

Heritage Foundation Experts Analyze Trump's Executive Orders

[Heritage Foundation Staff](#)

January 22, 2025



President Donald Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office on Jan. 20, 2025 in Washington, D.C.

President Donald Trump signed a flurry of executive orders his first day in office. His executive orders covered policies related to the economy, the border, gender ideology and more.

Below, we round up analysis from The Heritage Foundation's policy experts on these executive orders. This article will be regularly updated to include new analysis.

Political Prosecution of Pro-Life Activists Comes to an End With Pardon of 23 Pro-Lifers

On Thursday, a day before the annual March for Life, Trump [issued pardons for 23 protesters](#) who were prosecuted under the Biden administration for violations of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act. [The FACE Act](#), passed in 1994 under President Bill Clinton, makes it a federal crime to use “threats of force, obstruction or inflict property damage intended to interfere with reproductive health care services.” And while the Act also protects houses of worship and crisis pregnancy centers that offer assistance to women with unexpected pregnancies, the Biden administration disproportionately focused on cases involving abortion clinics. Pro-life pregnancy resource centers are 22 times more likely to be attacked than abortion facilities, and in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, [436 church and pro-life pregnancy resource centers](#) were firebombed or vandalized. The disparity has resulted in [some Republicans in Congress](#) calling for the FACE Act's repeal on the basis of the fact that there are both state and federal legal remedies available for conduct covered by the FACE Act, and the fact that the Constitution reserves the general police power to the states, something they can use to protect houses of worship, pregnancy centers, and abortion clinics.

Among those imprisoned [and included in Thursday's pardons](#) were Lauren Handy, sentenced to five years in prison; John Hinshaw (21 months); William Goodman (27 months); Jonathan

Darnel (34 months); Herb Geraghty (27 months); Jean Marshall (24 months); Joan Bell (27 months); Bevelyn Williams (41 months); Heather Idoni (24 months); and Calvin Zastrow (6 months).

—*Sarah Parshall Perry, senior legal fellow, Edwin Meese III Center for Legal & Judicial Studies, The Heritage Foundation.*

Digital Financial Technology

On Jan. 23, Trump signed an executive order titled “[Strengthening American Leadership In Digital Financial Technology](#),” which provides yet another tool to cement America’s technological lead and protect the U.S. dollar.

The technology centered around digital assets, especially blockchain technology, lies at the heart of the ongoing information technology revolution. Digital assets can provide a foundation for more secure and efficient commerce in the future, and the executive order aims to promote dollar-backed stablecoins and protect “the sovereignty of the United States dollar.”

This executive order provides a framework for limited and clear regulations to facilitate technological progression and investment without government intrusion into private sector innovation, including through the creation of a dedicated working group. Among other duties, the working group will be tasked with assessing the merits of creating a federal digital asset stockpile. It is vital to ensure that the creation of such stockpile not be funded through tax or deficit increases, and that a future federal government would not be able to utilize such stockpile in a coercive manner against Americans.

Further, the executive order works to protect Americans from the threat of Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) and rescinds President Joe Biden’s executive order 14067.

—*Richard Stern, director of the Grover M. Hermann Center for the Federal Budget at The Heritage Foundation, and David Burton, senior research fellow, Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation.*

Artificial Intelligence

This week, Trump took [bold action](#) to ensure that the U.S. leads the development and governance of “AI, rooted in free speech and human flourishing.”

On Monday, the president [rescinded](#) a 2023 executive order from Biden which attempted to [impose](#) “onerous and unnecessary government control over the development of AI.” On Thursday, he issued a second order, “[Removing Barriers to American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence](#),” which seeks to promote the development of AI systems “free from ideological bias or engineered social agendas.”

The order directs key executive branch officials to create an action plan within 180 days to achieve this objective. It also directs them to conduct a comprehensive review of “all policies, directives, regulations, orders, and other actions” taken by federal agencies pursuant to the 2023

Biden AI order and to “suspend, revise, or rescind such actions” as necessary to promote an open and competitive tech environment. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is similarly directed to “revise OMB Memoranda M-24-10 and M-24-18” within 60 days to ensure that the federal government’s use and acquisition of AI systems is consistent with the new policy.

These [actions](#) track with The Heritage Foundation’s Tech Policy Center’s [recommendations](#) to advance American values by prioritizing open, transparent, and explainable AI models—key to fostering “human flourishing, economic competitiveness, and national security.”

