



TEAMSTERS

JOINT COUNCIL NO. 25

THOMAS W. STIEDE, President
160 Market Street
Willow Springs, Illinois 60480

September 20, 2024

■ IMPORTANT NOTICE

TO: ALL TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL NO. 25 AFFILIATES

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Enclosed is an informative overview prepared by Mr. Robert Cervone, Partner, Dowd, Bloch, Bennett, Cervone, Auerbach & Yokich, LLC., regarding "Project 2025," a plan that has been devised by the extreme right Heritage Foundation for the next Republican president to make changes in almost every aspect of the United States Government.

The overview summarizes "Project 2025's" detrimental implications on labor and working people. The proposed plan would adversely impact union contracts, wages, benefits and the ability to organize; all fundamental aspects of labor organizations that are driven by the rights and collective efforts of our membership.

As elected officers and leaders, it is our responsibility and obligation to preserve the interests and rights of our membership and keep them informed of issues, such as "Project 2025," that would strip them of those same rights as union members and that would be extremely detrimental to their livelihoods, present and future.

I encourage you to circulate this information to your membership and remain vigilant in your efforts to communicate and engage with them about current issues that significantly impact the future of labor.

Fraternally,

Thomas W. Stiede
President

TWS/sd

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P: 630.755.2500 TeamstersJC25.com F: 630.755.2525
Affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

UNION PROUD

"PROJECT 2025" **TRUMP'S ANTI-WORKER PLAN**

Questions Every Union Member Should Ask. **Answers Every Union Member Should Know.**

➤ **What is Project 2025?**

"Mandate for Leadership 2025: The Conservative Promise," otherwise known as "Project 2025," is a blueprint for the next Republican president to make sweeping changes in almost every aspect of U.S. government.¹ Project 2025 was created by the "Heritage Foundation."

➤ **What is the Heritage Foundation?**

The Heritage Foundation does right-wing research and public relations. It calls itself a "think-tank" created to "formulate and promote **conservative** public policies."² It's funded by multinational corporations, conservative "foundations," and other far-right organizations like the Koch brothers.³

The Heritage Foundation **openly opposes unions** and regularly publishes anti-union materials. It frequently publishes papers saying things like, "Expanding union membership would not help the middle class, and their decline has not hurt it."⁴ It calls unions "cartels" that "retard economic growth and delay recovery from recession" and urges congress to reject laws, like the Employee Free Choice Act, that would help workers organize unions.⁵

➤ **How is Trump tied to Project 2025?**

Evidence shows that, if elected, Trump will use Project 2025 as a playbook for his administration.

Project 2025's author (the Heritage Foundation) has had great influence over Trump for years. It touts its influence on Trump, saying he "embraced over 64% of The Heritage Foundation's policy recommendations," and that it put over 60 so-called experts in his administration.⁶ It was one of the biggest forces behind Trump's 2016 transition team,⁷ and Trump has often praised Heritage.⁸

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/what-is-project-2025-trump-conservative-blueprint-heritage-foundation/>

² "About Heritage," *Heritage Foundation*. Archived April 19, 2016.

³ "The Heritage Foundation: Koch Industries Climate Denial Front Group," *Greenpeace USA*. Archived March 14, 2017.

⁴ <https://www.heritage.org/jobs-and-labor/commentary/the-argument-most-workers-are-better-without-unions>

⁵ <https://www.heritage.org/jobs-and-labor/report/what-unions-do-how-labor-unions-affect-jobs-and-the-economy>

⁶ <https://www.mediamatters.org/project-2025/group-behind-project-2025-frequently-bragged-fundraising-materials-about-its-influence>

⁷ Trump's shadow transition team," *Politico*, November 22, 2016.

⁸ <https://www.mediamatters.org/project-2025/group-behind-project-2025-frequently-bragged-fundraising-materials-about-its-influence>

People within Project 2025 admit Trump is on board. Project 2025 director Paul Dans said Trump is “very bought in with this,” and Heritage Foundation President Kevin Roberts said, “our respective staffs have been in conversation throughout the campaign.”⁹

“At least 140 people who worked for [Trump] are involved” with Project 2025.¹⁰ Many will likely serve under him again if he wins in November.¹¹

Trump claims he doesn’t know about Project 2025 and disagrees with it, but these claims are contradictory. (If he doesn’t know about it, how could he disagree with it?) One statement or the other is false, and Trump made over 30,000 false or misleading statements in four years as President.¹² Trump knows about it and, as the Project 2025 Director himself has said, Trump agrees with it.

