos Gimenez, Maria Salazar, Kat Cammack, and Laura Loomer."
  - March 2023, Loomer met with Trump and campaign co-chair Susie Wiles at Mar-a-Lago. She told *The Washington Post* that Trump had told aides to offer her a role on the campaign,which she was set to start on April 1, until *The New York Times* reported on the news and, reportedly, the offer fell through.
    - "I'll never forget it," Loomer told *The Post*. "He says, 'Make sure she gets on the team, we gotta hire her.' And he goes, 'She's a lot smarter than a lot of these other people who have worked for me.'"
    - In early April 2023 *The Times* reported that Trump had "recently" instructed aides to hire Loomer for a campaign role, despite concerns that her history of inflammatory statements and alignment with the fringes of the Republican Party would spark backlash. This concern proved accurate: after the news broke, it ignited a firestorm among some of Trump's most vocal conservative supporters. By the end of that week, a senior campaign official confirmed that Loomer would no longer be hired.

- April 4, 2023, Loomer attended Trump's speech at Mar-a-Lago, which followed his arraignment in New York, where he pleaded not guilty to 34 felony charges related to hush money payments.
- April 29, 2023, the Trump campaign shared an article of Loomer's on the campaign website entitled, "LOBBYGATE: Ron DeSantis's State Insurance Chief Failed to Declare Interest, As Millions of Floridians Face Rising Premiums And Loss of Insurance"
- May 2023: "Laura — Happy birthday — You are fantastic!" Trump wrote on a printout of her request to have dinner with him for her birthday. Since Loomer's birthday is May 21, this exchange likely took place in May 2023.
- June 6, 2023, Loomer posted on X that she had confronted former FBI Director James Comey at a book signing, questioning him about the Durham Report. She was detained by police after the incident, in what she described as, "I #LOOMERED Comey". Trump responded to a printout of the post, writing, "LAURA - THIS IS AMAZING - I AM POSTING ON TRUTH."
- August 2023, Trump again "suggested the campaign hire Loomer for an official role," *CNN* reported.
- August 8, 2023, Loomer tweeted: "I would do anything to help President Trump. Would you? If he had people around him in his first term who were as loyal as I am, he wouldn't have a lot of the issues he has been subjected to now. Traitors in your own camp are dangerous. I will sniff them all out in 2025." Trump replied in capitals on a printout of the tweet, "Laura — I hear you! Sounds good to me," signing it with his signature.



- August 13, 2023, Trump appeared with Loomer in a video at his Bedminster golf club in New Jersey. Loomer said she spent the whole day with Trump at the 2023 LIV Golf Bedminster Tournament. In the video, shared by Loomer on X, Trump praised her, saying, “It’s great to have you, and you’ve been really very special. You work hard, and you are a very opinionated lady. I have to tell you that, and in my opinion, I like that. And I appreciate all of your support and you’ve been terrific, and everybody appreciates your support.” According to Loomer, “President Trump invited me to sit with him inside his private box at #Bedminster to watch the #LivGolf tournament.”
- November 8, 2023, during a rally in Hialeah, Florida, at which Loomer was seated in the “special guest section,” Trump said: And a person who's really taken the country by storm, very powerful person, very strong person, very courageous person, a warrior, Laura Loomer. Laura, where are you? Thank you, Laura. Great job you do.
- November 9, 2023, Donald Trump Jr. said on his Rumble show that he would “love to see” Loomer “as press secretary just to watch D.C. just explode.”
- November 10, 2023, Loomer responded to Donald Trump Jr. Rumble show comments the day earlier, saying, “let it be known that I will gladly accept the position of press secretary.”
- October 11, 2023, during an address at his Club 47 fan club in West Palm Beach, Florida, Trump said of Loomer, who was in the crowd: “Somebody who's extremely shy but really talented, and she's going places. Laura Loomer. Where's Laura? Laura. Where is Laura? She doesn't like DeSanctimonious. She doesn't like DeSanctis.”
- January 2024, Loomer traveled with Trump aboard his private plane to a campaign event in Iowa. This was likely on January 14, 2024, when during a rally in Indianola, Iowa, Trump said of Loomer, who was in the crowd: “Also, a woman who's really talented, and she's been amazing. She just loves the campaign and loves the country, and she's brought her whole staff with her. She's a very important person, politically, but she's very, she’s actually free press in the true sense. She's free press. And she's really become a friend of a lot of great patriots in this country, Laura Loomer. Stand up, please, Laura. Great job, you do. Great job. You wanna try and have her on your side, right? Much better. No. She's fantastic. Thank you, Laura. Your whole staff, we appreciate you coming.”
- February 10, 2024, during a rally in Conway, South Carolina, Trump said: “A fantastic woman, a true patriot, Laura Loomer. Laura, thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Laura.”
- February 13, 2024, JD Vance appeared on Laura Loomer's platform, where Loomer actively helped him raise funds. During the appearance, she expressed her support by saying, “I really want people to donate and support you and your reelection efforts.”

- April 5, 2024, the Trump campaign shared an article of Loomer's on the campaign website entitled, “EXCLUSIVE: More of Judge Merchan’s Anti-Trump Bias Exposed as New York AG Letitia James Employed Merchan’s Wife and The Democrat Attorney’s General Association Paid Loren Merchan’s Authentic Campaigns Company”.
- March 5, 2024, on *Prime Time* with Alex Stein, RNC co-chair Lara Trump praised Loomer, saying she “does a lot of great work online on behalf of my father-in-law and on behalf of our country.”
- March 6, 2024, Loomer attended a fundraiser at Mar-a-Lago in support of Nevada GOP Senate candidate Jeff Gunter. In one video posted online, he placed his arm around her waist and told onlookers, “She’s a lot softer than people realize.”

- April 4, 2024, Loomer attended Kari Lake’s fundraiser for her Senate campaign at Mar a Lago. During an address by Trump, he said to Loomer in the crowd: “We have a lot of great friends and a lot of great people. Laura, how are you? You look so beautiful as always. That's a woman with courage. You don't wanna be, you don't wanna be ‘Loomered.’ If you're ‘Loomered’ you’re in deep trouble. That’s the end of your career in a sense. Thanks, Laura.”

- July 14, 2024, Loomer told CNN she accompanied Trump to the Republican National Convention on his jet the day after the assassination attempt on his life. “He wanted me on the plane with him the day after he almost got assassinated. I was with him. I flew with him to the (Republican National Convention), so it could show that I’m a trustworthy person, I have his back,” Loomer said.
- July 9, 2024, during a rally in Doral, Florida, Trump said: “A friend of all of ours, and this woman is amazing, Laura Loomer. Where is she? Where’s Laura? She is amazing.”
- July 19, 2024, Loomer shared a video on X showing her at the front of the crowd after Trump’s acceptance speech at the RNC. In the video, she can be heard expressing her admiration, saying, “I love you,” to which Trump responds by blowing kisses.
- July 27, 2024, Bitcoin 2024 Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, Trump said: “The great Laura Loomer. Some of you know Laura. She's a fantastic person, great woman and a tremendous developer from New York and Florida, one of the best”
- Sept. 10, 2024, she attended the presidential debate after flying with Trump on his plane,
- Sept. 11, 2024, Loomer was “invited as a guest” to accompany Trump to two 9/11 commemoration events in New York and Pennsylvania, notwithstanding her public conspiracy theories on 9/11 (see below). As CNN remarked, “Of all the days to count Loomer as a travel companion, Sept. 11 was notable. … Loomer’s proximity … was illustrative of her influence with Trump of late.”

- Loomer has an extensive record of spreading dangerous lies and conspiracy theories, compounded by her self-identification as “pro-white nationalism” and a “proud Islamophobe.” Her prominent involvement in the MAGA movement has been marked by calls for aggressive action against members of the justice system (and Democrats) working to hold Trump accountable. CNN reported that “several people close to the former president say Loomer has contributed to some of the unseemly conspiracy theories Trump has elevated since Harris replaced Biden on the ticket.” (*Media Matters*; NPR; CNN; *NY Times*; *AP*; Judd Leggum)
  - She was banned from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, as well as ride-sharing services Uber and Lyft, for her incendiary comments against Muslims, although Elon Musk later reinstated her account on X.
  - Shared a video on X on June 24, 2023, that claimed, “9/11 was an Inside Job.” Loomer has sought to deny her culpability, pointing out that her accompanying text to the video in her post did not state “inside job””
  - A lead propagator of conspiracy theories surrounding the January 6 Capitol attack. For example, on January 6, 2024, Loomer alleged that “January 6 was an inside job used to give the Deep State an excuse to ban President Trump on all social media … It was also used to set the ground for stealing all future elections, which we are witnessing now with

the ballot removal cases, and it was used to expand the surveillance state, normalized Weaponized government and to demonize and jail Trump and his supporters." She praised rioters as "patriots" who "protested the 2020 stolen election," and advocated for their pardoning.

- Openly endorses "great replacement" theory, including that the conspiracy that undocumented immigrants are voting illegally
- Loomer claimed that Haitian immigrants are "eating cats," as has Trump. For example, on September 12, 2024, she posted on X: "We are losing our country and illegal Aliens are raping and killing children and eating people's pets, and the only thing the White House wants to talk about is CURRY AND COLLA GREENS." *Axios* reported that Loomber was "egging" Trump on during the plane ride to the presidential debate in September 2024, in which went on to claim Haitians were eating the pets in Ohio.
- In 2017 she celebrated the deaths of 2,000 migrants crossing the Mediterranean.
- Loomer has made numerous racist remarks about Vice President Kamala Harris, including attacks on her racial heritage. CNN even reported that a Trump adviser said Loomer was behind Trump's comments on July 31, 2024, during the National Association of Black Journalists Convention, where he falsely claimed Harris had only recently identified as Black."
    - On September 8, 2024, reposting a photo shared by Kamala Harris on X that featured her Indian grandparents, Loomer added, "If @KamalaHarris wins, the White House will smell like curry & White House speeches will be facilitated via a call center, and the American people will only be able to convey their feedback through a customer satisfaction survey at the end of the call that nobody will understand." (She doubled down on her comments on Sept. 12)

- Claimed several times that the assassination attempt on Trump was an "inside job"
- Reported to be partly behind the bogus attacks on the daughter of Justice Juan Merchan, who oversaw Trump's criminal trial in New York. In response to the March 26, 2024 gag order Merchan placed on Trump, Loomer immediately posted a series of false claims on X that Merchan's daughter had a picture of Trump behind bars as her X avatar, which Trump later cited as proof of Merchan's bias. Indeed, Trump's legal team echoed the false claim in an unsuccessful motion for Merchan's recusal.
- *Mediaite* reported that Loomer was behind Trump's November 2023 attacks on the wife of Justice Arthur Engoron during his civil fraud trial. Although the judge's wife had no social media posts about Trump and does not even have an X (formerly Twitter) account, Trump shared images claiming they were hers. These images were "directly sourced" from Loomer's social media. Throughout the trial, Trump also targeted the court staff, sharing the court clerk's name, photo, and a link to her Instagram account.

        - Reacting to Trump's 34 convictions in New York for falsifying business records, Loomer said Democrats should not just be jailed but receive the death penalty for treason: "Not just jail, they should get the death penalty. You know, we actually used to have, the punishment for treason in this country."
        - Stated Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce are in an arranged relationship to influence the 2024 election
        - In August 2022 she toasted with Holocaust denier Nick Fuentes "to the hostile takeover of the Republican Party."