—*Daniel Cochrane, senior research associate in the Tech Policy Center at The Heritage Foundation*

At Long Last: Finally Releasing the Files on JFK, RFK, and MLK

On his third day in office, Trump did something that, although you have to wonder why, no prior president had done.

In his executive order, “[Declassification of Records Concerning the Assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.](#),” the president directed the attorney general and the director of National Intelligence—neither of whom has yet been confirmed—to present a plan within 15 days “for the full and complete release of records relating to the assassination” of John F. Kennedy. They are directed to prepare a similar plan for the president within 45 days for the release of records on the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

As Trump points out, “more than 50 years” after their assassinations, the federal government has still not “released to the public all of its records related to those events.” The president says that “their families and the American people deserve transparency and truth” and that it is “in the national interest to finally release” those records “without delay.”

He is right.

The records on President Kennedy were supposed to be released in full by Oct. 26, 2017, under a federal law passed by Congress in 1992, unless the president certified that postponement was necessary to prevent harm to our “military defense, intelligence operations, law enforcement or conduct of foreign relations.” Trump accepted proposed redactions in 2017 and 2018 from federal agencies but ordered those agencies to reconsider the need for those redactions.

Biden issued subsequent certifications in 2021, 2022, and 2023, that once again delayed the release of these records, which leads you to wonder—what is in these records that the government doesn’t want us to see?

Trump concludes that the continued withholding of these records on President Kennedy, including the redactions, “is not consistent with the public interest” and is “long

overdue.” Although there is no similar law requiring the release of government records on Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Trump says the release of “all records in the Federal Government’s possession pertaining to each of those assassinations is also in the public interest.”

It is hard to count all of the movies, documentaries, books, and articles that have been produced about the appalling and heartrending assassinations of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, assassinations that deeply scarred our nation. Many of those have been full of speculation and wild conspiracy theories. Hopefully, the release of these records finally, 62 and 57 years after these tragic events, will be another step in, to paraphrase Shakespeare, knitting up the raveled sleeve of the country’s care.

—Hans von Spakovsky, manager of the Election Law Reform Initiative and a senior legal fellow with the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation

America First

Trump issued the executive order “America First Policy Directive for the Secretary of State” to establish alignment between his foreign policy objectives and the State Department. The executive order simply instructs that “the foreign policy of the United States shall champion core American interests and always put America and American citizens first,” and requires the Secretary to issue guidance to this effect.

While the executive order may seem self-evident to most Americans, it is in fact an important component in restoring the president’s Article II authority to direct the conduct of federal departments and agencies.

During his first term, Trump and his political appointees at State repeatedly encountered significant resistance to his stated policies, including America First. By issuing this executive order., the president is putting the career employees at State on notice that his priorities are will now take precedence over traditional practices and diplomatic norms, and empowering Secretary Marco Rubio to implement them.

The Heritage Foundation has [argued for decades](#) that the State Department’s career employees serve the department more than they do the president and so for departmental reform. More recently, Heritage analysis has established the [pernicious infiltration](#) of an extreme liberal ideology at the department that has reinforced itself through an entrenched pursuit of the [diversity, equity and inclusion \(DEI\) agenda](#), which Trump has more broadly banned through another executive order. The America First Policy Directive will reinforce that executive order where it is needed most, at the State Department.

—Victoria Coates, vice president, Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy at The Heritage Foundation

Wind Energy

Trump issued a presidential memorandum directing the temporary halt of all federal offshore and onshore wind energy leasing and permitting activities, while ordering a comprehensive review of existing practices. This memorandum, which took effect Jan. 21, specifically places a temporary moratorium on the Lava Ridge Wind Project approved in the Dec. 5, 2024 Record of Decision.

One of wind energy's fundamental flaws is its intermittency. Wind power projects consistently overpromise and underdeliver while imposing massive costs on taxpayers. Recent Heritage Foundation analysis shows these projects cost communities billions. In New Jersey's case, nearly \$75 billion (\$8,000 per resident) for a global temperature reduction of just 0.0007 degrees Celsius by 2100.

In 2023, wind power operated at full capacity only 33% of the time, dropping to 26% during summer. American families and businesses need power 100% of the time. Utility scale battery backup can help curtail this deficiency some, but it remains very expensive and not widely deployed. This is why despite decades of subsidies, wind is not economically sustainable without ongoing taxpayer support and policy mandates. It is estimated that the tax credits enjoyed by wind producers would have cost U.S. taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars between 2025 and 2034.

