



Project 2025's Plan To Gut Checks and Balances Harms Rural America

By Colin Seeberger September 13, 2024

The new authoritarian playbook would devastate rural America in many ways.

Project 2025 is a plan to [gut America's system of checks and balances](#) in order to enact an extreme, far-right agenda that would hurt all Americans. The plan proposes taking power away from everyday people to give politicians, judges, and corporations more control over Americans' lives. Here are specific ways that Project 2025 harms Americans in rural communities.

Use the QR code to find more of our work on Project 2025.



Increasing taxes on Americans in rural communities

Project 2025 shifts the tax burden from the wealthy onto the middle class. According to [Center for American Progress analysis](#) of [U.S. Census income data](#), the median household outside of metropolitan areas would see an annual tax increase of \$1,250. Meanwhile, the 45,000 households in America reporting more than \$10 million in income would each see an average annual tax cut of at least [\\$1.5 million](#).

Putting farmers at increased risk of financial harm and stunting their ability to grow

Project 2025 [proposes eliminating](#) the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, which “[protect] farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues” [according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture](#). The plan [would also](#) “ban farmers from receiving ARC and PLC payments the same year they also receive crop insurance indemnities,” undermining farmers’ ability to plant the next crop. Moreover, Project 2025 would [make it harder](#) for small and family farmers’ to access capital via Farm Service Agency loans and undermine their ability to expand to new markets. The plan also calls for [eliminating crop export promotion programs](#), such as the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program.

Eliminating child care options

Roughly [60 percent of rural Americans](#) live in a child care desert, where the demand for affordable child care dramatically outpaces [the supply of available child care slots](#). Project 2025 proposes to make this shortage even worse by [eliminating Head Start](#), which provides access to no-cost child care—among other services—for more than [780,000 low-income children](#) in the United States. Eliminating Head Start would wipe out a critical supply of child care in rural communities. A [previous CAP analysis](#) found that Head Start accounted for [between 21 and 59 percent](#) of all child care slots in rural communities across 10 states.

Defunding public schools while leaving rural students with few alternative options

Project 2025 [calls for eliminating](#) the U.S. Department of Education and the Title I program, which provides vital resources to schools that serve low-income students, including in rural areas. The plan [proposes to divert these funds](#) from public schools in order to support a private school voucher model, a centerpiece of the proposal’s “universal school choice” initiative. However, [according to the National Coalition for Public Education](#):

Vouchers don’t provide an actual choice for students living in rural areas. Unlike the typical suburban middle class or urban family, rural families [have few access points](#) to schools other than their in-district local public schools. For example, while 92% of urban families have access to one or more private schools within five miles, only 34% of rural families have access to such a choice.

Eliminating free school meals that disproportionately benefit rural students

According to the Program in Nutrition at the Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy: “Children in rural communities are [especially vulnerable to food insecurity](#) ... Of the counties with the highest rates of child food insecurity, 86% are rural.” Hence, Project 2025’s proposal to end the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)—which provides free school meals to those attending schools serving a student body wherein at least 25 percent of students are eligible for free- or reduced-price school meals—would be an acute threat to students in rural America. Nearly [20 million students](#) attending more than 40,000 schools in the United States are currently eligible to benefit from free school meals under the CEP.

Undermining recovery efforts from natural disasters in rural areas, which are more susceptible to extreme weather events

Project 2025 proposes to [end the Small Business Administration's direct lending program](#), the federal government's largest source of disaster recovery funds for survivors, providing low-interest direct loans to small-business owners and households who need to repair and rebuild their properties. Doing so would be [particularly harmful](#) to rural communities that “lack the basic capacity to access competitive federal [recovery] grants” due to lack of manpower, financial resources, expertise, and time. As CAP has [previously noted](#): “Rural communities are often the most susceptible to climate disasters, including flooding, wildfires, drought, and increasingly extreme weather.”

Gutting rural connectivity

Project 2025 calls for repealing all unspent funds provided through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, otherwise known as the bipartisan infrastructure law (BIL). Rural communities have benefited tremendously from the law, including through upgraded roads, bridges, tunnels, airports, ports, and waterways. The BIL also provided an unprecedented [\\$65 billion](#) to deploy broadband in all communities and make internet access more affordable. Prior to the law's passage, rural communities were nearly [15 times more likely](#) to lack access to reliable broadband than those in urban areas, according to the Federal Communications Commission. Thus, repealing the bipartisan infrastructure law's broadband investments would disproportionately harm people living, working, or going to school in rural America.

Limiting air travel service in rural areas

Project 2025 [slams the Essential Air Service \(EAS\) program](#), which helps ensure commercial air carriers can serve small airports in rural communities. The plan blames EAS for “distorting the commercial market” and calls for “finally ending the program.” Specifically, Project 2025 proposes allowing the market to dictate commercial service in all regions, including rural communities that would otherwise not be served in the absence of EAS.