Given Trump’s close ties to the Heritage Foundation and the absurdity of his Project 2025 denials, it is clear Trump would use Project 2025 as a blueprint for his government.

➤ **Is there anything in Project 2025 Trump could use to help unions or working people?**

Not much. Trump Project 2025 contains **no firm recommendations** for legislation to improve workers’ ability to unionize or otherwise improve wages or working conditions.

Trump Project 2025 does **not call for enacting the Protecting the Right to Organize Act** (“PRO Act”), which would limit states’ anti-union laws and empower union workers, including allowing the National Labor Relations Board to fine companies that violate labor laws.

It does **not call for raising the minimum wage** (even after the Republican Congress blocked the Biden-Harris administrations’ push to raise the minimum to \$15 an hour). The federal minimum wage has not increased (from \$7.25) in 15 years.

It would **increase drug costs** by blocking negotiations with big pharma. The Biden-Harris administration passed the Inflation Reduction Act, which allowed Medicare to negotiate with drug companies, improve access, and lower costs of prescription drugs. In August 2024, the Biden-Harris administration announced negotiated price cuts in 10 popular drugs that will save

⁹ <https://www.mediamatters.org/project-2025/group-behind-project-2025-frequently-bragged-fundraising-materials-about-its-influence>

¹⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/11/politics/trump-allies-project-2025/index.html>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/aug/04/project-2025-trump-unions-overtime-pay>

¹² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/01/24/trumps-false-or-misleading-claims-total-30573-over-four-years/>

\$6 billion in the first year.¹³ Nevertheless, Project 2025 says “this ‘negotiation’ program should be repealed.” Project 2025 p. 465.

➤ **How would Trump use Project 2025 to hurt individual workers?**

Trump Project 2025 would reduce workers’ income by **cutting overtime**.

- Trump Project 2025 suggests overtime could be required only when you work **more than 80 hours** in a two-week period instead of the current 40 hours in a week. That means, if an employee works 55 hours one week and 25 the next, the employee won’t get any overtime pay, despite working 55 hours one week.
- It would allow employers to **pay overtime in compensatory time** rather than time-and-a-half pay (\$). While they claim this would give workers more time off, many, including the former Director of the Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division, warn that employers could abuse the loophole: “Unfortunately, in too many work settings, workers would be pressured into taking the accumulated time option and then have trouble using that time when they chose to do so,” he said. This would mean the **employer would pocket overtime pay** the worker is supposed to get.

Trump Project 2025 would also **repeal the Davis-Bacon (Prevailing Wage) Act**, which requires contractors on public projects to pay the prevailing wage. Repealing Davis-Bacon would devastate wages and work opportunities for union construction workers.

Trump Project 2025 would lower wages by making it easier to classify workers as **“independent contractors.”** “Independent contractors” do not have the same protections as employees. For example, employers do not have to pay minimum wages or overtime pay to “independent contractors.” More people would be forced into contractor status and therefore earn less.

Trump Project 2025 would **reintroduce dangerous child-labor**. The Project recommends making it easier for children to work in dangerous jobs like metal-stamping plants with heavy machinery – jobs that the law currently prohibits for workers under age 18.

Trump Project 2025 would **reduce women’s incomes** by limiting abortion and contraception access. Instituting abortion and contraception restrictions may limit women’s

¹³ <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2024-08-15/biden-administration-reveals-price-cuts-negotiated-by-medicare-for-10-popular-drugs-says-it-will-save-6-billion-in-the-first-year>

workforce participation, increase time off from work, and reduce their earnings over time, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research.¹⁴

Trump Project 2025 would make it **harder for workers to keep good union insurance**. Employers get tax deductions for providing employee benefits, including payments to union health and welfare funds. These deductions help off-set the cost of union insurance. Under Project 2025, Trump would cap these tax deductions at \$12,000 per year per employee. (Any benefit payment above that would be taxed like wages.) Many union employers pay more than \$12,000 per year to union health and welfare funds, so these employers will fight to reduce contributions to health and welfare funds to reduce their tax bills. This will make it harder for unions to negotiate to keep union insurance without giving up wage increases or reducing benefits.

➤ **How would Trump use Project 2025 to hurt unions and workers' ability to organize unions?**

Trump Project 2025 suggests a **ban on public-sector unions** – whether police, firefighter, teachers, or state highway maintainers – saying that Congress should consider a law abolishing **all** such unions. “Congress should also consider whether public-sector unions are appropriate in the first place.” Project 2025 p. 82.