That is why it has long been the Heritage position that subsidies for wind (or any source of energy) distort energy markets and results in less reliable, more expensive energy. Heritage analysis shows that energy access determines whether societies thrive or suffer. Looking across every nation on Earth, we see that high-energy societies are high-prosperity societies, while low-energy countries remain trapped in poverty.

—Jack Spencer, senior research fellow for Energy and Environmental Policy, Center for Energy, Climate, and Environment at The Heritage Foundation

Paris Agreement Withdrawal

Trump issued executive order, "[Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements](#)," which withdraws the United States from all commitments, including the Paris Agreement, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The order directs the U.S. United Nations ambassador to immediately submit notification that the U.S. is withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on climate change. It goes on to withdraw the U.S. from any agreement associated with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ends the U.S. International Climate Finance Plan, and directs federal agency heads to review, identify and stop any activities associated with the global warming agenda.

The Heritage Foundation has consistently argued for withdrawing from these commitments for the benefit of every American family and business—and the rest of the world. As [academic](#)

[research shows](#), alarmist rhetoric around global warming is overblown while the economic consequences of global warming policies are [real](#) and [growing](#). This is critical step to modernizing America's energy and environmental policy.

Though the agreement never made good economic or environmental sense, China's decision to virtually abandon the pact [exacerbated these underlying issues](#). The Biden administration's obsession with the global warming agenda has been an unmitigated disaster by any measure. It has [caused inflation](#), [reduced consumer choice](#), [empowered America's strategic competitors](#), increased the threat of [electricity blackouts](#), chilled investment in new energy infrastructure, and left Americans less prepared to deal with natural disasters.

The foundation for much of this bad policy is America's participation in international environmental agreements that put premium on environmental virtue signaling at the expense of America's economy and world standing. This executive order changes that.

—*Jack Spencer, senior research fellow for Energy and Environmental Policy, Center for Energy, Climate, and Environment at The Heritage Foundation*

Empowering Alaskans

Trump issued executive order "[Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential](#)," which rescinds the previous administration's efforts to stop resource development in Alaska, clears federal bureaucracy, and empowers Alaskans develop their resources for the benefit of Alaska and the United States.

This executive order will help lower prices and empower Alaskans to develop their resources while protecting critical habitat and Alaska's cultural heritage. It opens that Arctic National Wildlife Preserve to development, expedites permitting and leasing in Alaska, prioritizes the development and sale of liquefied natural gas, orders federal agency heads to facilitate Alaskan resource development, and essentially path for energy development in the state.

The Heritage Foundation has consistently argued that developing Alaskan resources will benefit Alaska and the country. The gas and oil industry, for example, supports nearly 50,000 Alaskan jobs, accounted for [35% of the state's economy at \\$19.4 billion](#), and generally provides nearly 90% of the Alaskan government's general fund, putting over \$180 billion in the state's coffers since Alaska became a state in 1959.

Heritage has also argued [against the false premise](#) that Americans must choose between economic development and environmental protection and cultural traditions. Indeed, responsible resource development provides the means to protect the natural environment and cultural traditions. To this end, rather than use alleged environmental concerns to justify federally imposed anti-energy policies, this executive order empowers Alaskans to drive policies forward that protect the state's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and economic interests.

—*Jack Spencer, senior research fellow for Energy and Environmental Policy, Center for Energy, Climate, and Environment at The Heritage Foundation*

TikTok

On Monday, Trump issued an [executive order](#) directing the Department of Justice to pause enforcement of the law mandating a Chinese divestment of TikTok (“The Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act”) for a period of 75 days.

The Heritage Foundation was an early advisor to the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party during the drafting of this legislation, [emphasizing the immense risks](#) posed by a CCP-controlled TikTok to U.S. security and sovereignty.

The president’s order recognizes the concerns he articulated in his [2020 executive order](#), which sought to ban TikTok due to its threats to national security, foreign policy, and the U.S. economy.

Under Biden, TikTok was given 270 days to divest to comply with the law and allow Americans continued access to the platform. However, Biden made no material progress and [declined to implement the law](#) before leaving office.

The Heritage Foundation is confident that Trump will accomplish more in 75 days than Biden did in nearly a year of inaction, securing a deal that ensures the complete divestment of TikTok’s algorithm because allowing shared control with the CCP would leave Americans just as vulnerable as before the law’s passage.

—Wes Hodges, lead of the campaign to Hold Big Tech Accountable and advisor for coalitions at The Heritage Foundation

Return to In-Person Work for Feds

President Donald Trump’s executive order on “Return to In-Person Work” requires heads of executive departments and agencies to “take all necessary steps to terminate remote work arrangements and require employees to return to work in-person at their respective duty stations on a full-time basis, provided that the department and agency heads shall make exemptions they deem necessary.”

