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Recruiting is underway for Trump-like 'wrecking ball' to shrink government and fire



President Donald Trump returns to the White House after visiting outside St. John's Church, Monday, June 1, 2020, in Washington. With more than a year to go before the 2024 election, a constellation of conservative organizations is preparing for a ... [more >](#)



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By Lisa Mascaró - Associated Press - Tuesday, August 29, 2023

WASHINGTON (AP) — With more than a year to go before the 2024 election, a constellation of conservative organizations is preparing for a possible second [White House](#) term for [Donald Trump](#), recruiting thousands of Americans to come to [Washington](#) on a mission to dismantle the federal government and replace it with a vision closer to his own.

Led by the long-established [Heritage Foundation](#) think tank and fueled by former Trump administration officials, the far-reaching effort is essentially a government-in-waiting for the former president's second term — or any candidate who aligns with their ideals and can defeat President Biden in 2024.

With a nearly 1,000-page "Project 2025" handbook and an "army" of Americans, the idea is to have the civic infrastructure in place on Day One to commandeer, reshape and do away with what Republicans deride as the "deep state" bureaucracy, in part by firing as many as 50,000 federal workers.

"We need to flood the zone with conservatives," said [Paul Dans](#), director of the 2025 Presidential Transition Project and a former Trump administration official.

"This is a clarion call to come to [Washington](#)," he said. "People need to lay down their tools, and step aside from their professional life and say, 'This is my lifetime moment to serve.'"

The unprecedented effort is being orchestrated with dozens of right-flank organizations, many new to [Washington](#), and represents a changed approach from conservatives, who traditionally have sought to limit the federal government by cutting federal taxes and slashing federal spending.

Instead, Trump-era conservatives want to gut the "administrative state" from within, by ousting federal employees they believe are standing in the way of the president's agenda and replacing them

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with like-minded officials more eager to fulfill a new executive's approach to governing.

The goal is to avoid the pitfalls of Trump's first years in office, when the Republican president's team was ill-prepared, his Cabinet nominees had trouble winning Senate confirmation and policies were met with resistance — by lawmakers, government workers and even Trump's own appointees who refused to bend or break protocol, or in some cases violate laws, to achieve his goals.

While many of the Project 2025 proposals are inspired by Trump, they are being echoed by GOP rivals Ron DeSantis and Vivek Ramaswamy and are gaining prominence among other Republicans.

And if Trump wins a second term, the work from the Heritage coalition ensures the president will have the personnel to carry forward his unfinished White House business.

"The president Day One will be a wrecking ball for the administrative state," said Russ Vought, a former Trump administration official involved in the effort who is now president at the conservative Center for Renewing America.

Much of the new president's agenda would be accomplished by reinstating what's called Schedule F — a Trump-era executive order that would reclassify tens of thousands of the 2 million federal employees as essentially at-will workers who could more easily be fired.

Biden had rescinded the executive order upon taking office in 2021, but Trump — and other presidential hopefuls — now vow to reinstate it.

"It frightens me," said Mary Guy, a professor of public administration at the University of Colorado, who warns the idea would bring a return to a political spoils system.

Experts argue Schedule F would create chaos in the civil service, which was overhauled during President Jimmy Carter's administration in an attempt to ensure a professional workforce and end political bias dating from 19th century patronage.

As it now stands, just 4,000 members of the federal workforce are considered political appointees who typically change with each administration. But Schedule F could put tens of thousands of career professional jobs at risk.

"We have a democracy that is at risk of suicide. Schedule F is just one more bullet in the gun," Guy said.

The ideas contained in Heritage's coffee table-ready book are both ambitious and parochial, a mix of longstanding conservative policies and stark, head-turning proposals that gained prominence in the Trump era.

There's a "top to bottom overhaul" of the Department of Justice, particularly curbing its independence and ending FBI efforts to combat the spread of misinformation. It calls for stepped-up prosecution of anyone providing or distributing abortion pills by mail.

There are proposals to have the Pentagon "abolish" its recent diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, what the project calls the "woke" agenda, and reinstate service members discharged for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine.

Chapter by chapter, the pages offer a how-to manual for the next president, similar to one Heritage produced 50 years ago, ahead of the Ronald Reagan administration. Authored by some of today's most prominent thinkers in the conservative movement, it's often sprinkled with apocalyptic language.

A chapter written by Trump's former acting deputy secretary of Homeland Security calls for bolstering the number of political appointees, and redeploying office personnel with law enforcement ability into the field "to maximize law enforcement capacity."

At the White House, the book suggests the new administration should "reexamine" the tradition of providing work space for the press corps and ensure the White House counsel is "deeply committed" to the president's agenda.

Conservatives have long held a grim view of federal government offices, complaining they are stacked with liberals intent on halting Republican agendas.

But Doreen Greenwald, national president of the National Treasury Employees Union, said most federal workers live in the states and are your neighbors, family and friends. "Federal employees are not the enemy," she said.

While presidents typically rely on Congress to put policies into place, the Heritage project leans into what legal scholars refer to as a unitary view of executive power that suggests the president has broad authority to act alone.

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To push past senators who try to block presidential Cabinet nominees, Project 2025 proposes installing top allies in acting administrative roles, as was done during the Trump administration to bypass the Senate confirmation process.

John McEntee, another former [Trump](#) official advising the effort, said the next administration can "play hardball a little more than we did with Congress."

In fact, Congress would see its role diminished — for example, with a proposal to eliminate congressional notification on certain foreign arms sales.

Philip Wallach, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute who studies the separation of powers and was not part of the [Heritage](#) project, said there's a certain amount of "fantasizing" about the president's capabilities.

"Some of these visions, they do start to just bleed into some kind of authoritarian fantasies where the president won the election, so he's in charge, so everyone has to do what he says — and that's just not the system the government we live under," he said.

At the [Heritage](#) office, [Dans](#) has a faded photo on his wall of an earlier era in [Washington](#), with the [White House](#) situated almost alone in the city, dirt streets in all directions.

It's an image of what conservatives have long desired, a smaller federal government.

The [Heritage](#) coalition is taking its recruitment efforts on the road, crisscrossing America to fill the federal jobs. They staffed the Iowa State Fair this month and signed up hundreds of people, and they're building out a database of potential employees, inviting them to be trained in government operations.

"It's counterintuitive," [Dans](#) acknowledged — the idea of joining government to shrink it — but he said that's the lesson learned from the [Trump](#) days about what's needed to "regain control."

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"firing as many as 50,000 federal workers." A good start!
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Vjklander 7h

I have been saying for a long time that China is not a Communist country. But, I've had to refine my thinking. There is philosophical Communism and political Kommunism. I use the K to keep them distinct. Kommunist countries are not Communist. The central tenet of Communism is: there can be no priveleged class. However, in Kommunist countries, the Kommunist Party is a priveleged class, thereby negating their self definition. That is when the epiphany hit me. The United States is a Kommunist country. The Kommunist Party of America is the federal workforce, the political elite, and the mainstream media. These are the people who actually control everything. They cannot be fired. Their children go to the best schools. They get the good jobs. They decide who lives and dies in war, in health, in society.
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