- In September 2024, Trump, running mate JD Vance, and numerous MAGA supporters falsely accused Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, of eating cats, dogs, and waterfowl, including geese and ducks from local parks—a claim swiftly debunked by local officials. According to *The Washington Post*, the claim was "based on scattered social media posts drawing on photos and stories far from Springfield" that "gained momentum online with neo-Nazis" and over several days "unspooled into a twisted and demagogued message" that Trump amplified during the debate for millions of viewers. Despite being baseless, the false narrative spread rapidly through far-right media, resulting in significant security threats. Bomb threats targeted the city hall, two elementary schools, and two hospitals, while a threat was made to shoot Haitian students at a local university. Some schools evacuated or were closed during investigations, a college and university canceled activities and moved teaching online, and hospitals went into lockdown. Indeed, days after the rumor surfaced, the Proud Boys were seen marching through the town, heightening tensions and further endangering the community's safety.
    - It is important to note that while Trump has falsely referred to "***illegal*** Haitian migrants taking over Springfield," (emphasis added) the vast majority of Haitians immigrants are in Springfield and the United States legally. The Biden administration granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitians who arrived on or before June 3, 2024, extending their legal protection through February 3, 2026, with the possibility of renewal. (see further reporting by *The New York Times*.) As highlighted by Prof. Ryan Goodman, "The racist smears of Haitians in Springfield, Ohio shows how easily these influencers' position against "illegal immigrants" slides into being against legal immigrants (of color)"
    - Trump's Involvement.
        - Sept. 10, 2024, Presidential Debate, Trump said, "What they have done to our country by allowing these millions and millions of people to come into our country, and look at what's happening to the towns all over the United States. .... In Springfield, they're eating the dogs, the people that came in, they're eating the cats. … They're eating the pets of the people that live there, and this is what's happening in our country, and it's a shame."
        - Sept. 13, 2024, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, while Trump did not repeat the claim that dogs and cats were being eaten by Haitans, he did falsely claim that Haitian immigrants in Springfield are in the country illegally and "destroying" the town's "way of life." The claim of "*illegal* Haitian migrants"

appeared to be "carefully scripted", with Trump reading directly off his prepared remarks.

- Trump's running mate, Sen. JD Vance (OH) played a critical role in spreading the false claim, which he continued to defend even after threats to his constituents.
  - Sept. 9, 2024, Vance claimed on X that in Springfield people "have had their pets abducted and eaten by people who shouldn't be in this country."
  - Sept. 10, 2024, Vance followed up: "In the last several weeks, my office has received many inquiries from actual residents of Springfield who've said their neighbors' pets or local wildlife were abducted by Haitian migrants. It's possible, of course, that all of these rumors will turn out to be false." He later added: "In short, don't let the crybabies in the media dissuade you, fellow patriots. Keep the cat memes flowing."
  - Despite local officials debunking the accusations, Vance has doubled down on his rhetoric. Though he has seemingly admitted to spreading these false stories to attract media attention, and also accepted that most Haitians are legal immigrants, he continues to defend his claims by pushing further baseless conspiracy theories, including the "Great Replacement" narrative.
    - Sept. 15, 2024, during a CNN interview, Vance said, "the media totally ignored this stuff until Donald Trump and I started talking about cat memes." "If I have to create stories so that the American media actually pays attention to the suffering of the American people, then that's what I'm gonna do." "It comes from firsthand accounts from my constituents. I say that we're creating a story, meaning we're creating the American media focusing on it." "But yes we created the actual focus that allowed the American media to talk about the story and the suffering caused by Kamala Harris's policies."
    - Sept. 15, 2024, when asked by CBS News about hate groups amplifying harmful rhetoric about Haitians in Springfield, as well as the Proud Boys presence in the town, Vance doubled down on another baseless claim he had recently endorsed, that Haitians are spreading HIV and tuberculosis throughout Springfield. "Of course, I don't align myself with the views of the Proud Boys Margaret, but we have to remember that this is a real problem. The media is using things like a dozen marchers to ignore and distract from the fact that thanks to Kamala Harris's open borders, there are children who aren't getting a good education. Thanks to her open border, there is a rise in HIV cases in Springfield, Ohio," Vance said.
    - Sept. 14, 2024, Twitter post, Vance wrote: "Anyone who doesn't think 20,000 cheap laborers should be dropped on a small Ohio town is a neo-nazi."
    - Sept. 13, 2024, Twitter post, Vance said, "'They are here legally,' they tell us. Yes, they are here legally because Kamala Harris

granted Temporary Protective Status to 100,000 Haitians. But Kamala Harris waving the magic amnesty wand is not a justification for the presence of 20,000 newcomers in Springfield. It is an indictment of her despicable open border. … Yet it is Kamala Harris who is a threat to democracy. It is Kamala Harris who would rather import new voters than persuade the ones who are already here."

- Both Trump and his MAGA allies shared endless AI-generated images of Trump, including depictions of him as a cat and geese savior, as part of their inflammatory rhetoric. For instance, hours before the presidential debate Trump shared memes on Truth Social. The day earlier, the House Judiciary GOP shared a similar meme, while Charlie Kirk, Elon Musk fanned the false claims. Further, the Republican Party of Arizona launched a billboard campaign at 12 locations in metropolitan Phoenix, mimicking a Chick-fil-A ad with an image of four kittens and the message, "Vote Republican!" and "Eat Less Kittens," playing off false rumors.

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XXII. Spreading Disinformation and Conspiracy Theories on Public Health

- Trump spent decades spreading dangerous misinformation about public health and disease, a practice that continued throughout his administration, especially in connection with COVID-19.

- Going back to the early 1990s, Trump repeated and spread myths about HIV transmission and has embraced baseless conspiracy theories about vaccines.
    - In 1993 during the AIDS/HIV crisis, while on *The Howard Stern Show*, Trump said that people who knew they were HIV-positive intentionally spread the virus: "they go out on a rampage on purpose" from "anger [and] hatred."
    - In 2015, Trump linked childhood vaccines with autism and as a candidate in 2016, Trump met with anti-vaccine activists.

- During the COVID-19 epidemic, Trump was the "single largest driver" of coronavirus misinformation and conspiracy theories, responsible for 38% of false and baseless medical information related to the pandemic, according to researchers at Cornell University who analyzed 38 million articles about COVID-19.
    - Although the Trump administration played a role in helping to develop the COVID-19 vaccine (albeit a smaller role than Trump claims), Trump also played a critical part in spreading false information about miracle cures, including suggesting that injecting disinfectant into one's body could help fight the virus.

- Trump has called for a curtailment of research into mis- and disinformation.
    - December 15, 2022: "I will sign an executive order banning any federal department or agency from colluding with any organization, business or person to censor, limit, categorize or impede the lawful speech of American citizens. I will then ban federal money from being used to label domestic speech as mis- or disinformation."

- Working alongside Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who is known for promoting conspiracy theories about vaccines and other health matters, Trump has promised to tackle corruption at major health institutions, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Trump has said he will allow Kennedy Jr. to "do anything he wants" and to "go wild" with health in his administration.
    - Nov. 6, 2024, NPR interview, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said President Trump instructed him to get "the corruption and the conflicts out of the regulatory agencies."
        - *POLITICO* reported that Kennedy Jr. initiated a movement to "make America healthy again" by replacing officials in agencies he claims are beholden to the industries they oversee.

    - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, "I'm going to let him go wild on health," Trump said. "I'm going to let him go wild on the food. I've got to let him go wild on medicines."
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: "Working with Robert F Kennedy Jr., … we will take on the corruption at the FDA, the CDC, World Health Organization and other institutions of public health that have dominated, and really are dominated by corporate power and dominated really by China."

- A Trump administration could potentially move toward a ban on certain vaccines. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., nominated by Trump to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, is a prominent anti-vaccine advocate with a long history of promoting vaccine misinformation, such as claims of a link between vaccines and autism. His group, Children's Health Defense, has contributed to widespread vaccine hesitancy and public resistance.
    - Nov. 6, 2024, NPR interview, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said, "I will work immediately on that. That will be one of my priorities, to make sure that Americans - of course, we're not going to take vaccines away from anybody. We are going to make sure that Americans have good information right now."
    - Nov. 3, 2024, NBC interview, Trump refused to rule out banning vaccines if he became president, saying he'd "make a decision" after discussing with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and others. "Well, I'm going to talk to [Kennedy] and talk to other people, and I'll make a decision, but he's a very talented guy and has strong views," Trump said.
    - Oct. 30, 2024, CNN interview, Trump-Vance transition team co-chair Howard Lutnick explained that Kennedy Jr. aims to conduct studies to prove vaccines are unsafe, potentially leading to their removal from the market. "He wants the data, so he can say, 'These things are unsafe.' He says, 'If you give me the data, all I want is the data, and I'll take on the data and show that it's not safe.' And then if you pull the product liability, the companies will yank these vaccines right off, off of the market," Lutnick told CNN's Kaitlan Collins, adding, "Let's give him the data. I think it'll be pretty cool to give him the data. Let's see what he comes up with. I think it's pretty fun."

- The incoming Trump administration may recommend the removal of fluoride from public drinking water, citing health concerns associated with its use.
    - Nov. 6, 2024, NPR interview, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said that on day one the Trump administration will recommend to the U.S. water systems to remove fluoride from public drinking water. "We don't need fluoride in our water, and it's a very bad way to deliver it because it's delivered it through the blood system."
        - Nov. 2, 2024, X post, Kennedy Jr. wrote, "On January 20, the Trump White House will advise all U.S. water systems to remove fluoride from public water. Fluoride is an industrial waste associated with arthritis, bone fractures, bone cancer, IQ loss, neurodevelopmental disorders, and thyroid disease."

- Nov. 3, 2024, NBC interview, Trump said "Well, I haven't talked to him about it yet, but it sounds OK to me," adding, "You know, it's possible."

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XXIII. Politicizing Education & Censoring Disfavored Ideas

- Trump plans to eliminate or deplete the Department of Education, as he has previously tried to do, calling for the Department to be shut down in Washington, DC, and sent back to states.
  - Nov. 25, 2024, Interview with *Time*: Trump said he would effectuate a "virtual closure of [the] Department of Education in Washington" and that "we want to move education back to the states."
  - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said:
    - "We will drain the government education swamp."
    - "I'm dying to get back to do this: We will ultimately eliminate the federal Department of Education and send education back to Wisconsin and back to the states. We'll send it back to the states so that Ron Johnson can run it."
  - Sept. 2023, Agenda47: Trump said, "We're going to end education coming out of Washington, DC. We're going to close it up – all those buildings all over the place and people that in many cases hate our children. We're going to send it all back to the states."

- "Depict[ing] the nation's public schools as purveyors of an extreme ideology on gender and race," *The New York Times* wrote, Trump has promised to cut federal funding for schools that promote Critical Race Theory, transgender topics, and other racial, sexual, or political content that he considers inappropriate for children. This proposal is part of his broader agenda to reshape education in line with conservative values. He aims to prevent what he views as indoctrination and restore traditional approaches to education.
  - Oct. 27, 2024, Madison Square Garden rally, Trump said: "We will get Critical Race Theory and transgender insanity the hell out of our schools."
  - Oct. 24, 2024, Tempe, AZ, Trump said: "We will get critical race theory and transgender insanity -- we're going to get 'em the hell out of our schools immediately."
  - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said:
    - "We will drain the government education swamp and stop the abuse of your taxpayer dollars to indoctrinate America's youth with all sorts of things that you don't want to have our youth hearing."
    - "We will … keep critical race theory and transgender insanity the hell out of our schools."
  - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "On day one, I will sign a new executive order to cut federal funding for any school pushing critical race theory,

transgender insanity, and other inappropriate racial, sexual or political content onto the lives of our children."

- May 1, 2024, Waukesha, WI, Trump said: "On Day One, I will sign a new executive order to cut federal funding for any school pushing critical race theory, transgender insanity, and other inappropriate racial, sexual, or political content onto the lives of our children."
- March 2, 2024, Greensboro, NC, Trump said: "On day one, I will sign a new executive order to cut federal funding for any school pushing critical race theory, transgender insanity, and other inappropriate racial, sexual, or political content onto our children."
- March 2023, Iowa, Trump vowed to cut federal funding to any school covering any subject he finds "inappropriate," including critical race theory, transgender issues, or "any other inappropriate racial, sexual or political content on our children."
- August 2022, CPAC Texas: Trump said, "Across the country, we need to implement strict prohibitions on teaching inappropriate racial, sexual and political material to America's schoolchildren in any form whatsoever. And if federal bureaucrats are going to push this radicalism, we should abolish the Department of Education."

- Trump said he would use the college accreditation process to attack diversity, equity, and inclusion policies at higher education institutions because "radical Left accreditors [ ] have allowed our colleges to become dominated by Marxist Maniacs and lunatics."

- Trump has said many times that he would defund schools with a vaccine or mask mandate.
  - May 11, 2024, Wildwood, NJ, Trump said: "I will not give one penny to any school that has a vaccine mandate or a mask mandate."

- Trump said he would direct DOJ to pursue civil rights cases against schools that engage in affirmative action and diversity policies–what he calls "racial discrimination"--and will impose fines equal to the entire amount of a school's endowment.