It’s the president’s responsibility, under his Article II duties, to supervise executive agencies and faithfully execute the laws, including managing telework policies, and “ensur[ing] that telework does not diminish employee performance or agency operations.”

Even as the Biden administration rightly noted that the law “does not mandate telework or confer a legal right or entitlement” to telework and directed agencies to “aggressively implement” a “substantial increase in meaningful in-person work,” federal employee unions pushed back, with 43% of federal employees still teleworking and 7% fully remote in 2023.

The Trump administration will face substantial opposition to this EO from federal employee labor unions, some of whom recently took action to thwart the Trump’s telework plans.

—Rachel Greszler is senior research fellow on workforce and public finance with the Roe Institute of The Heritage Foundation.

Federal Hiring Freeze

President Donald Trump’s “[Hiring Freeze](#)” executive order prevents federal agencies from filling open federal civilian positions and prohibits the creation of new positions.

The freeze is not applicable to the armed forces or immigration enforcement, and it does not affect members of the excepted federal service, including political appointees who are now beginning their service under the Trump administration. Moreover, the executive order “does not prohibit making reallocations to meet the highest priority needs, maintain essential services, and protect national security, homeland security, and public safety.”

The hiring freeze will be in effect until the director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the director of the Office of Personnel Management and the administrator of the new U.S. DOGE Service, submits a plan “to reduce the size of the federal government’s workforce through efficiency improvements and attrition.”

Over the past two years, the number of [federal employees increased by 133,700](#), or 5.9%, which is nearly twice the 3.1% increase in private employment. At an average salary of [\\$106,400](#) and an additional [\\$56,500 in benefits](#) for each federal employee, that’s costing taxpayers an additional \$22.8 billion per year, even as the quality and availability of many government services [has deteriorated](#).

This hiring freeze will help incoming Trump administration officials determine their workforce needs and allocation, including prioritizing core government functions and eliminating misuse and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

—Rachel Greszler is senior research fellow on workforce and public finance with the Roe Institute of The Heritage Foundation.

Public Safety Returns

On Day 1 of his administration, Trump issued his executive order, “[Restoring the Death Penalty and Protecting Public Safety](#).”

As part of this executive order, Trump acknowledged the constitutionality, long usage, and popular support of the death penalty—particularly for those who have been convicted of committing heinous crimes. He also recognized that it is his duty as president to faithfully enforce lawfully entered death sentences against such individuals.

This order requires the attorney general to pursue the death penalty in all appropriate cases and to prioritize federally prosecuting, and seeking the death penalty, against those who murder law enforcement officers and illegal aliens who commit capital crimes while in the country.

It also requires the attorney general to encourage state officials to seek the death penalty in appropriate cases—including against those whose federal capital sentences Biden commuted—and to help states secure the needed to drugs to carry out death sentences by lethal injections.

On top of that, the order urges the attorney general to seek to overturn constitutionally questionable Supreme Court decisions that limit the use of the death penalty. And it instructs the attorney general to prioritize prosecuting violent crime and to dismantle transnational criminal organizations.

The Heritage Foundation has long [promoted policies](#) that help protect American citizens and provide some measure of justice to crime victims. The policies promoted in this executive order are a welcome change in line with those goals.

—Zack Smith, senior legal fellow and manager, Supreme Court and Appellate Advocacy Program, Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation

Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service

Trump’s executive order on “[Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service](#)” requires the assistant to the president for Domestic Policy, in consultation with the heads of the Office of Management and Budget, Office of Personnel Management and the DOGE to, within 120 days, develop and send the president “a Federal Hiring Plan that brings to the Federal workforce only highly skilled Americans dedicated to the furtherance of American ideals, values, and interests.”

In general, the executive order requires the federal government to utilize best practices from the private sector to improve the quality of federal employee candidates and to improve the hiring process for candidates to [federal positions](#), with the goal of making the federal government more [efficient, competitive, and constructive](#).

For example, the executive order requires: prioritizing individuals committed to efficiency, American ideals, and upholding the rule of law and constitution; utilizing modern technology and proven competency assessments in the recruitment and selection process; decreasing the “governmentwide time-to-hire to under 80 days”; improving communication with candidates to keep them up-to-date on their status; and ensuring that department and agency leadership are active participants in the hiring process. The executive order also requires “accountability and reporting” to evaluate the success of the hiring reforms.

