

Excerpt that follows is from *Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise* (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation, 2023), reproduced at [archive.org](https://archive.org); downloaded with my added highlighting and comments.

## THE CONSERVATIVE PROMISE

This volume— *The Conservative Promise*—is the opening salvo of the 2025 Presidential Transition Project, launched by The Heritage Foundation and our many partners in April 2022. Its 30 chapters lay out hundreds of clear and concrete policy recommendations for White House offices, Cabinet departments, Congress, and agencies, commissions, and boards.

Just as important as the scope of *The Conservative Promise*'s recommendations is the breadth of its authorship. This book is the product of more than 400 scholars and policy experts from across the conservative movement and around the country. Contributors include former elected officials, world-renowned economists, and veterans from four presidential Administrations. This is an agenda prepared by and for conservatives who will be ready on Day One of the next Administration to save our country from the brink of disaster.

The Heritage Foundation is once again facilitating this work. But as our dozens of partners and hundreds of authors will attest, this book is the work of the entire conservative movement. As such, the authors express consensus recommendations already forged, especially along four broad fronts that will decide America's future:

1. Restore the family as the centerpiece of American life and protect our children.
2. Dismantle the administrative state and return self-governance to the American people.
3. Defend our nation's sovereignty, borders, and bounty against global threats.
4. Secure our God-given individual rights to live freely—what our Constitution calls "the Blessings of Liberty."

What makes these four pieces of the conservative promise so valuable to the next President is that they cut through superficial distractions and focus on the moral and foundational challenges America faces in this moment of history. This was one of the secrets of conservatives' success in the Reagan Era, one our generation should emulate.

As in the late 1970s, Americans today experience the failures of political and

### 1. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 2:55:00 PM

TRICK #1: QUESTIONABLE,  
UNPROVIDED & UNVERIFIABLE  
DATA

a) The Annie E. Casey Foundation  
(<https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/106-children-in-single-parent-families#detailed/1/any/false/>)

1096,2545,1095,2048,1729,37,871,870,573,869/any/429,430) cites 34% of US children living with a single parent (either sex) in 2024. US Census Bureau statistics show that the percentage of black single mothers in 2023 was 44%, not 70%. The Census Bureaus does not provide data for the number of single mothers who are married or not.

### 2. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 2:56:00 PM

b) Statement assumes without evidence that children's living with an unmarried mother is the cause of the list of social ills. What is the basis of the claim that "fatherlessness" is a principal source of America's social ills?

### 3. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 2:57:00 PM

c) No supporting data for the extreme projection of a "crisis" and "social implosion."

cultural elites in countless ways: in the job market and in the grocery store checkout lines, on the streets and in our schools, in the media and within our institutions. But in truth, these daily dysfunctions are not innumerable problems, but innumerable manifestations of a few core crises.

In 1979, the threats we faced were the Soviet Union, the socialism of 1970s liberals, and the predatory deviancy of cultural elites. Reagan defeated these beasts by ignoring their tentacles and striking instead at their hearts.

His approach to the Cold War? "We win and they lose." His economic agenda? The human dignity of work and its many rewards.

His platform in the culture wars? The "community of values embodied in these words: family, work, neighborhood, peace and freedom." This book—and Project 2025 as a whole—will arm the next conservative President with the same kind of strategic clarity, but for a new age.

#### **PROMISE #1: RESTORE THE FAMILY AS THE CENTERPIECE OF AMERICAN LIFE AND PROTECT OUR CHILDREN.**

The next conservative President must get to work pursuing the true priority of politics—the *well-being of the American family*.

In many ways, the entire point of centralizing political power is to subvert the family. Its purpose is to replace people's natural loves and loyalties with unnatural ones. You see this in the popular leftwing aphorism, "Government is simply the name we give to the things we choose to do together." But in real life, most of the things people "do together" have nothing to do with government. These are the mediating institutions that serve as the building blocks of any healthy society. Marriage. Family. Work. Church. School. Volunteering. The name real people give to the things we do together is community, not government. Our lives are full of interwoven, overlapping communities, and our individual and collective happiness depends upon them. But the most important community in each of our lives—and the life of the nation—is the family.

- 1 Today, the American family is in crisis. **Forty** percent of all children are born to
- 2 unmarried mothers, including more than 70 percent of black children. **There** is no government program that can replace the hole in a child's soul cut out by the absence of a father. Fatherlessness is one of the principal sources of American poverty, crime, mental illness, teen suicide, substance abuse, rejection of the church, and high school dropouts. So many of the problems government programs are designed to solve—but can't—are ultimately problems created by the crisis of marriage and the family. The world has never seen a thriving, healthy, free, and
- 3 prosperous society where most children grow up without their married parents. **If**

#### 4. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 2:58:00 PM

TRICK#2: CONTRADICTION USED TO INTIMIDATE AND ARRIVE AT DESIRED CONCLUSION

In contrast to the statement above, that government can't solve problems of marriage and family, government is now imagined as a source of "power" needed to solve the so-called "family crisis."

#### 5. Daniel Lochman

May 2, 2026 at 9:01:00 AM

TRICK #3: BANDWAGON APPEAL

Emotional claim used to reinforce need for government power to save "family authority."

#### 6. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 3:01:00 PM

TRICK #4: VAGUE AND LOADED LANGUAGE

"Woke progressivism" is not defined and therefore susceptible to being used in opposition to everything not approved by MAGA. the presumed righteousness of MAGA. In the next sentence "totalitarian" is emotional, questionable, and unexplained. "Woke culture warriors" in the next paragraph encourages frames political opponents as foolish and violent, worthy of being "hard targets" for

#### 7. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 3:05:00 PM

Similar to 1c, the link between deprivation of rights and resulting censorship is assumed without supporting argument

#### 8. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 3:09:00 PM

Related to #4, "pornography" is not defined, with the result that a biology class on anatomy or certain Biblical texts could be construed as pornographic, vagueness used to link educators and librarians to pornographers and to the extreme punishments

#### 9. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 3:12:00 PM

TRICK #5: OBFUSCATING ASSERTIONS

Do schools not serve students? Why must "universal school choice" be the "goal of all conservatives"?