- Trump wants to immediately prohibit federal funding "academic programs that support" the "toxic censorship industry."
  - December 2022, Agenda47, "The federal government should immediately stop funding all non-profits and academic programs that support this authoritarian project. If any U.S. university is discovered to have engaged in censorship activities or election interferences in the past—such as flagging social media content for removal [and] blacklisting—those universities should lose federal research dollars and federal student loan support for a period of five years, and maybe more.

- As detailed in *Section XXIII* of the *Threat Tracker*, Trump's nominee for Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, envisions a sweeping overhaul of the American school system

rooted in Christian nationalist ideals. His "educational insurgency" strategy, inspired by counterinsurgency tactics, aims to establish a network of classical Christian schools serving as cultural "boot camps" to reshape the nation's values and governance. Hegseth criticizes modern education, claiming DEI and CRT ideologies have "replaced Biblical wisdom, … Western civilization, … [and] free thought." Framing education as a battlefield, he seeks to embed this agenda into society, prioritizing indoctrination over inclusivity and critical thought. Indeed, his affiliations place him within a broader network of Reformed Reconstructionist ideologues and advocates for radical educational reform, closely tied to groups like the Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC) and the Association of Classical Christian Schools (ACCS), both with strong connections to Doug Wilson, a prominent Christian nationalist figure. Much of Hegseth's vision for a reformed education system is outlined in *Battle for the American Mind*, a book he co-authored with ACCS President David Goodwin, advocating classical Christian education as a counter to modern secular trends. (Goodwin, who has spoken at Heritage Foundation events on school reform.) Through his church membership, affiliations, and public endorsements, Hegseth has aligned himself with a movement advocating for a society governed by biblical principles, including efforts to transform education as a foundation for broader cultural and political change. This vision poses a myriad of threats to the nation's pluralistic and democratic educational principles.

- Project 2025's education agenda includes several proposals that could be enacted unilaterally by a second Trump administration. These include rolling back civil rights protections for LGBTQ+ students, reducing Title IX protections against sex-based discrimination, dismantling federal civil rights enforcement, eliminating income-driven repayment plans, and removing protections from predatory colleges. The overall goal is to significantly reduce federal oversight, shifting more control to states and reducing protections for vulnerable student groups. (Brookings)

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XXIV. Purported Fight Against Domestic Censorship

- In December 2022 Trump announced a new Agenda47 policy initiative, "Free Speech Policy Initiative," aimed at "shatter[ing] the left-wing censorship regime, and … reclaim[ing] the right to Free Speech for all Americans." The initiative alleges that "a sinister group of Deep State bureaucrats, Silicon Valley tyrants, left-wing activists, and depraved corporate news media have been conspiring to manipulate and silence the American People. They have collaborated to suppress vital information on everything from elections to public health." To "dismantle[ ]" and "destroy[ ]" the "censorship cartel."

- Trump has promised to issue a day one executive order prohibiting any federal agency or department from "colluding" with any individual, business, or organization to censor, restrict, classify, or obstruct the lawful speech of American citizens.

    - December 2022, Agenda47: “[W]ithin hours of my inauguration, I will sign an executive order banning any federal department or agency from colluding with any organization, business, or person, to censor, limit, categorize, or impede the lawful speech of American citizens.
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: “I will sign an executive order banning any federal employee from colluding to limit speech.”

- Trump plans to “[e]stablish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to declassify and publish all documents on Deep State spying, censorship, and abuses of power.”

- Within hours of inauguration, Trump has promised to start identifying and firing any federal bureaucrat involved in “domestic censorship,” directly or indirectly,
    - December 2022, Agenda47, “[W]ithin hours of my inauguration, … I will begin the process of identifying and firing every federal bureaucrat who has engaged in domestic censorship—directly or indirectly—whether they are the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, the FBI, the DOJ, no matter who they are.”
    - Sept. 7, 2024, Mosinee, WI, Trump said: “I will sign an executive order banning any federal employee from colluding to limit speech.”

- Trump would direct the Justice Department to investigate and “aggressively prosecute” those involved in online censorship, urging House Republicans to send preservation letters to the Biden administration, campaign, and tech giants to prevent evidence destruction.
    - December 2022, Agenda47:
        - “I will order the Department of Justice to investigate all parties involved in the new online censorship regime, which is absolutely destructive and terrible, and to aggressively prosecute any and all crimes identified. These include possible violations of federal civil rights law, campaign finance laws, federal election law, securities law, and anti-trust laws, the Hatch Act and a host of other potential criminal, civil, regulatory, and constitutional offenses.”
        - “To assist in these efforts, I am urging House Republicans to immediately send preservation letters — and we have to do this right now — to the Biden administration, the Biden campaign, and every Silicon Valley tech giant, ordering them not to destroy evidence of censorship.”
        - “We should also enact new laws laying out clear criminal penalties for federal bureaucrats who partner with private entities to do an end-run around the Constitution and deprive Americans of their First, Fourth, and Fifth Amendment rights. In other words, deprive them of their vote.”

- Trump wants to immediately prohibit federal funding of the toxic censorship industry, including “all non-profits and academic programs that support this authoritarian project.”

- December 2022, Agenda47, "The federal government should immediately stop funding all non-profits and academic programs that support this authoritarian project. If any U.S. university is discovered to have engaged in censorship activities or election interferences in the past—such as flagging social media content for removal [and] blacklisting—those universities should lose federal research dollars and federal student loan support for a period of five years, and maybe more.

- On day one, Trump plans to prohibit federal funding from being used to classify domestic speech as "misinformation" or "disinformation." "We need to break up the entire toxic censorship industry that has arisen under the false guise of tackling so-called 'mis-' and 'dis-information.'"
  - December 2022, Agenda47, "[W]ithin hours of my inauguration, … I will … ban federal money from being used to label domestic speech as "mis-" or "dis-information".

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XXV. Embracing Christian Nationalism

- Trump and his allies are preparing to infuse "Christian nationalism" in a second Trump administration, with Trump himself at the center, viewing Christian support as crucial not only for winning electorally but also for reinforcing the nation's core identity. He has actively sought positions that align with these views, arguing that Christian values are currently under threat, including by the radical left.
  - Oct. 28, 2024, National Faith Advisory Board Summit, Atlanta, GA, Trump sat for questions as more than 1,000 Christian leaders gathered to affirm the essential role of faith in American politics. He said:
    - "[T]hey're trying to hurt you. They're trying to stymie you. This new administration, this new, radical left group of people -- and it's not so new. It's been around for a while. And they are people that are not nice people."
    - "Now we have to save religion in this country. I mean, honestly, religion is under threat in this country. Serious threat. … We can't let that happen because I really believe it's, it's sort of the fabric of our country. It's a thing that holds our country together and we can't lose it and we're not gonna lose it. We're not gonna lose it."
    - "I think this is a country that needs religion. It's like the glue that holds it together and we don't have that. That's why you are the most important people and I'm not sure you even realize it."
  - April 2, 2024, Green Bay, WI, Trump said: "November 5 is going to be called something else you know, it's going to be called Christian visibility day when Christians turnout in numbers that nobody has ever seen before. Let's call it Christian visibility day."

    - Feb. 22, 2024, National Religious Broadcasters Convention, Nashville, TN, Trumps said:
        - "Christians, they can't afford to sit on the sidelines in this fight. They have to really get out there, and they have to do what they have to do, and they have to win."
        - The radical left is coming after all of us because they know that our allegiance is not to them. Our allegiance is to our country and our allegiance is to our creator."
        - "Remember, every communist regime throughout history has tried to stamp out the churches, just like every fascist regime has tried to co-opt them and control them. And, in America, the radical left is trying to do both."
        - "They want to tear down crosses where they can, and cover them up with social justice flags. … But no one will be touching the cross of Christ under the Trump administration, I swear to you."
        - "The left is trying to shame Christians. They try and to shame us. I'm a very proud Christian, actually. I've been very busy fighting and taking the bullets, taking the arrows. I'm taking them for you. And I'm so honored to take them."
        - "I am here today because I know that to achieve victory in this fight, just like in the battles of the past, we still need the hand of our Lord, and the grace of Almighty God."
        - " How any Christian can vote for a Democrat, Christian, a person of faith, person of faith. How you can vote for a Democrat is crazy. It's crazy. They've got to stop. They've got to stop because it's hard, you know, we have to we have to really go out and on November 5th, and we have to get votes like nobody ever got before because they always cheat."

- Trump's nomination for defense secretary, Pete Hegseth has long been a vocal advocate for a conservative Christian nationalist vision, consistently linking cultural and demographic changes to existential threats against what he describes as America's "traditional Christian fabric." Through his writings, and public statements, he has promoted a framework that seeks to preserve and expand "Christendom" through education, governance, and cultural transformation, often invoking controversial Reconstructionist and Christian Zionist ideologies.
    - **Reconstructionist Connections**: Hegseth is reported to be closely associated with the Reformed Reconstructionist movement, which has strong ties to groups advocating for a society governed by biblical principles. His rhetoric and actions consistently reflect a focus on promoting the vision of building a Christian nation through education, cultural transformation, and governance.
        - **Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC)**: Hegseth reportedly attends the Pilgrim Hill Reformed Fellowship in Tennessee, led by Pastor Brooks Potteiger and Pastoral Intern Joshua Haymes. The church is part of the Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches

(CREC), an association founded by Doug Wilson, which NPR reports is "denomination of Christian Reconstructionism" and "considered by some academics to be an extremist, Christian supremacist movement." Wilson has written extensively on his vision of an ideal Christian society, including controversial views such as praising the antebellum South as a multiracial Christian society and opposing women's suffrage. Hegseth is said to be in "good standing" with this church, according to Potteiger.

- **Association of Classical Christian Schools**: Hegseth is deeply connected to the Association of Classical Christian Schools (ACCS), a network co-founded by Doug Wilson. His children attend a school within the ACCS network, and in 2022, he co-authored a book with ACCS President David Goodwin, *Battle For The American Mind*, advocating for these schools as a means to save children from leftist indoctrination in public schools and elite universities.
- **Podcast Appearances and Promotion**: Hegseth has been a guest on *Reformation Red Pill*, a podcast hosted by Haymes and Potteiger, which reflects far-right Reconstructionist views. He continues to promote the podcast and its ideological messaging. In November 2023, Hegseth endorsed an Advent devotional published by Forge Press, an organization run by Haymes and Potteiger. Forge Press claims its mission is to "arm Christians with tools & weapons to build, defend, & expand the new Christendom," echoing textbook Reconstructionist principles. In this framework, "Christendom" is defined as a society governed by conservative Christian morality and leadership, often invoking historical justifications for events like the Crusades as a model for expanding Christian influence.

- **Defending "Christendom" Against A Cultural, Religious "Invasion":** In his 2020 book *American Crusade*, Hegseth framed the cultural and demographic shifts in America as a direct threat to its "traditional Christian fabric." He warned about "Muslims' birth rates" and the growing number of Muslim-Americans in political office, drawing parallels to what he described as a "cultural invasion" in Europe. He praised "Christian crusaders who pushed back the Muslim hordes in the twelfth century" and argued that Americans today must adopt similar courage to confront Islamists, whom he depicted as existential threats to freedom and Christian society. Hegseth claimed that Islamists are executing a deliberate plan to "conquer" Europe and America demographically, culturally, and politically. He alleged that they are aligning with secular forces to dismantle "our nation's Judeo-Christian institutions," and warned of a strategy to "seed the West with as many Muslims as possible" and suggested that "thanks to their very high birth rates relative to native populations and their strategically insular culture — the sons and daughters of those migrants and refugees multiply in greater numbers than do native citizens." Hegseth's writing consistently ties his anti-Muslim views to his vision of preserving and expanding Christendom, positioning conservative Christian morality as the foundation for national governance and policy. "Our

present moment is much like the 11th Century. We don't want to fight, but, like our fellow Christians one thousand years ago, we must," Hegseth wrote. "Arm yourself — metaphorically, intellectually, physically. Our fight is not with guns. Yet."