—Rachel Greszler is senior research fellow on workforce and public finance with the *Roe Institute of The Heritage Foundation*.

Privately Operated Criminal Detention Facilities

On Day 1 of his administration, Jan. 20, 2025, Trump issued an executive order ([Initial Rescissions Of Harmful Executive Orders And Actions](#)) that rescinded Executive Order 14006 that then-President Joe Biden issued on Jan. 26, 2021, to eliminate the use of privately operated criminal detention facilities (“[Reforming Our Incarceration System to Eliminate the Use of Privately Operated Criminal Detention Facilities](#)”).

During his first term in office, the U.S. Department of Justice contracted with privately operated prisons to house offenders convicted of violating federal law and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. Such contracts are [constitutional](#) and are consistent with federal law, which empowers [the U.S. attorney general](#), acting through the [Bureau of Prisons](#), to select the place of confinement for convicted offenders. Parties who believe that the nation incarcerates too many

offenders opposed the use of private prisons as an additional place of confinement. In 2021, Biden directed the Justice Department not to “renew Department of Justice contracts with privately operated criminal detention facilities.” The Trump executive order rescinded the Biden executive order, thereby authorizing the Justice Department to negotiate such contracts again.

—*Paul Larkin, the John, Barbara, and Victoria Rumpel senior legal research fellow in the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation*

Stopping the Abuse of the Government’s Power

In his executive order, “[Ending the Weaponization of the Federal Government](#),” Trump at long last sets out the policy of the United States “to correct misconduct by the Federal Government related to the weaponization of law enforcement and the weaponization of the Intelligence Community.”

The executive sets out an unfortunately accurate summary of that misuse over the past four years:

The American people have witnessed the previous administration engage in a systematic campaign against its perceived political opponents, weaponizing the legal force of numerous Federal law enforcement agencies and the Intelligence Community against those perceived political opponents in the form of investigations, prosecutions, civil enforcement actions, and other related actions [that were] oriented more toward inflicting political pain than toward pursuing actual justice or legitimate governmental objectives.

Those activities were “inconsistent with the Constitution and/or the laws of the United States, including those activities directed at parents protesting at school board meetings, Americans who spoke out against the previous administration’s actions, and other Americans who were simply exercising constitutionally protected rights.”

In fact, it was a “third-world weaponization of prosecutorial power to upend the democratic process.” As just one example, the executive order points out that while the Justice Department “ruthlessly” prosecuted the 1,500 Jan. 6 defendants, it “simultaneously dropped nearly all cases against BLM rioters.” It was unequal justice under the law.

The attorney general is directed to review the activities of executive branch “departments and agencies exercising civil or criminal enforcement authority,” and the director of intelligence is to undertake a similar review of all intelligence agencies, for any conduct over the past four years “contrary to the purposes and policies of this order.” They must submit a report to the president and federal agencies are ordered to preserve all documents of their activities.

More information on the weaponization of the federal government can be seen here: <https://www.heritage.org/weaponization-government>

—Hans von Spakovsky, manager of the Election Law Reform Initiative and a senior legal fellow with the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation

Requiring Accountability From Intelligence Officials

In Trump’s executive order, “[Holding Former Government Officials Accountable for Election Interference and Improper Disclosure of Sensitive Governmental Information](#),” the president revokes the security clearances of 49 former intelligence officials, including James Clapper, Michael Hayden, and John Brennan, as well as former National Security Advisor John Bolton. The 49 intelligence officials were part of the group of 51 (two have since died) who “coordinated with the Biden campaign to issue a letter” that “falsely” claimed that Hunter Biden’s abandoned laptop “was part of a Russian disinformation campaign.” At the time, “multiple signatories” had “ongoing contractual relationships with the CIA” and yet “willfully weaponized the gravitas of the Intelligence Community to manipulate the political process and undermine our democratic institutions,” suppressing “information essential to the American people during a Presidential election.”

As the executive order says, “Federal policymakers must be able to rely on analysis conducted by the Intelligence Community and be confident that it is accurate, crafted with professionalism, and free from politically motivated engineering to affect political outcomes in the United States.”

Bolton, according to the executive order, damaged national security by “the publication of classified information” in his memoir after he was fired in 2019, undermining “the ability of future presidents to request and obtain candid advice on matters of national security from their staff.”

In addition to revoking these security clearances, the director of National Intelligence is directed to submit a report to the president within 90 days of any “additional inappropriate activity” that occurred inside intelligence agencies, by anyone contracted with those agencies, or by anyone else holding a security clearance. The DNI should also make recommendations for further disciplinary action and prevention of future occurrences of the intelligence community “inappropriately influencing domestic elections.”