If parents are children's "primary educators," why send children to school?

current trends continue, we are heading toward social implosion.

Furthermore, the next conservative President must understand that using

4 government alone to respond to symptoms of the family crisis is a dead end. Federal power must instead be wielded to reverse the crisis and rescue America's kids from familial breakdown. The Conservative Promise includes dozens of specific policies to accomplish this existential task.

Some are obvious and long-standing goals like eliminating marriage penalties in federal welfare programs and the tax code and installing work requirements for food stamps. But we must go further. It's time for policymakers to elevate family authority, formation, and cohesion as their top priority and even use government power, including through the tax code, to restore the American family.

6 Today the Left is threatening the tax-exempt status of churches and charities that reject woke progressivism. They will soon turn to Christian schools and clubs with the same totalitarian intent.

The next conservative President must make the institutions of American civil society hard targets for woke culture warriors. This starts with deleting the terms sexual orientation and gender identity ("SOGI"), diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI"), gender, gender equality, gender equity, gender awareness, gender-sensitive, abortion, reproductive health, reproductive rights, and any other term used to

7 deprive Americans of their First Amendment rights out of every federal rule, agency regulation, contract, grant, regulation, and piece of legislation that exists.

8 Pornography, manifested today in the omnipresent propagation of transgender ideology and sexualization of children, for instance, is not a political Gordian knot inextricably binding up disparate claims about free speech, property rights, sexual liberation, and child welfare. It has no claim to First Amendment protection. Its purveyors are child predators and misogynistic exploiters of women. Their product is as addictive as any illicit drug and as psychologically destructive as any crime. Pornography should be outlawed. The people who produce and distribute it should be imprisoned. Educators and public librarians who purvey it should be classed as registered sex offenders. And telecommunications and technology firms that facilitate its spread should be shuttered.

In our schools, the question of parental authority over their children's education is a simple one: Schools serve parents, not the other way around. That is, of course, the best argument for universal school choice—a goal all conservatives and conservative Presidents must pursue. But even before we achieve that long-term goal, parents' rights as their children's primary educators should be non-negotiable in American schools. States, cities and counties, school boards, union bosses, principals, and teachers who disagree should be immediately cut off from federal funds.

9

#### 10. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 3:14:00 PM

Another instance of #4 in addition to TRICK #6: SIMPLE INACCURACY

What are these "noxious tenets" and what is meant by "gender ideology"?

Is the conviction that males are oppressed a gender ideology? The meaning of these terms is inaccurately reflected in the following sentence and continuing into the next paragraph. Critical race theory refers to institutional systems that shape and determine identity and behavior -- skin color is not the

#### 11. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 3:16:00 PM

TRICK #6: FALSE EITHER/OR

If the "givenness of our nature" is to be either a man or woman, what does one do with the intersex population (with estimates ranging from .018% to 1.7% of US births, depending on definition and source), born with procreative common to both sexes?

#### 12. Daniel Lochman

May 1, 2026 at 3:19:00 PM

TRICK #7: TRUISM NOT ALIGNED WITH SPECIFIC CASE

This sentence states a truism that is not related explicitly to the assertion in the preceding sentence. In addition, the paragraph undermines the principal authority assigned to parents 2 paragraphs above.

- 10 The noxious tenets of "critical race theory" and "gender ideology" should be excised from curricula in every public school in the country. These theories poison our children, who are being taught on the one hand to affirm that the color of their skin fundamentally determines their identity and even their moral status while on the other they are taught to deny the very creatureliness that inheres in being human and consists in accepting the givenness of our nature as men or women.

- 11 Allowing parents or physicians to "reassign" the sex of a minor is child abuse and must end. For public institutions to use taxpayer dollars to declare the superiority or inferiority of certain races, sexes, and religions is a violation of the Constitution and civil rights law and cannot be tolerated by any government anywhere in the country.

- 12 But the pro-family promises expressed in this book, and central to the next conservative President's agenda, must go much further than the traditional, narrow definition of "family issues." Every threat to family stability must be confronted.

This resolve should color each of our policies. Consider our approach to Big Tech. The worst of these companies prey on children, like drug dealers, to get them addicted to their mobile apps. Many Silicon Valley executives famously don't let their own kids have smart phones.<sup>2</sup> They nevertheless make billions of dollars addicting other people's children to theirs. TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms are specifically designed to create the digital dependencies that fuel mental illness and anxiety, to fray children's bonds with their parents and siblings. Federal policy cannot allow this industrial-scale child abuse to continue.

Finally, conservatives should gratefully celebrate the greatest profamily win in a generation: overturning Roe v. Wade, a decision that for five decades made a mockery of our Constitution and facilitated the deaths of tens of millions of unborn children. But the Dobbs decision is just the beginning. Conservatives in the states and in Washington, including in the next conservative Administration, should push as hard as possible to protect the unborn in every jurisdiction in America. In particular, the next conservative President should work with Congress to enact the most robust protections for the unborn that Congress will support while deploying existing federal powers to protect innocent life and vigorously complying with statutory bans on the federal funding of abortion. Conservatives should ardently pursue these pro-life and pro-family policies while recognizing the many women who find themselves in immensely difficult and often tragic situations and the heroism of every choice to become a mother. Alternative options to abortion, especially adoption, should receive federal and state support.

In summary, the next President has a moral responsibility to lead the nation in restoring a culture of life in America again.