- **A Christian Nationalist 'Educational Insurgency':** Hegseth envisions a bold strategy to reshape America through what he calls an "educational insurgency." Drawing from counterinsurgency tactics, he and allies like the ACCS aim to create a network of classical Christian schools as "boot camps" for cultural transformation, laying groundwork to reclaim what they see as a nation adrift from its foundational values. Critics of modern education, they argue for a retreat and regroup approach to build a new generation ready to take action.
  - November 18, 2024, *CrossPolitic* podcast, hosted by Toby Sumpter and Gabe Rench, both closely tied to Doug Wilson and his church, Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho. While discussing his book *Battle For The American Mind*, Hegseth detailed plans to establish a network of "classical Christian schools," referring to the ACCS, aimed at building a foundation for what he described as an "educational insurgency" to reshape the nation. "I think we need to be thinking in terms of these classical Christian schools as boot camps for winning back America," said co-host Sumpter. Hegseth agreed, adding, "That's what the crop of these classical Christian schools are gonna do in a generation. Policy answers like school choice, while they're great, that's phase two stuff later on once the foothold has been taken, once the recruits have graduated boot camp." He further elaborated on the strategy: "We call it a tactical retreat. We draw out in the last part of the book what an educational insurgency would look like, because I was a counterinsurgency instructor in Afghanistan and kind of the phases that Mao [Zedong] wrote about. We're in middle phase one right now, which is effectively a tactical retreat where you regroup, consolidate, and reorganize. And as you do so, you build your army underground with the opportunity later on of taking offensive operations in an overt way." Hegseth then added, "Obviously, all of this is metaphorical and all that good stuff," a remark that prompted laughter from both hosts and himself.
  - In December 2023, B*attle For The American Mind* co-authors Hegseth and Goodwin discussed the efforts of ACCS to champion classical education as a countermeasure to modern educational trends. The pair likened the association's mission to fighting an "insurgency," with Goodwin explaining, "[ACCS] is trying to support and enable insurgents around the country to educate their kids classically." Hegseth added, "ACCS is the place" to create the infrastructure necessary for this movement and called on supporters to help fund the association's work. Hegseth also criticized the prevailing ideology in higher education, describing it as the "dominant theory" or "critical theory" agenda, which he argued is embedded in DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and CRT (Critical Race Theory)

frameworks. He claimed this agenda has “replaced Biblical wisdom, … Western civilization, … [and] free thought.”

- February 2023, *The Kevin Roberts Show*, Hegseth declared that the U.S. system had deteriorated beyond the point of conventional reform, likening the situation to a military defeat requiring a “tactical retreat.” Drawing on his experience as a counterinsurgency instructor, Hegseth framed the solution in insurgency terms, citing Mao's phases of insurgency. He emphasized the need to build a parallel educational ecosystem rooted in classical Christian education, involving "deprogramming" teachers and revamping teaching methods to align with traditional learning stages: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Rejecting elite institutions, he argued for a fundamental reset to reclaim foundational American principles. "Let's stop holding these places up as imprimaturs of credibility. They're poisoning our country. They're bad for our Republic," he said.
- June 2022, during an appearance for his book release, *Battle for the American Mind*, Hegseth said the “best [K-12] institutions” are those like ACCS, “classical, Christian schools” that produce “elite critical thinkers … ready to go into the culture and engage.”

- **Endorsement of Christian Zionist Temple Ideology:** In 2018, while speaking in Israel, Hegseth stated, “There’s no reason why the miracle of the reestablishment of the Temple on the Temple Mount is not possible.” This reflects a far-right, Christian Zionist ideology, which envisions the removal of Muslim holy sites to rebuild the third Jewish Temple—a narrative tied to Christian nationalist and apocalyptic beliefs.

- Trump vows to create a federal task force to combat anti-Christian bias, promising to investigate and address all forms of discrimination and persecution against Christians in America.
  - 2024 GOP platform: “To protect Religious Liberty, Republicans support a new Federal Task Force on Fighting Anti-Christian Bias that will investigate all forms of illegal discrimination, harassment, and persecution against Christians in America.”
  - June 22, 2024, Faith and Freedom Coalition’s “Road to Majority,” Washington, DC, Trump said, “I will also create a new federal task force on fighting anti-Christian bias. Its mission will be to investigate all forms of illegal discrimination, harassment, persecution against Christians in America. And it’s taking place at a level that nobody can believe. We’re like a country from a different country.”

- Russell Vought, Trump’s pick to lead the Office of Management and Budget, is a Christian nationalist. Vought has steadily pushed a Christian nationalist agenda, and wants it to be front and center in a second Trump administration.
  - Vought leads the Center for Renewing America (CRA), an influential conservative group creating plans for a second Trump presidency. From their website, their mission statement is “to renew a consensus of America as a nation under God

with unique interests worthy of defending that flow from its people, institutions, and history, where individuals' enjoyment of freedom is predicated on just laws and healthy communities."

- *POLITICO* has reported that "[o]ne document drafted by CRA staff and fellows includes a list of top priorities for CRA in a second Trump term. 'Christian nationalism' is one of the bullet points." *The New York Times* later reported that an early 2023 email from a CRA employee outlined 10 agenda topics for papers on legal and policy frameworks. One category included "broader legal" issues, such as "Christian nationalism."
- In the CRA annual report, Trump commented, "Russell Vought did a fabulous job in my administration, and I have no doubt he will do a great job in continuing our quest to make America great again"
- March 22, 2021, Newsweek Op-Ed by Vought: "My own definition of 'Christian nationalism' would be this: An orientation for engaging in the public square that recognizes America as a Christian nation, where our rights and duties are understood to come from God and where our primary responsibilities as citizens are for building and preserving the strength, prosperity and health of our own country. It is a commitment to an institutional separation between church and state, but not the separation of Christianity from its influence on government and society. It is a belief that our participation in the political system can lead to beneficial outcomes for our own communities, as well as individuals of all faiths."
- In June 2021, he called for an "army" of conservative activists with "biblical worldview" "who want nothing more than racial reconciliation in this country."
- In July 2024, Vought criticized conservatives for focusing too much on religious liberty. He urged instead a stronger push to establish the U.S. as a Christian nation, prioritize Christian immigrants, and debate mosque construction, "I want to make sure that we can say, 'we are a Christian nation'," Vought said. "And my viewpoint is mostly that I would probably be Christian nation-ism. That's pretty close to Christian nationalism because I also believe in nationalism." In the conservative movement, "we've been too focused on religious liberty, which we all support, but we've lacked the ability to argue we are a Christian nation," Vought argued, adding, "Our laws are built on the Judeo-Christian worldview value system." "If we're going to have legal immigration, can we get people that actually believe in Christianity?", he later said. Speaking on abortion, Vought said: "So, I think the President has actually come up with a strategy that works so long as you are giving people like me in government the ability to block funding for Planned Parenthood, block funding for fetal tissue research. What I've told people is he had the most pro-life record ever. I've never seen him take it to stand in the way of a pro-life initiative that actually was real, politically and with momentum." Vought also celebrated Trump picking JD Vance as running mate. "Think of him as a member version of what we [at the Center for Renewing America] do."
- On August 15, 2024, speaking to *Humor Times*, Vought advocated for "spirited debate" on the construction of mosques in America's downtowns.

- Vought is close with Christian nationalist William Wolfe, an activist who said in a deleted Twitter post that schools should no longer teach sex education, and that surrogacy and no-fault divorce should be ended.
    - Twitter post from Vought, Jan. 25, 2023: "I'm proud to work with @William_E_Wolfe on scoping out a sound Christian Nationalism. Both he & @wokal_distance are VFs @amrenewctr . @ConceptualJames is there no room for Christians who are also nationalists to be in an anti-woke coalition? My take below"

- Project 2025 is also "taking a hardline religious-right agenda," endorsing controversial proposals to use federal power to outlaw abortions, restrict contraception coverage, and ban pornography while imprisoning creators and distributors.
    - Echoing Christian nationalist doctrine, Project 2025 calls "religious devotion and spirituality the greatest sources of happiness around the world."
    - The Project 2025 agenda says, "God ordained the Sabbath as a day of rest" and calls for Congress to amend legislation to "encourage communal rest" on the Sabbath.

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XXVI. Condoning Anti-Semitism

- At the Sept. 19, 2024, Israeli-American Council National Summit in Washington, Trump claimed Jewish-American voters would be partly responsible if lost the Nov. 5 election. "If I don't win this election - and the Jewish people would really have a lot to do with that if that happens because if 40%, I mean, 60% of the people are voting for the enemy - Israel, in my opinion, will cease to exist within two years.
    - In a *Newsweek* opinion piece by an author of this Threat Tracker, Trump's speech at the American Israeli Summit is critiqued for its dangerous implications for the American Jewish community, despite his election win. By preemptively blaming Jews for a possible 2024 loss, Trump revived harmful scapegoating tropes, reminiscent of the Nazi "stabbed in the back" myth, which could incite violence and repression against Jewish Americans "for years to come." The timing of Trump's comments, just weeks before Election Day, raised serious concerns for the community's safety, with silence from many Republicans further emboldening extremists. Without bipartisan condemnation, this rhetoric risks fueling continued violence and hatred toward American Jews.

- As *The New York Times* noted, Trump has "repeatedly accused Jewish voters of disloyalty if they voted for Democrats…evok[ing] an antisemitic trope that Jews have a 'dual loyalty' and are often more loyal to Israel than to their own countries."
    - July 30, 2024, *Sid & Friends* interview, Trump said that "any Jewish person" who votes for Democrats "should have their head examined. If you love Israel, or if you're Jewish, because a lot of Jewish people do not like Israel and they happen

to be in New York, you know that, but if you are Jewish, regardless of Israel, if you're Jewish, if you vote for a Democrat you're a fool, an absolute fool."

- July 26, 2024, Turning Point Action summit, FL, Trump said he asked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a meeting at Mar-a-Lago earlier that day: "How can a Jewish person or a person that loves Israel vote" for Democrats? "How do they vote for Democrats? Everything is negative … They wanna stop you from having victory … And they wanna put you in jail. They wanna persecute you. How does a Jewish person vote for a Democrat?" Trump also alleged that Kamala Harris "doesn't like Jewish people. She doesn't like Israel. That's the way it is, and that's the way it's always gonna be. She's not gonna change. "
- July 24, 2024, Charlotte, NC, during his first rally following President Joe Biden's exit from the 2024 presidential election race, Trump said that Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee, is "totally against the Jewish people." Trump continued, "it amazes me how Jewish people will vote for the Democrats when they're being treated so disrespectfully and badly."
- May 9, 2024, Manhattan, NY, Trump told reporters outside his Manhattan criminal trial: "What Biden is doing with respect to Israel is disgraceful. If any Jewish person voted for Joe Biden, they should be ashamed of themselves." The official Trump War Room account on X shared Trump's video, accompanied by the aforementioned quoted comment, which JD Vance swiftly reposted, writing, "Trump right again. Biden's policy in Israel is equal parts incoherent and immoral." On May 12, 2024, Vance defended Trump's comments on *CNN*'s "State of the Union," pointing to Trump's purported positive "record" on Israel, stating, "Donald Trump has actually been really good for the state of Israel." "Do I think it's reasonable to look at this situation and say that, if you're a Jewish American who cares about the state of Israel, who cares about these anti-semitic riots, and say you should be on the side of Republicans in 2024 because they govern effectively on some of the issues that you care about, I think it's a totally reasonable argument to make," he said. He dismissed concerns of anti-semitic tropes, asserting Trump "hasn't singled out Jewish Americans" and his criticism "applies to a whole host of American citizens."
- April 8, 2024, Trump said in an interview aired April 8 on Real America's Voice: "Any Jewish person that votes for Biden does not love Israel and frankly, should be spoken to," adding, "A lot of it's habit. Jewish people by habit, they just, they vote for the Democrats and Black people, by habit, vote for the Democrats."
- March 18, 2024, Trump said to Sebastian Gorka, one of his former White House aides who now hosts a conservative talk radio show, that Jews who vote for Democrats "hate Israel" and "hate[] their religion." He continued to say that they "hate everything about Israel, and they should be ashamed of themselves because Israel will be destroyed."
    - That same day, Trump's spokesperson Karoline Leavitt doubled down on his comments, saying in a statement that "Trump is right," and that "[t]he Biden Administration has given millions in aid to Gaza and the Iranian Regime, Democrats in Congress have signed petitions supporting Gaza

terrorists and caved to the demands of Far-Left Palestinian extremists." "The Democrat Party has turned into a full-blown anti-Israel, anti-Semitic, pro-terrorist cabal."