Trump Project 2025 would **ban the use of card check recognition**, one of the most effective ways workers can unionize. When a majority of employees choose a union through pro-union cards, unions can often use this majority support to get recognition from the employer and bargain contracts without the delay and frustration of the election process. Trump Project 2025 would make this illegal and harder for workers to organize.

Trump Project 2025 would make it **easier to get rid of unions**. Currently, workers can vote to “decertify” a union only during certain window periods before their contract expires (or there is no contract in force). Trump Project 2025 would allow such votes any time, destabilizing collective bargaining relationships and encouraging employers to (illegally) persuade vulnerable or unscrupulous employees to do their anti-union bidding.

Trump Project 2025 would **prohibit project labor agreements (“PLAs”)**. PLAs are used to promote labor peace on construction projects by ensuring the projects are done with union contractors. Prohibiting PLAs would greatly depress wages and work opportunities for union construction workers.

Trump Project 2025 would **rescind the union-buster “Persuader Rule.”** This rule requires employers to disclose when they use union-busting law firms and consultants and how much they pay them. This information can be used to educate workers during union campaigns

¹⁴ <https://iwpr.org/costs-of-reproductive-health-restrictions/>

about the motives and tactics of these employer “hired guns.” Eliminating the rule would make it easier for employers to carry out anti-union campaigns and conceal money they spend on those campaigns (instead of spending it on improving pay and working conditions).

Trump Project 2025 would **rescind the “joint employer” rule**. It would prevent the National Labor Relations Board from finding franchise companies, like McDonald’s, to be “joint employers” with local franchises. When two companies are “joint employers” both need to bargain with workers at unionized locations, and both may be liable for labor law violations. Rescinding the joint employer rule insulates big corporations like McDonalds from these outcomes even though they often have all the bargaining power and are the primary culprits of violations.

Trump Project 2025 would **allow sham unions**. It would change federal law to allow companies to form non-union “employee involvement organizations.” The Trump Project says this would “facilitate voluntary cooperation on critical issues like working conditions,” but these organizations would undoubtedly be dominated by the employer and used to keep out legitimate unions (selected by workers who would truly advance the cause of workers).

➤ **How would Trump use Project 2025 to weaken current worker protection laws and programs?**

Trump Project 2025 would **redefine “protected concerted activity”** under the National Labor Relations Act to make it more employer-friendly and workers receive less protection from retaliation when they engage in union organizing or act together to protect themselves.

Trump Project 2025 would **turn civil servants into political hacks**. The federal civil service system started in the 1880s to ensure federal workers did their jobs impartially and not to please whatever administration was in office. Project 2025 would replace many non-partisan, professional employees with partisans ready to do Trump’s bidding. This could mean that investigators and administrative law judges at the NLRB, DOL, EEOC, OSHA, and other agencies would enforce (or not enforce) the laws to please Trump and his favored corporations, instead of on behalf of workers, which the laws are intended to protect.

Trump Project 2025 would ban the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) from collecting data on race and ethnicity. Such data can be used to bring lawsuits against employers for systemic discrimination. The ban could allow greater systemic discrimination by employers.

Trump Project 2025 recommends allowing **states and local governments to opt out of federal labor law** protections. It says states and local governments should be able to get waivers from federal laws, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which establishes the minimum wage and overtime laws, and the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which protects

workers' rights to join unions. This would result in a patchwork of labor standards and weaken worker protections, because even if the state or local laws were well-intended, those jurisdictions often lack the resources to effectively enforce the laws.

Trump Project 2025 would **make unemployment benefits harder to get**. The program imposes strict controls and supervision over unemployment insurance in the name of eliminating fraud, but which would likely make it harder for those in need to access benefits. It also allows non-public organizations to administer state unemployment insurance programs. This privatization of unemployment benefits could cut workers' jobs and lead to obstacles to obtaining this critical social safety net.

Trump Project 2025 would **shield unsafe employers from responsibility for injured workers**. It would allow DOL/OSHA to exempt small business, first-time, non-willful violators from OSHA fines, even potentially in egregious cases.

➤ What is the big take-away from Trump Project 2025?

Even commentators not known to be pro-worker or pro-union, such as Forbes Magazine, have said that Trump Project 2025's policies would "widen systematic inequities in the workplace" and "eliminate worker protections."¹⁵ But you don't need journalists or "think tanks" to tell you that. The questions and answers above tell you everything you need to know – Trump and Project 2025 would do great damage to workers and unions.

¹⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2024/07/08/three-ways-project-2025-will-impact-american-workplaces/>