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Project 2025: What's At Stake for Civil Rights and Technology

What is Project 2025? It's a wish list of right-wing policies, reflecting an extreme Christian nationalist ideology, written by the Heritage Foundation and more than 100 other conservative groups as a blueprint for a potential conservative administration. It is an explicit effort to further empower the presidency, embed ideologues in nonpartisan civil service, and enable the executive branch to unravel the civil rights movement's gains over the last seven decades.

The full agenda, which is more than 900 pages long, would completely reshape our federal government in order to benefit white nationalists, the rich and powerful, and religiously motivated bigots. Here is how it would undermine civil rights in technology policies:

- **Rescinding the Biden Administration's Actions on AI, Including Safeguards for Civil Rights:** Project 2025 would reverse the AI Bill of Rights and subsequent AI executive order, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) AI guidance memo, and the anticipated OMB AI procurement guidance.
- **Ceasing Efforts to Combat Mis/Disinformation and Targeting Companies That Try to Combat It:** Project 2025 calls for the Department of Homeland Security to immediately end efforts to counter mis/disinformation and to secure elections. It also states that the FBI should be prohibited from activities "related to combating the spread of so-called misinformation and disinformation by Americans who are not tied to any plausible criminal activity." The National Telecommunications and Information Administration would be required to review federal policy related to free speech online and "provide policy solutions to address big tech's censorship of speech."
- **Abandoning Disparate Impact as a Tool for Addressing Discrimination in AI:** While it does not specifically call out its applicability to AI, Project 2025 calls for "sweeping action" to eliminate the use of disparate impact as a standard for determining when discrimination has taken place.
- **Narrowing Protections Against Discrimination in Technology:** Project 2025 calls for restricting the application of the landmark *Bostock v. Clayton County* ruling, in which the Supreme Court clarified that discrimination on the basis of sex applies to discrimination against LGBTQ people.

- **Expanding Surveillance Against Women:** Project 2025 calls for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct “abortion surveillance and maternity mortality reporting systems,” and it would require states to report data to the federal government on women traveling for reproductive care.
- **Weaponizing the Federal Trade Commission (FTC):** Project 2025 puts businesses on notice — if they are proactively or voluntarily working to support civil rights — that they could face legal challenges from agencies, including the FTC. Companies will be pressured to downplay, not pursue, or dismantle actions, including those related to equitable AI, that are deemed by conservatives to advance social good.
- **Weaponizing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC):** Project 2025 calls on the FCC to cut back on efforts to address broadband affordability and digital equity and to bully tech companies into reducing content moderation efforts.