- December 2022, Truth Social, Trump said: "No President has done more for Israel than I have. Somewhat surprisingly, however, our wonderful Evangelicals are far more appreciative of this than the people of the Jewish faith, especially those living in the U.S." "Those living in Israel, though, are a different story – Highest approval rating in the World, could easily be P.M.! U.S. Jews have to get their act together and appreciate what they have in Israel – Before it is too late!"
- October 2022, Truth Social, Trump wrote: "No President has done more for Israel than I have. Somewhat surprisingly, however, our wonderful Evangelicals are far more appreciative of this than the people of the Jewish faith, especially those living in the U.S.." "Those living in Israel, though, are a different story — Highest approval rating in the World, could easily be P.M.!" Jewish Americans need to "get their act together" and "appreciate" Israel "before it is too late."
- December 2021, Trump said in an interview that "the Jewish people in the United States either don't like Israel or don't care about Israel," adding, "People in this country that are Jewish no longer love Israel."
- June 2021, Trump said: "Jewish people who live in the United States don't love Israel enough. Does that make sense to you? I'm not talking about Orthodox Jews. I believe we got 25% of the Jewish vote, and it doesn't make sense. It just seems strange to me."
- April 2021, during an interview for a book about his Middle East policy, Trump said: "These people in this country that are Jewish no longer love Israel. I'll tell you, the evangelical Christians love Israel more than the Jews in this country." He also said the fact that many Jewish Americans voted for Obama and Biden "tells you that the Jewish People in the United States either don't like Israel or don't care about Israel."
- Sept. 16, 2020, during a call with Jewish leaders after Rosh Hashanah, Trump referred to "Israel" as "your country." "We really appreciate you, we love your country also and thank you very much," Trump said. CNN noted that the comment was "reminiscent of previous remarks he's made that were criticized for the suggestion that American Jews view themselves as loyal to Israel."
- December 2019, Trump said: "We have to get the people of our country, of this country, to love Israel more, I have to tell you that. We have to do it. We have to get them to love Israel more. Because you have people that are Jewish people that are great people – they don't love Israel enough."
- August 21, 2019: Trump said that Jewish Americans who vote for Democrats are "being very disloyal to Jewish people and you're very disloyal to Israel." He continued: "I think that if you vote for a Democrat, you are very, very disloyal to Israel and to the Jewish people."
- August 20, 2019: Trump said, "any Jewish people that vote for a Democrat, I think it shows either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty."

    - April 6, 2019, Republican Jewish Coalition's Annual Leadership Conference, Las Vegas, NV, Trump called Netanyahu "your prime minister." "I stood with your prime minister at the White House to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights," he said.

- May 20, 2024, a 30-second video was posted on Trump's Truth Social platform featuring hypothetical newspaper articles celebrating a purported 2024 presidential election victory. The headline read, "What's next for America?" and heralded "the creation of a unified Reich."
    - The Trump campaign eventually deleted the post and insisted the video was created by a "random account" and posted by an unnamed campaign staffer.
    - The articles were styled like early 20th-century newspapers, apparently recycling text from World War I reports, including references to "German industrial strength" and "peace through strength." Other articles included headlines such as, the "Border Is Closed" and "15 Million Illegal Aliens Deported," as well as that the Trump administration would reject "globalists" (a term that *NYT* reports "has been widely adopted on the far right and that scholars say can be used as a signal of antisemitism").

- In 2022, Trump had dinner with Nick Fuentes and Kanye West. Fuentes is a white supremacist who has professed his love for Hitler and denied the Holocaust, comparing Jews murdered in concentration camps to cookies in an oven. West has a history of praising Hitler and Nazis, denying the Holocaust, and spreading anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

- After a 2017 rally in Charlottesville, Virginia organized by white supremacists where neo-Nazis marched shouting anti-Semitic slogans, Trump said "there were very fine people on both sides."

- During the 2016 campaign, Trump tweeted a picture calling Hilary Clinton the "Most Corrupt Candidate Ever" with a red Jewish star and $100 bills in the background, an anti-Semitic image with white-supremacist origins.

- Another 2016 Trump campaign ad featured several prominent Jewish figures while warning against "global special interests."

- In 2015 while seeking the Republican nomination for president, Trump told an audience at the Republican Jewish Coalition, "You're not going to support me because I don't want your money. But that's okay. You want to control your own politician."

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XXVII. The Economic Impacts of Trump's Autocratic Moves

- **Overview**
    - "There is strong evidence that democracies provide stability and predictability in growth and other development outcomes relative to autocracies," according to a report by the University of Oslo's V-Dem Institute. Conversely, the erosion of democratic norms and institutions can introduce significant financial risk that destabilizes economies. Specific economic indicators such as access to capital markets at lower interest rates and foreign direct investment correlate with the strength of democratic institutions and the rule of law. Autocratic regimes are associated with negative economic factors such as high inflation, lagging GDP and brain drain. They are prone to "drastic economic decline."
    - An important warning was issued in June 2024, when sixteen Nobel Prize-winning economists signed a joint letter expressing "deep[ ] concern[ ]" about the "risks to the U.S. economy" posed by a second Trump term. They warn that Trump's unpredictable actions and policies threaten "economic and political certainty," jeopardizing the United States' " standing in the world" and its stable international relationships. The economists caution that Trump returning to office would have a "destabilizing effect" on the nation's domestic economy and raise alarms about his "fiscally irresponsible budgets" potentially "reignit[ing]" inflation. The warning highlights the severe economic instability and international isolation that could result from another Trump term, underlining the broader autocratic threat his presidency poses to democratic norms, economic stability, and the United States' global economic leadership.
    - Given the shock autocratic policies Trump and his allies have proposed for a second Trump Administration, the risk of economic deterioration and of spiraling economic crises driven by autocratic forces is very serious, if not acute.

- **Economic instability and black swan risk**
    - Research indicates that democratic backsliding of the kind Trump promises is correlated with increasing economic risk and unpredictability. A Yale Budget Lab report states, "The US enjoys a safe harbor investment premium—a value that investors place on US safety, soundness and stability. Even a relatively modest move in risk premia would have profound implications for the US. If the US country risk premium moved to that of the current UK level, after 10 years, real equity wealth per household would be $50,000 lower and real GDP 1% smaller. The erosion of safe harbor advantages could include more uncertainty and discontinuous risk, higher bond yields, and, ultimately, lower growth." The unrest that the emergence of a Trump-led autocratically-oriented governing regime would create could pierce the United States's safe harbor investment premium, which would significantly impact the country's prosperity and economic security.

- According to the Yale report, the risk includes "a 'black swan' event outside of the realm of US experience, such as a debt default or a military intervention in domestic politics. Here we assume an immediate 300 basis point rise in risk premia and a 30% decline in FDI, but even these assumptions may still undershoot the potential damage of such a scenario."
- This risk correlates with many of the threats of unprecedented autocratic action set forth throughout the Tracker. The use of the U.S. military in domestic politics is but one example of such policies; it is also reasonable to assume mass deportation of millions of migrants, the demolition of departments and agencies, and many other planned autocratic-leaning policies risk producing similar results.
- As Professor Layna Mosley of Princeton wrote, "The uncertainty associated with an erosion of democratic values can generate volatility as well as higher costs of capital, for business as well as for municipal and sovereign borrowers." Indeed, "peer-reviewed research in finance, economics, and political science reveals the risks to markets of political instability, weak rule of law, and democratic backsliding." The specific harms associated with Trump's policy proposals, in tandem with the political and social upheaval outlined in the aforementioned sections of this report, increase the danger of severe economic risks.

- **Runaway inflation**

  - Moreover, "Trump's second-term agenda of sweeping tariffs, mass deportation of undocumented migrants, and enormous tax cuts would accelerate, rather than alleviate, inflation," according to Ronald Brownstein. As former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers stated in that publication, "There has never been a presidential platform so self-evidently inflationary as the one put forward by President Trump. I have little doubt that with the Trump program, we will see a substantial acceleration in inflation, unless somehow we get a major recession first."
  - "Summers identified multiple pillars of Trump's economic agenda that could accelerate inflation. These included compromising the independence of the Federal Reserve Board, enlarging the federal budget deficit by extending his 2017 tax cuts, raising tariffs, rescinding Biden policies designed to promote competition and reduce junk fees,' and squeezing the labor supply by restricting new immigration and deporting undocumented migrants already here." Summers has also warned: "There is a real risk during a Trump presidency that we would again see mortgage rates above 10 percent as inflation expectations rose and long-term interest rates increased."
  - Mark Zandi, the chief economist of Moody's Analytics, also predicted that Trump's policies would increase inflation. Zandi further warned that Trump would, "force the Federal Reserve Board to raise interest rates higher than they would be otherwise."
  - Trump has proposed that the president should have influence over interest rate decisions, a shift that would undermine the Federal Reserve's independence. Indeed, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that a small group of Trump allies

created a nearly 10-page proposal to weaken the Fed's autonomy, giving the president greater authority over monetary policy. The proposals suggest that the central bank should consult with Trump on setting interest rates and would empower him to remove Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell before his term ends in 2026. While the Journal could not confirm Trump's direct involvement, sources close to the initiative believe the work aligns with his agenda.

- As we document elsewhere in the Tracker, Trump is planning mass deportations. That severe action in turn "would cause a severe supply shock to the labor market, which could increase the overall cost of living," according to Michael Strain of AEI.

- **Tariffs and Protectionist Harms**

  - Autocracies are often associated with greater levels of economic isolation on the international stage. Kimberly Clausing, professor of tax policy at the UCLA Law School and co-author of a nonpartisan Peterson Institute for International Economics report that found the tariffs Trump is promising to implement would significantly increase costs for consumers, noted that "Trump is promising a no-holds-barred, all-out protectionist spree that will affect every single thing that people buy that is either an import or in competition with imports."
  - Trump's Agenda47 promises to "reclaim our economic independence from China. President Trump will revoke China's Most Favored Nation trade status and adopt a 4-year plan to phase out all Chinese imports of essential goods—everything from electronics to steel to pharmaceuticals" and commits to "an eye for an eye, a tariff for a tariff, same exact amount" should "India, China, or any other country" assert additional tariffs on the U.S.
  - Trump allies, including his Treasury Secretary nominee Scott Bessent, defend his tariff proposals as strategic tools to gain leverage in foreign policy negotiations.
  - **Presidential Powers and Legal Constraints**: Trump and his campaign have provided limited details on how he would implement his tariff plan. Many trade experts and former officials believe he could swiftly utilize existing powers to implement them, such as the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. It grants the president broad authority over economic transactions in the event of an emergency declaration. As *POLITICO* noted, this approach could face legal challenges, yet an October 2024 report from the *Cato Institute* suggests that courts or Congress may struggle to restrict Trump's actions. Indeed, Trump indicated in late November 2024 that he intends to rely on executive orders, at least in part, to implement his tariff plan.
  - **Universal Tariff Proposal**: Trump proposes a sweeping 20% tariff on all U.S. imports, with an even steeper 60% tariff on Chinese goods. This unprecedented across-the-board tariff would likely raise consumer costs significantly, with estimates suggesting that it could cost middle-income U.S. households over $2,600 annually, according to research from *Peterson Institute for International*

Economics. Such a policy could increase inflation by two percentage points in the short term and shrink GDP by more than a percentage point by 2026.

- **Impact on Employment and GDP**: *The Tax Foundation* estimates that the proposed tariffs could equate to a $524 billion annual tax increase, reducing GDP by 0.8% and potentially cutting 684,000 full-time jobs. Sectors like retail, which is heavily dependent on affordable imports, would face particularly sharp impacts, possibly leading to layoffs and higher consumer prices for essentials like apparel and household items.

