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Social Justice



Kristen Eichamer of the Heritage Foundation holds a fan in Project 2025's tent at the Iowa State Fair, Aug. 14, 2023, in Des Moines, Iowa. (AP/Charlie Neibergall)



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Project 2025, the Heritage Foundation's policy document for a future Republican presidential administration, is an "extremist plan" that would reshape the United States in "profoundly harmful ways," says a new informational resource from Network Advocates for Catholic Social Justice.

The 18-page resource, released Aug. 28 by the Catholic advocacy organization, suggests that Project 2025 clashes with several principles of Catholic social teaching, particularly through its proposals that would benefit corporations and wealthy Americans at the expense of the poor and middle class.

"This plan has the potential to gut civil rights protections and social safety net programs, things that every single person needs, in order to allow a select few, the ultra wealthy, to have what they want," said Humility of Mary Sr. Eilis McCulloh, a grassroots education and organizing specialist with Network.

Titled "Project 2025 in Contrast with Catholic Social Justice: A Future for Few/A Future for All," the resource says the proposed policy plan for a Republican administration would, among other things, eliminate the federal Head Start program, roll back workers' rights, gut the Affordable Care Act, legalize discrimination against the LGBTQ community and weaponize the U.S. Department of Justice against a president's political opponents.

"To me, it is terrifying that this vision could be used to restructure our country," McCulloh told the National Catholic Reporter. "As a Catholic sister, as a person of faith, as a justice seeker, it's in such a direct contrast to everything I believe and that I've been taught in my faith."



Humility of Mary Sr. Eilis McCulloh, a grassroots education and organizing specialist with Network Advocates for Catholic Social Justice, speaks at the U.S Capitol July 23 during the announcement of the Nuns on the Bus & Friends "Vote Our Future" tour. (Courtesy of Network)

Drafted by the Heritage Foundation, a leading conservative think tank in Washington D.C., Project 2025 is a nearly 900-page compendium of domestic policy proposals that would expand presidential powers and impose an ultra-conservative social vision on the United States.

The plan includes proposals for funding a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, eliminating the U.S. Department of Education, removing the abortion drug mifepristone from the market and using federal law to prevent it from being sent through the postal service.

Project 2025 also envisions bringing the entire executive branch under the next Republican president's direct control in part by eliminating civil service job

protections for thousands of government employees and replacing them with political appointees.

The Heritage Foundation and Project 2025 were both sponsors of the 2024 National Catholic Prayer Breakfast.

"We can't afford not to take this plan seriously," said Margie Clark, an attorney and volunteer at Network whose research on Project 2025 informed the new resource.

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>
> —Humility of Mary Sr. Eilis McCulloh

Former President Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, has disavowed Project 2025. Writing on his social media website, Trump has said that he knows "nothing" about the plan and that he has "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," Trump wrote.

However, hundreds of Project 2025's contributors worked for Trump's previous administration. Those links have been highlighted by the former president's critics, including Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee whose campaign has launched an ad blitz focusing on the controversial plan.

Though Trump has distanced himself from Project 2025, the Network resource notes that previous Republican administrations, including Trump's first term, have adopted many of the Heritage Foundation's policy proposals.

"I think it's just so important that people know about this," said Clark, who added that the idea for the Project 2025 resource grew out of conversations with other Network staff and volunteers.

"There was a realization that [Project 2025] hadn't been looked at through a Catholic lens, to see how it holds up against Catholic social teaching principles," Clark said.

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The resource compares and contrasts Project 2025 with Catholic social teaching principles and Network's policy positions on a range of issues that include immigration, health care, economic justice, civil rights, democracy, environmental justice and gun control.

"I will just say that as a policy, Project 2025 is diametrically opposed to Catholic social teaching," said Clark, who noted one proposal that would eliminate staff time for renewing the status of those in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, a policy that allows some people who came to the United States as children to request a two-year period of deferred action from deportation.

"That struck me as being so cynical, and just so cruel," Clark said.

While Project 2025 "may be getting a lot of press attention," McCulloh said that she and others at Network believe there is a different, more compelling vision for the future of the United States.

"That vision is one where everyone thrives, with no exceptions," McCulloh said, adding that the Project 2025 resource is a culmination of the nonpartisan, "Vote Our Future," election-year voter education campaign that Network has been distributing.

"Our hope is that everybody who gets the resource will share it with everybody else as well," McCulloh said.

For more information on Network's "Vote Our Future" voter education campaign, visit networkadvocates.org/election-2024.

This story appears in the **Election 2024** feature series. View the full series.
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