

# PROJECT 2025

FACT CHECK BY Tom Norton

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## Fact Check: Has Donald Trump 'Blessed' Project 2025?



Donald Trump gives a thumbs up as he leaves a rally at Tucson International Airport in Tucson, Arizona on October 19, 2020. Democrats have claimed Trump has given Project 2025, a controversial conservative policy document,... More **MANDEL NGAN/AFP via**

"Project 2025 is Trump's 2nd term agenda and everybody knows it."

By [Tom Norton](#)

Donald Trump continues to face claims that he will institute the controversial Project 2025 policy document if he is elected president later this year.

Project 2025, a 900-page policy proposal published by conservative group [The Heritage Foundation](#), has been described as a blueprint for a Trump government should the [Republican Party](#) win this November.

Trump has tried to distance himself from the document, claiming earlier this year that he had nothing to do with it and that some of its ideas were "ridiculous" and "abysmal."

Regardless, [Democrats](#) have continued to use associations between Project 2025 and

Trump in their campaigning, this week claiming that the former president had "blessed" the document.

### The Facts

There are several links between Trump and Project 2025. A [CNN](#) analysis found that as many as 140 former Trump staffers and associates worked on the paper.

Trump has previously praised The Heritage Foundation; speaking at its Annual Leadership Conference on April 21, 2022, a week after Project 2025 was announced, he said: "But this is a great group. And they're going to lay the groundwork and detail plans for exactly what our movement will do and what your movement will do when the American people give us a colossal mandate to save America and that's coming." Project 2025 was published a year later.

Trump's running mate [JD Vance](#) has several connections to its creators. Vance wrote a foreword for Heritage Foundation President Kevin Roberts' new book, *Dawn's Early Light*:

*Burning Down Washington to Save America*, saying he was "thrilled" to have done so and that the book contained "a bold new vision for the future of conservatism in America."

Vance also has links through American Moment, a nonprofit providing public policy training and intern opportunities to young conservatives. American Moment, which Vance has supported from its launch, has been a supporter of Project 2025 from its early development, has secured Project 2025 Director Paul Dans as a speaker for its trainees, has invited Dans to speak on its podcasts, and has hired former employees of Project 2025 to its staff.

Some of Project 2025's policy ideas echo Trump's too, including on immigration, bureaucratic reform, education, and energy.

Donald Trump spokesperson Steven Cheung told *Newsweek* that Trump had "denounced and distanced" himself from the project on numerous occasions.

"Also, the Trump campaign, starting back in November 2023, has distanced itself," Cheung said.

Many, including the Harris-Walz campaign, still believe there is a credible argument that Trump will shepherd Project 2025's policy ideas into legislation if elected. He has, as mentioned before, not endorsed it publicly and has criticized some of its ideas. The claim that he has "blessed" it is based on a hidden camera interview with Russell Vought, Trump's director of the Office of Management and Budget from July 2020 to January 2021. Vought is also one of the authors of Project 2025 and the founder of the conservative group the Center for Renewing America (CRA), one of the many organizations that partnered on the project.

In the hidden camera interview by the Centre for Climate Reporting, Vought told undercover reporters he was "not worried" about what Trump said in public about the project.

Vought then goes on to say that "our organization" was "blessed" by Trump. It appears he is talking about the CRA, however, not The Heritage Foundation or Project 2025. An accompanying article by the Centre for Climate Reporting also suggests Vought was talking about the CRA.

While the CRA is closely associated with Project 2025 and The Heritage Foundation, it does not appear that Vought's quote ties all three ventures together. The quote, describing his plans after Trump left the White House, would have been made in early 2021, the same year the CRA was founded and more than a year before Project 2025 was announced publicly.

"He's running against the brand, he is not running against any people, he is not running against any institutions," Vought said. "It's interesting he's in fact not even opposing himself to a particular policy. "He's been at our organization, 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."

*Newsweek* has contacted the Centre for Climate Reporting for further information.

In any case, the claim used by Democrats is not from Trump's mouth and is based on an undercover report from a former associate who may have exaggerated the significance of his relationship with the former president. As the Centre for Climate Reporting states, the cover story used to arrange the hidden camera interview was a discussion of a donation opportunity.

While we cannot be certain about Trump's feelings on Project 2025, the "blessed" comment appears to have been misattributed.

*Newsweek* has contacted the Oversight Committee Democrats and the Center for Renewing America for comment.

## **Unverified.**

The "blessed" comment was based on an undercover interview with Project 2025 author and former Trump staffer Russell Vought. Vought said on hidden camera he was not worried about Trump's public dismissal of Project 2025 and that the president had "blessed" his "organization." In the context of the conversation, this appears to refer to the Center for Renewing America (CRA), which Vought founded in 2021.

While the CRA and Vought contributed to Project 2025, the comment seems to refer to the CRA exclusively.

No matter that context, Trump has not given his "blessing" publicly or directly. Trump has tried to distance himself from the project, calling some of its ideas "abysmal" and "ridiculous."

**FACT CHECK BY Newsweek's Fact Check team**