- **Targeted Tariffs and Retaliation Risks**: Trump has also threatened up to 100% tariffs on goods from Mexico, potentially jeopardizing the USMCA trade agreement his own administration negotiated. Additionally, Trump's plan to impose up to 200% tariffs on specific companies like John Deere for moving production overseas introduces the risk of retaliatory tariffs from countries like China, which could reduce U.S. agricultural exports and harm American farmers reliant on foreign markets. On November 25, 2024, Trump vowed (in two Truth Social posts) to implement a 25% tariff on all imports from Mexico and Canada and an "additional" 10% tariff on goods from China, as part of his first executive orders on day one in office. Framing the move as a response to the illegal alien "invasion" and drug trafficking, Trump stated the tariffs would remain until these issues are resolved. As above, Trump has already touted a 60% tariff on Chinese goods.
  - The *New York Times* described Trump's threat as a "dramatic ultimatum against the three largest trading partners of the United States, and a move that threatens to sow chaos in America's diplomatic and economic relationships." The plan raises questions about compliance with the USMCA, a trade deal he has championed as a key achievement. If enacted, the tariffs could "dramatically raise prices for American consumers on everything from gas to automobiles to agricultural products," according to the *AP*. *CNN* warned the "punishing tariffs" could "wreak havoc on America's supply chains," raising costs for "everyday goods" and stifling economic growth as inflation-weary consumers cut back on spending.
- **Mirrored Tariff Policy**: Trump and his allies support a mirrored tariff policy: any tariff imposed on the U.S. by a trading partner would prompt an equivalent U.S. tariff in return. "Under the Trump Reciprocal Trade Act, other countries will have two choices—they'll get rid of their tariffs on us, or they will pay us hundreds of billions of dollars, and the United States will make an absolute FORTUNE," Trump warned in an Agenda47 video. In Chapter 26 of Project 2025's *Mandate for Leadership*, former Trump adviser Peter Navarro advocates for this "mirroring" approach, suggesting that the U.S. match tariffs imposed by other nations to "uphold the principle of reciprocity." p. 770.
- **Implications for Tech and Renewable Sectors**: Trump has criticized subsidies for U.S. semiconductor manufacturing under the CHIPS Act and suggested imposing tariffs on imported chips, which could raise costs for U.S. tech companies. Moreover, renewable energy projects, heavily reliant on Chinese

components, could face significant price hikes under Trump's proposed tariffs, impacting the costs of solar and energy storage projects and possibly slowing the transition to clean energy.

- **Attacking Independence of the Federal Reserve Board**

    - The Wall Street Journal has reported: "Former Trump administration officials and other supporters of the presumptive GOP nominee have in recent months discussed a range of proposals, from incremental policy changes to a long-shot assertion that the president himself should play a role in setting interest rates. A small group of the former president's allies—whose work is so secretive that even some prominent former Trump economic aides weren't aware of it—has produced a roughly 10-page document outlining a policy vision for the central bank, according to people familiar with the matter. The group of Trump allies argues that he should be consulted on interest-rate decisions, and the draft document recommends subjecting Fed regulations to White House review and more forcefully using the Treasury Department as a check on the central bank. The group also contends that Trump, if he returns to the White House, would have the authority to oust Jerome Powell as Fed chair before his four-year term ends in 2026, the people familiar with the matter said, though Powell would likely remain on the Fed's board of governors."
    - These policies would have a dramatic impact on the U.S. and global economies. As Citigroup Global Chief Economist Nathan Sheets has said: "If Fed independence is eroded it would be absolutely disastrous. When I think about the risk for markets and the dollar, any policy change that eroded Fed independence in an appreciable way would be greeted by the market very vigorously and adversely and be a source of great pressure and volatility," he said. "Any gains a political actor might think they glean would be so small compared to the potential cost that they might have ... it leaves me optimistic it is not a game worth playing."

- **Devaluing the Dollar**

    - Trump economic advisers are also proposing methods to devalue the U.S. dollar. *POLITICO* reported that one former Trump administration official said, "Currency revaluation is likely to be a priority for some members of a potential second Trump administration, mainly because of the viewpoint that [an overvalued dollar] contributes to the trade deficit."
    - Trump has long harbored a belief that the dollar is "too strong," a view echoed by his current economic advisers. *POLITICO* noted, "But weakening the dollar could have other far-reaching consequences, from sending consumer prices for imported products soaring, to inviting retaliation from other countries and threatening the dollar's role as world reserve currency, which would undermine U.S. sanctions on adversaries like Iran and Russia." Former trade chief Robert

Lighthizer, who has been named as a possible Treasury Secretary in a Trump Administration, has championed aggressive currency devaluation.

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XXVIII. Bipartisan Actions to Counter Autocratic Threats

The literature of how to prevent and address autocratic onset is vast. One of the authors of this Tracker has co-authored a comprehensive guide to this subject globally and to the relevant scholarly literature—the Brookings Institution's "The Democracy Playbook." Important recent contributions specifically addressing Trump's threats for 2025 have been made by Protect Democracy, Democracy Forward (State Democracy Defenders Action has participated in that effort), and many others.

In future editions of this tracker, we will attempt to catalog those and other suggestions and to comprehensively address how best to respond to the growing threats of autocratic and anti-democratic efforts. For the moment, we offer some preliminary thoughts toward a comprehensive theory of the case. We group those preliminary suggestions into three periods of time: the pre-election period from present through November 5, 2024; the transition period from November 5, 2024 to January 20, 2025; and the period from January 20, 2025 onward.

Following those three sections, we summarize some of the more substantial recommendations that have been made by others. Because those recommendations tend to cut across all three of the time periods we isolate, we present those additional recommendations as separate sections rather than trying to slice and dice them into our three periods.

A. Preliminary Suggestions: Present through November 5, 2024

The current administration can and should take proactive measures to put in place additional federal regulatory or executive order frameworks that impose legal limitations on the Executive's invocation of the Insurrection Act and other emergency powers. While statutory reform may or may not be realistic in 2024, legislative proposals can inform possible executive action. There is a rich body of existing scholarship upon which regulations and executive orders can draw. Advocates have proposed statutory language that would toughen the legal framework for the utilization of military, paramilitary, and DOJ powers by more precisely delineating what are valid triggering circumstances for the Act and what particular range of responses would be authorized. Legal scholars have also warned of the potential for abuse with existing authorities and proposed legal reforms to address such risks.

Similar steps should be considered with respect to the full range of threats set forth in this Tracker. While executive orders or regulations could be reversed by an incoming Trump or other future administration, such rollbacks would be subject to the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act, other legal review, and then litigation. Thus, such internal executive branch regulations would serve both to sound the alarm if they were violated and to impose possible

impediments to autocratic action. Regulations were impactful in the past in slowing and stopping illegal and authoritarian moves. For instance, lawsuits early in Trump's presidency forced executive agencies to comply with Obama-era rules which helped counteract egregious policies such as Trump's first travel ban targeting Muslim countries in January 2017.

Attempts at congressional intervention should not be written off, despite apparent congressional gridlock and in particular House control by allies of Trump and supporters of his autocratic tendencies. It is worth looking at whether there could be any appetite for particular individual provisions from the Protecting Our Democracy Act (PODA), such as: preventing abuse of the pardon power; enforcing the Emoluments Clause; preventing abuse of the National Emergencies Act; preventing political interference into the DOJ; protecting whistleblowers; enforcing congressional subpoenas; limiting a president's ability to evade advice and consent through installation of long-term acting officials; and increasing accountability for online election advertising. A recent book by one of the authors of this Tracker, "Overcoming Trumpery", highlights those and other solutions to preventing nepotism and conflicts of interest, safeguarding the DOJ from being hijacked for political ends, and preventing foreign interference in the American democratic process (Chapters 2-4).

In order to have any hope of consideration, solutions would need to be more narrowly crafted and framed in conservative, and even MAGA, terms. Conservatives of all stripes have long articulated hostility to excessive executive power, such as Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) attempting, during the Trump administration, to require greater congressional assent for a president's declaration of national emergency. So it might be possible to at least mull narrowly crafting some bipartisan reforms. Indeed, some in Congress may view these as necessary to address possible overreach by a Democratic administration, either today or in the future. After all, the far-right fear (however unfounded) of autocratic moves by their political opponents is intense. So the possibility of bipartisan legislative solutions should not be altogether discounted.

B. Preliminary Suggestions: November 5, 2024 through January 20, 2025

Should there be hesitation to make bold regulatory moves in the pre-election period, such reforms might be considered in the transition period should we be facing the threat of autocratic takeover in January 2025. That would be less than optimal, because they would be seen as last-minute changes and might be easier to unwind legally and politically. But it would be better than nothing.

Depending upon its makeup, Congress could also move on a package of anti-autocratic legislative reforms in the short interregnum between when the new Congress is seated on January 3 and when the president is sworn in on January 20. Indeed, it is not too soon to begin preparation of such a package that could achieve bipartisan support. It could include some of the remedies noted in the section above.

This package should also include narrowly crafted provisions clarifying standing for state attorneys general and "private attorneys general"—that is, other plaintiffs with strong equities in

responding to wrongdoing—to seek federal court review of particularly egregious autocratic conduct.

C. Preliminary Suggestions: January 20, 2025 and Onward

Nonpartisan civil society organizations, and affected individuals and enterprises, will have a critical role to play in meeting every illegal action with legal action as they did in 2017 and following. Another front line of defense, as it has been both with respect to both Democratic and Republican administrations, are the above mentioned state attorneys general. So are the many other state and local government officials who may have legal standing to bring cases, or have other parts to play.

To take some examples from Trump's first administration, fifteen states, including Washington and Alaska, had standing to challenge the Trump administration on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Harris County, which faced chemical explosions at some of its plants, was the only Texas local government to join an effort in challenging the Trump EPA for rolling back chemical safety rules. Fourteen state attorneys general supported a lawsuit to prevent federal ICE agents from conducting arrests in and around state courthouses. Cities in Indiana successfully defended their status as sanctuary cities. And on and on—the examples are legion.

Many more suggestions for 2025, and indeed for all three of the time periods we have identified, follow in the discussion of remedies others have suggested.

D. Democracy Playbook Recommendations

In their report, The Democracy Playbook, Eisen et al. recommend the following 10 commitments for countering democratic backsliding and the advent of autocracy. The following summary is drawn from the Executive Summary to the linked report (see pp. 4-15), and the page numbers refer to the body of the report. The following include both steps which can be undertaken immediately and in the future; at the federal, state and local level; and even from international election observers and the like.

COMMITMENT 1: Strengthen and Ensure Election Security, Integrity, Transparency, and Voting Access

Preventing authoritarianism will start at the ballot box by securing Americans' exercise of their right to vote. State Actors can commit to investing "in the people, administrative framework and election management bodies (EMBs), electoral jurisprudence, and systems required for the technological security, transparency, and accountability of election counting, voter registration, and political campaign networks" (see p. 23).

Political opposition groups can "make a commitment to contest acts of nondemocratic actors, within the bounds of democratic norms, who aim to sow distrust in elections. Opposition leaders may also choose to pursue more extreme institutional measures available to them such as investigations, impeachment processes, votes of no confidence, and recall referendums and/or deploy extra-institutional tools like protests, strikes, or boycotts" (see p. 39).

International actors can “commit to observe elections together under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or other international umbrellas to meet basic standards of universal access, equality, fairness, freedom, transparency, accountability, and privacy in voter submission” (see p. 87).

Nonprofit and civil society actors can “strengthen nonpartisan election monitoring and increase efforts to restore citizen trust and confidence in both the electoral process and the overall foundations of democracy, transparency, and accountability, including by engaging the broader public audience” (see p. 36). They can also “enhance collaboration with independent media to counter disinformation and ensure citizens can access transparent and truthful information as part of electoral processes” (see p. 80).

COMMITMENT 2: Advance Rule of Law and Impartial Justice (Commitments for State Actors)

Branches of the government, or even individual offices, can take steps now to enact codes to promote oversight and independence. Government ethics and transparency mechanisms can “enhance citizen trust in, and access to, the operation of government under law. With respect to the judicial system, that means establishing codes of conduct, opening up courtrooms by producing publicly available transcripts of proceedings in a timely fashion, taking steps to ensure that sealed documents are minimized, and placing cameras in courtrooms” (see p. 32).

COMMITMENT 3: Depoliticize Democratic Processes

Our politicians, on both sides of the aisle, must use language that condemns autocracy to meet the challenges of the moment. “Political actors should uphold international laws and institutional obligations and use their political power with restraint. But when norms break down, further legal mechanisms should be considered” (see p. 26). “Political parties, through their capacity to influence coalitions and internal leadership roles, should limit leaders who espouse anti-democratic sentiment or positions or who evince a disregard for human rights” (see p. 28).

Nonprofit and civil society actors can “model the responsible behavior civil society groups wish to see among their elected leaders in terms of good governance structure, rhetoric, and public positions” (see p. 44). They can also “carry out activities, including with targeted and increased support from domestic and international partners, to depolarize democracy, strengthen resiliency, and create space for common ground among political actors” (see p. 46).

COMMITMENT 4: Enhance Democratic Safeguards on Technology

Online speech is more profitable the more polarizing it is. State actors should “commit to establishing a common democratic agenda for regulating private industries that have an impact on democratic discourse and processes through close cooperation on regulatory efforts around data protection, content moderation, and export control reform” (see p. 25). Social media companies specifically should “support[ ] narrowly tailored, targeted government regulations that do not infringe on users’ right to free speech—focusing on mechanisms like political advertising and reduction of disinformation prevalence measures” (see p. 59). They should “intensify[ ] cooperation with other platforms to share best practices” and “establish[ ] better information with independent researchers and universities” (see p. 59).

COMMITMENT 5: Strengthen Civil Society and Independent Media

The press has a significant role to play in checking abuses of power, by determining what it will cover and how the coverage should play out. Since critics accused the press of awarding Trump too much coverage in 2016, many outlets are now going too far in the opposite direction and refraining from covering his recent autocratic outbursts. The media should "strengthen professional development, training, and education to provide a pipeline to up-and-coming media actors able to notice and resist threats to the industry" (see pp. 49, 70). They should "practice media self-scrutiny and develop a robust media criticism community. Such a community could increase public trust, and thus public support, through the transparent and constructive questioning of the relationship between journalists, politicians, and advertisers" (see p. 50).

"External actors, including international donors, NGOs, and government officials should forcefully respond to government attacks on NGOs and independent media. That includes issuing systematic, coordinated, and high-level responses to government authorities' restrictions on NGO activities and the work of free media, while taking steps to avoid the perception that activities are solely externally driven" (see p. 69). "NGOs should train and be prepared to use diverse and varied nonviolent tactics to increase the pressure on government and attract more people to participate" (see p. 46).

COMMITMENT 6: Avoid Toxic "Otherization" Politics

With Project 2025, radical autocratic ideas have shaped the Overton window of American politics. Autocratic ideas must instead be unacceptable as part of our politics. "Those on both sides of critical issues should create space in the public square for legitimate and respectful debate. For example, there is a legitimate debate over migration levels that is very different from tolerating the anti-migrant and often anti-Muslim rhetoric that frequently uses xenophobic language to exploit refugee and migration crises" (see p. 28). "While substantive debates on policy issues should be welcomed, democratic actors must try to limit the extent to which debates over toxic identity politics weaken the trust of citizens in democratic governance and institutions, and serve as fuel to empower extremists. This effort needs to be matched with a focus on local, rural, and urban-level integration—as well as a posture that eschews hateful rhetoric" (see p. 28). "There must be a full lifecycle approach—from recruitment through return to civilian life—to preventing and mitigating the scourge of white nationalist, extremist, and other anti-democratic ideologies that exhibit a disregard for basic human rights" (see p. 44).

We must "tailor efforts to rural and underserved areas that are highly susceptible to radicalization due to a systemic lack of access to NGO and government support systems, thus allowing for anti-democratic extremist actors to fill the gap in community needs while promoting anti-democratic sentiment" (see p. 59). This includes "provid[ing] additional funding towards preemptive measures to prevent radicalization (see pp. 59, 69).

"Democracies should enhance coordination on migration and refugee crises, as well as increase humanitarian support for civil society organizations and municipalities that are working to house and assist refugees" (see p. 88). Private sector actors can "seek affirmative ways to help protect democracy, including through activism, philanthropy, corporate social responsibility, and helpful rhetoric" (see p. 55).

COMMITMENT 7: Prioritize Anti-Corruption and Anti-Kleptocracy Initiatives

Key to preventing democratic backsliding is upholding the obligations enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. During Trump's first term, he was able to violate the Emoluments Clause, for example. Instead, we need to "agree to regulate the role of money in politics to retain trust in the democratic system through the creation of such mechanisms as public financing of campaigns, disclosure requirements for donations, and limits on the amount of campaign donations" (see p. 26). This includes pledging that "corruption-related financial crimes are not deprioritized" and promising to "provide whistleblower protections and incentives" (see p. 89).

COMMITMENT 8: Demonstrate that Democracies Can Deliver a Better Standard of Living (State Actors)

There must be an affirmative message about how democracy benefits people. That means committing to policies of inclusive growth that tackle economic inequality and that improve well-being and opportunity across all demographic lines, including race, class, and geography" (see p.44).

"Such pro-growth policies for left-behind areas include extending broadband access, providing investment capital for new and small businesses, and using both transportation investment and regulatory policy to address rural-urban imbalances. Policies should address the unique needs of each area by elevating existing community assets and collaborations that bolster local economies" (see p. 68).

COMMITMENT 9: Strengthen Democracy via Multilateral Institutions

Multilateral institutions can "pledge to use conditionality more aggressively—both punitive and incentive-based—against backsliding democracies and malign actors," including "cutting funding to the worst offenders" (see p. 86). "International organizations should pledge to invest in and expand capabilities for monitoring disinformation campaigns emanating from foreign actors" (see p. 81).

COMMITMENT 10: Deepen a Broad-Based Global Coalition of Democracies

Those who support democracy anywhere support democracy everywhere. That means "democracies should commit to increase coordination and cooperation with each other in defense of the key elements of the multilateral order, including strengthening standing local, regional, or global democratic institutions and frameworks or expanding or creating new mechanisms for advanced democratic collaboration" (see p. 87).

E. Protect Democracy Recommendations

In their report, the The Authoritarian Playbook for 2025, Protect Democracy recommends the following ten steps (see pp. 65-69):

1. Create pro-democracy coalitions before the crisis arrives.

"Now is the time to build stronger and deeper pro-democracy coalitions that are educated about what's at stake and prepared to act together. Blunting a full-on autocratic government takeover will require courts, Congress, agency officials, states, and municipalities to act as checks against abuse of power. But, institutions often struggle to do this on their own. We'll need to bolster them,

and the best way to do that is through broad coalitions — whether of civic groups, advocacy organizations, business interests, faith groups, or otherwise. Building coalitions is time-consuming and requires legwork to establish respect and develop alignment."

2. Take anti-democratic ideas and promises seriously.

"The voting public must know what is at stake in the next election and beyond. Public communicators, whether they hold jobs in the news media, campaigns, non-profit advocacy, corporate public affairs, or some other outward-facing positions, should focus on explaining how autocratic rule will impact their audiences and communities. That means focusing less on the horserace elements of political stories and refraining from 'both sides' coverage that fails to explain the unique authoritarian threat. As New York University journalism professor Jay Rosen has encapsulated the need, we must all focus on 'not the odds, but the stakes.'"

3. Keep a broad pro-democracy movement united against the acute, big-picture autocratic danger.

"Authoritarians will exacerbate … divisions, pitting vulnerable groups against each other. The pro-democracy coalition must stay focused on what unites us — protecting the ability to resolve policy disagreements through a democratic process. As Poland showed recently, and Belgium and Finland showed in the early 20th century, the way to overcome autocratic movements is for people committed to democracy from the left, center, and right to put their traditional differences aside to come together to defend democracy."

4. Support Republicans that stand firm for democratic institutions.

"The authoritarian movement in America has been made possible with support from the Republican Party. At the same time, Republican officials and affiliated interest groups can have an outsized impact in checking the authoritarian faction. As scholars Daniel Ziblatt and Steven Levitsky have explained, it's essential for pro-democratic actors in the authoritarian-dominated party not just to offer tacit criticism of autocratic actions but to 'expel antidemocratic extremists from their ranks, refuse to endorse their candidacies, eschew all collaboration with them and, when necessary, join forces with ideological rivals to isolate and defeat them.' The pro-democracy coalition must be willing partners to support and nurture those relationships with pro-democracy Republicans that can produce meaningful change."

5. Rally around non-partisan, independent public servants.

“Our democracy depends on millions of dedicated public servants doing their jobs to deliver services, uphold the law, and keep the public informed. Through their commitment to the rule of law, these civil servants, election officials, judges, and court employees are a first line of defense against an autocratic government … that is why among the autocratic faction’s first moves in power will be to dismantle the civil service and independent law enforcement and replace them with regime loyalists.

Independent public servants are the bulwark standing between the authoritarian and the American people; we may frequently disagree with them or be frustrated by what they do (or don’t do), but we must safeguard their vital roles. We must also help them when they speak out against authoritarianism, providing material resources and other forms of support in lawful ways when they risk their livelihoods or safety to do the right thing.”

6. Uphold the rule of law and democratic institutions, and always repudiate violence.

“[P]ro-democracy actors must always condemn political violence. This also means respecting lawful court orders, avoiding aggressive presidential executive actions that stretch constraints on abuse of power, and refusing to tolerate corruption.”

7. Protect the first targets and arrange to advocate for the most vulnerable.

“A central tenet of the autocratic playbook is to target vulnerable people and populations to deflect from an autocrat’s failures and consolidate support. Community groups, civic and industry associations, and state and local governments should articulate agreements to support each other in times of need. We might think of this as the NATO Article V approach — ‘an attack against one … is an attack against all.’ As with NATO, such alliances and agreements can create a deterrent effect that will make it harder for an autocrat to single out members.”

8. Evaluate security at the community, household, and personal level.

“Members of the pro-democracy coalition should be ready to address potential threats to their personal security, families, and workplaces. Practical safety preparedness includes protecting private personal information, evaluating online security vulnerabilities, and training for the unexpected. We should also identify people in our households, neighborhoods, and communities who may require additional support and develop plans in advance to help them should the need arise.”

9. Work to protect free and fair elections in 2026 and 2028.

“An autocrat in the White House will cause immense damage to our democratic institutions and hurt an enormous number of people, but the 2026 midterms will not be far away. We can expect the autocratic faction to continue to seek to suppress the right to vote, undermine confidence in election systems, and explore ways to nullify votes for opposing candidates.

We need to make substantial investments in all available strategies to protect free and fair elections in 2026 and 2028 so that 'we the people' have a chance to hold the authoritarian faction accountable and vote it out of office. Those cycles may also be an opportunity for the pro-democracy coalition to come together to support solid pro-democracy candidates committed to upholding our Constitution and the rule of law."

10. Continue building the democracy of tomorrow.

"In many ways, our democracy hangs in the balance over the next 12 months. American civil society must focus aggressively during that time on the defensive work of protecting a free and fair election in 2024, limiting the likelihood the autocratic faction prevails, and preparing for an autocrat in the White House in 2025.

Alongside these defensive efforts to protect our democracy, however, we must also work to build the resilient and inclusive democracy of tomorrow. That includes strengthening our checks and balances and rule of law institutions, reforming our electoral systems and political parties to make our democracy more representative and authoritarian resistant, enabling the democratic participation of those who have been historically excluded, bridging divides, and enhancing civic engagement."

F. Democracy Forward Recommendations

As discussed above, with Trump's plan to eliminate civil servant jobs en masse, a report by Democracy Forward draws attention to specific threats including relocating federal agencies, shortening the disciplinary process, attacking public sector unions, utilizing buyout programs, terminating employees for past work, impounding appropriated funds, and utilizing the National Security Act of 1947. The report notes that countermeasures targeting these main weak points can be taken—and have begun.

"The pro-democracy community has started to respond. In November of 2023, 26 organizations joined with Democracy Forward to submit comments in support of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) proposed rule: Upholding Civil Service Protections and Merit System Principles. The proposed rule is intended to counter a return of the so-called 'Schedule F' efforts, which was a proposal at the end of the Trump administration to reclassify large numbers of civil servants into positions from which they could be readily terminated. The far right is already planning to re-issue Schedule F should it gain control of the federal executive branch. It is crucial now to put in place safeguards against future attacks on the civil service. While preparing for Schedule F is necessary, it is not sufficient to respond to the wide-ranging threats from anti-democratic actors. Their systematic planning must be met with a comparable response. Other serious threats remain."

"Identifying threats is the first step toward effectively countering them. Addressing these threats will require a thoughtful and coordinated response by the many institutions, policymakers, and communities dedicated to advancing democracy and the ability of the government to be

responsive to the needs of people and communities. Some of these proposals can be forestalled by proactive actions. Others can be challenged in court if they come to fruition."

G. Atlantic Council/International Center on Nonviolent Conflict Recommendations

In their report, "Fostering a Fourth Democratic Wave," Atlantic Council and ICNC recommend that in building democratic solidarity, "the United States and its allies could establish a new standing body, such as D-10 or a broader coalition of democracies, with a mandate to develop strategy and coordinate execution of joint efforts to support democracy and counter authoritarian efforts. The informal working group, or new standing body, would engage perspectives from every major region to identify threats and develop solutions to address them."

"The US government should elevate supporting democracy to be a central factor in foreign policy decision-making. The president should direct the national security agencies and the national security advisor to weigh implications for democracy in all major foreign policy decisions. In addition, the president should issue a National Security Strategy or directive for supporting democracy overseas. Such a directive would send a strong signal to US allies and authoritarian regimes that the United States is committed to supporting democracy overseas."

"The United States should establish a government-wide working group to develop a tiered framework of escalating responses to violent repression. The United States should work with leading democracies to build a framework for collective action centered around enforcement of this tiered approach."

H. Levitsky and Ziblatt Recommendations

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt's October 2024 opinion piece for *The New York Times*, *There Are Four Anti-Trump Pathways We Failed to Take. There Is a Fifth*, outlines five crucial recommendations to safeguard American democracy in response to the current threat posed by Donald Trump and other authoritarian figures. These recommendations are drawn from strategies that have been successfully implemented in other democracies facing similar challenges:

1. Electoral Competition: The American approach to extremism has traditionally relied on "the self-correcting power of electoral competition," rooted in the belief that suitable candidates will ultimately prevail over bad ones. However, this laissez-faire method has flaws: the Electoral College can distort outcomes, enabling candidates who lose the popular vote to win, like Donald Trump in 2016, and electoral competition alone has proven inadequate against extremist threats, as leaders in countries like Venezuela and Hungary have won majorities only to dismantle democratic systems from within.

2. Militant/Defensive Democracy: This approach allows public authorities to use the rule of law to combat antidemocratic forces. It includes measures to restrict or outlaw parties and candidates deemed anti-constitutional. While this can prevent extremist candidates from gaining power, it

also risks abuse by those in authority. The United States has Section III of the 14th Amendment, which could disqualify officials who participated in an insurrection. However, the Supreme Court recently limited its application.

3. Partisan Gatekeeping: Political parties must self-police "their own ranks, expelling antidemocratic elements or refusing to nominate extremists or demagogues for public office." Historically, U.S. political parties have been effective gatekeepers, but recent trends show a failure to uphold these standards, particularly within the Republican Party. Renewed efforts from party leaders, especially within the GOP, are essential to curtail extremist candidacies and agendas.

4. Containment through Coalition-Building: Pro-democracy forces must form broad coalitions across the political spectrum "to isolate and defeat" authoritarian figures. Successful examples include Poland's 2023 opposition uniting diverse parties to oust an illiberal government and similar efforts in France against far-right extremism. In the U.S., some Republicans like Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger supported Kamala Harris over Trump to prioritize democracy. However, the strategy struggles in a polarized system where key Republicans remain silent or back Trump, leaving their voters largely "unmoved."

5. Societal Mobilization: Finally, civil society—business, religious, and other leaders—is democracy's "last bastion of defense," essential in condemning authoritarian threats and rallying public support, as seen in large-scale responses in Germany and Brazil.

I. Summit on Autocracy in America: 10 Guiding Principles

On July 23, 2024, leading thinkers from across the ideological spectrum came together with hundreds of Americans for a day-long summit *Autocracy in America: A Warning and A Response*, to address the urgent threat of rising autocracy in the United States. Co-hosted by State Democracy Defenders Action, Principles First, and Democracy Forward, with convening co-chairs Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Ty Cobb, Norm Eisen, Bill Kristol, Heath Mayo, and Skye Perryman, the event featured a diverse lineup of speakers, including George Conway, John Dean, Keith Ellison, Dahlia Lithwick, J. Michael Luttig, Joanna Lydgate, Sarah Matthews, and Maya Wiley. Rooted in shared confidence in the American experiment, the summit underscored the need for collective action to transcend this historical challenge. The summit culminated in the adoption of 10 guiding principles for safeguarding democracy, which the *Washington Post* reported as serving as "the glue to hold together the anti-autocracy coalition."

- **Principle 1: The foundational idea of rule of law.** Leaders must be held accountable to the Constitution, and persistent violations of civil or criminal statutes should be "disqualifying." No one is above the law, and adherence to this principle is essential for democracy.
- **Principle 2: Truth, facts, science, and evidence.** Elected leaders should embrace truth and rely on evidence-based decision-making. Misinformation and lies undermine public trust, and leaders who deal in falsehoods "fail to meet the basic expectations" of governance.

- **Principle 3: The right to vote in free and fair elections is the foundation of our democracy.** Voting should be accessible to all eligible citizens without discrimination. "Peaceful transitions of power" and respect for electoral outcomes are cornerstones of democracy, and leaders must oppose authoritarianism at the ballot box and beyond.
- **Principle 4: Civil discourse about our differences.** Political disagreements should be resolved through "courteous public discourse" and democratic processes, not violence or incendiary rhetoric. Rejecting political violence is a "basic democratic norm" that must be upheld to prevent further damage to our democracy.
- **Principle 5: The importance of an independent, non-partisan civil service.** Civil servants swear an oath to the Constitution and must remain free from "political pressures or intimidation." Politicizing the civil service undermines its role in democratic governance and harms all Americans.
- **Principle 6: The importance of ethical government.** Governmental corruption is intolerable and erodes public trust. Leaders and judges must adhere to "high ethical standards," refusing to profit from public office, to uphold democracy and the rule of law.
- **Principle 7: The United States' leadership role in the world.** The U.S. has a responsibility to support global democracy and lead the fight against authoritarianism. This includes ensuring that "military and intelligence communities" operate under the Constitution and the rule of law at home and abroad.
- **Principle 8: An economy that brings prosperity for all.** Stable democratic leadership is a prerequisite for economic prosperity. The "chaos and instability" of autocratic regimes threaten economic growth and security for all Americans.
- **Principle 9: A free press and the First Amendment.** The press is not the "enemy of the people" but a vital component of democracy. Respect for freedom of speech, religion, and pluralism is essential, and efforts to impose rigid ideologies or suppress freedoms are "antithetical to democracy."
- **Principle 10. Equality and civil rights for all and the importance of American diversity.** Diversity strengthens democracy, and the U.S. must continue to "strive toward justice and equality." Backsliding on civil rights or failing to recognize the dignity of all people is unacceptable for any leader in a democratic society.

J. CREW Recommendations for Countering Authoritarianism

CREW's report, "Countering Authoritarianism: A Blueprint for a More Resilient Democracy", presents critical and actionable "prophylactic measures" to safeguard American democracy across eight chapters, identifying **January 6th accountability** as the first necessary step for "confronting the authoritarian threat." Chapter One emphasizes the urgency of holding those involved in the insurrection accountable through civil and criminal penalties, professional consequences like disbarment, and disqualification from government service at the state and federal levels. It calls for robust enforcement of the 14th Amendment's Disqualification Clause against federal agents, against state and local officials via *quo warranto writs*, and extending its applicability to military personnel. Additionally, the chapter advocates enforcing anti-militia laws to counter domestic extremism. Chapter two proposes strengthening civil service protections, safeguarding NGO independence, and establishing federal and state pro-democracy offices to

build a **pro-democracy government**. It also advocates for reducing political polarization through initiatives like citizen assemblies and promoting global democratic partnerships. In chapter three, the report addresses **presidential accountability**, advocating constitutional amendments to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court's presidential immunity decision and institutional reforms to bolster congressional oversight and investigative powers.

Chapter four addresses preventing the **manipulation of courts** for anti-democratic purposes, advocating reforms to enhance transparency in judicial processes, combat forum shopping, eliminate shadow docket abuses, and protect judicial personnel. Chapter five tackles **law enforcement extremism and emergency power misuse**, urging reforms to root out extremism, amend the Insurrection Act and National Emergencies Act, and establish accountability systems to limit qualified immunity for police misconduct. Chapters six and seven tackle **political corruption and foreign influence**, proposing measures to mitigate the effects of unlimited money in politics as established by the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United v. FEC*. Finally, chapter eight calls for **transformative voting rights legislation** to guarantee ballot access free from intimidation, ensure fair vote counting and certification and empower election officials to uphold peaceful power transitions.

K. Mobilizing Democracy: How Resistance Began Long Before Election Day

As early as 2023, a wide array of actors nationwide began organizing to combat the possibility of Donald Trump's return to the White House. The *New York Times* reported in June 2024 that advocacy organizations like the ACLU began scenario planning as early as 2023, mapping out potential authoritarian threats and preparing litigation to counter policies such as mass deportations, abortion restrictions, and misuse of federal power. Democratic governors, including Washington State Gov. Jay Inslee and California Gov. Gavin Newsom, secured abortion medication stockpiles and passed shield laws to safeguard healthcare providers and patients. Groups like the National Immigration Law Center coordinated rapid-response strategies for immigration raids. Meanwhile, watchdog organizations like Democracy Forward and Protect Democracy developed threat matrices, drafted legal challenges, and recruited plaintiffs to contest anticipated abuses of executive power.

By summer 2024, much of this groundwork had already evolved into broader coordination and implementation, reflecting an unprecedented scale of mobilization well before Election Day. Advocacy groups hosted scenario planning sessions, such as the Immigrant Movement Visioning Process, which prepared for mass deportations, while state attorneys general adapted litigation strategies from Republican counterparts to prepare for federal policy challenges. Coalition-building initiatives, like the Reproductive Freedom Alliance, provided a template for interstate collaboration on issues such as abortion and immigration. Conferences and tabletop exercises led by groups like State Democracy Defenders Action, Principles First, and Democracy Forward brought together practitioners and policymakers to refine strategies for resisting authoritarian threats. These early mobilizations, rooted in lessons learned from Trump's first term, now likely serve as the backbone for intensified efforts in response to Trump's actual victory in November 2024.

L. "Democracy 2025: United Coalition to Defend Rights from Day 1"

In anticipation of the incoming Trump-Vance administration, a coalition of over 280 pro-democracy organizations including State Democracy Defenders Action—supported by more than 800 lawyers and advocates—has launched Democracy 2025, a "large-scale," multimillion-dollar effort to mount swift legal challenges against potential anti-democratic actions. Led by Democracy Forward, the coalition aims to utilize litigation and advocacy to address threats outlined in a "Threat Matrix" identifying hundreds of priority legal issues, including efforts to undermine civil rights, healthcare access, labor protections, and environmental policies, as well as the weaponization of government agencies. These threats are tied to the far-right Project 2025 agenda. Armed with a substantial "war chest," the coalition is prepared to deploy lawsuits, provide pro bono representation, and engage the public through Democracy2025.org. Drawing on the track record of its members in successfully challenging Trump-era policies, the coalition seeks to ensure robust legal responses to protect democracy and vulnerable communities from Day 1 of the new administration.

M. Governors Safeguarding Democracy

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker and Colorado Governor Jared Polis announced the formation of "Governors Safeguarding Democracy," a group to protect institutions of democracy at the state-level. As *The New York Times* reported, the group aims "to coordinate resources across state lines to protect state courts, elections and laws against encroachment from what they expect to be a hostile federal government. The privately-funded organization is focused on protecting democratic institutions and the rule of law broadly rather than on any particular threat, and it hopes Republican governors will join the effort."

N. Blue State Attorneys General Mobilize Against Trump-Vance Policies

State attorneys general in blue states are mobilizing to confront anticipated Trump-Vance administration policies, drawing on lessons from his first term. California Attorney General Rob Bonta confirmed to *POLITICO* months of planning and strategizing with attorneys general nationwide to prepare for measures targeting immigration, LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive care, and environmental protections, guided in part by Trump's campaign promises and Project 2025. Bonta and legal teams in the Golden State have extensively prepared for Trump's return, drafting briefs, refining legal arguments, and identifying favorable litigation venues. Attorney General Letitia James and Governor Kathy Hochul in New York have similarly prepared by launching the "Empire State Freedom Initiative," which convened before Election Day, to address "policy and regulatory threats" to fundamental rights. Other efforts are also underway at the state level, including in New Jersey, where Attorney General Matt Platkin is preparing for litigation over mass deportations, abortion bans through an "aggressive reading of the Comstock Act," and environmental rollbacks, while in Massachusetts, Attorney General Andrea Campbell is focusing on defending reproductive, LGBTQ+, and immigrant rights, as well as student loan forgiveness programs.

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