—Hans von Spakovsky, manager of the Election Law Reform Initiative and a senior legal fellow with the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation

Race Neutrality and Merit-Based Opportunity

During his inaugural address, Trump said that America should be “colorblind and merit-based,” and his latest [executive order](#) and [related memo](#) advance that dream more than any presidential action in recent memory.

The order is titled, “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity” and it repeals several old executive orders that entrenched racial preferences in the federal government, its contractors, and its grants. The memo, meanwhile, directs agencies to close their diversity, equity, and inclusion offices, to put DEI employees on paid leave until they can be fired, and to root out attempts to disguise DEI by other names.

Trump’s order does three things. First, it bans federal bureaucrats from forcing or coercing contractors to give race and sex preferences and from giving grants to organizations that discriminate. Next, it announces the government’s recommitment to the colorblind view of civil rights, which holds that the law must treat people without regard to their race, color, or ethnicity. This view has long been the law and is enshrined in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but many past administrations have ignored it in favor of racial preferences.

Finally, Trump’s order recognizes that DEI practices in many companies, nonprofits, universities, and professional associations violate our colorblind civil rights laws and directs every agency to identify targets to sue in every sector of the economy. Together, the order and the memo will end discriminatory practices in the federal government and bring the government’s full enforcement power to bear against discrimination in the private-sector.

The Heritage Foundation has long endorsed [robust enforcement](#) of our civil rights laws, [fought against the racial preferences](#) that the left is enamored with, and [defended a nobler vision](#) of a colorblind and merit-based America.

—*GianCarlo Canaparo, senior legal fellow, Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation*

Ending Government Censorship of Americans

In Trump’s executive order, [“Restoring Freedom of Speech and Ending Federal Censorship,”](#) the president directs all federal agencies and employees to terminate all efforts to censor “the free speech of any American citizen.”

The executive order explains that the Biden administration “trampled free speech rights by censoring Americas’ speech on online platforms, often by exerting coercive pressure on third parties, such as social media companies, to moderate, deplatform, or otherwise suppress speech that the Federal Government did not approve.” It did so under the “guise of combating misinformation,’ ‘disinformation,’ and ‘malinformation.’”

But what the government was really doing was advancing the Biden administration’s “preferred narrative about significant matter of public debate.”

In what only the most radical American could disagree with, the executive order says that “Government censorship of speech is intolerable in a free society.” All federal agencies, employees, and agents are prohibited from engaging in, facilitating, or spending any “taxpayer

resources” on any “conduct that would unconstitutionally abridge the free speech of any American citizen.”

The attorney general is directed to investigate the activities of the federal government over the last four years and submit a report to the president with “recommendations for appropriate remedial actions to be taken.”

With this executive order, the harassment of the public by the FBI and numerous other federal agencies over their opinions as voiced on social media platforms is finally over.

>>> [“A Federal Court Just Handed Biden’s Ministry of Truth a Big Defeat,”](#)
[“Americans’ Right to Speak Suffers a Body Blow From Supreme Court.”](#)

—*Hans von Spakovsky, manager of the Election Law Reform Initiative and a senior legal fellow with the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation*

Military’s Role in Protecting Territorial Integrity

President Donald Trump on Monday issued an executive order, “[Clarifying the Military’s Role in Protecting the Territorial Integrity of the United States](#),” to ensure that the U.S. armed forces prioritize the protection of U.S. sovereignty and territorial integrity along our national borders. The president ordered the U.S. Northern Command to deliver its plan to seal the borders and maintain U.S. sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security by repelling forms of invasion and mass migration, as well as narcotics and human smuggling and trafficking. The order also requires USNORTHCOM to provide a steady-state campaign plan and continuous assessments to achieve those goals.

Securing Our Borders

—*Lora Ries, director of Border Security and Immigration Center at The Heritage Foundation*

‘Securing our Borders’

Another Trump executive order, “[Securing Our Borders](#),” calls for the federal government to take all appropriate action to, as the title implies, secure the U.S.’s borders.

The order notes that we now have millions of illegal aliens in our midst “including potential terrorists, foreign spies, members of cartels” and other [threats](#) who need to be identified and removed.

Consistent with Heritage’s recommendations, the president ordered many specific measures, including the resumption of building the wall at the southern border and ending “[catch and release](#)” of aliens caught entering illegally. His order also ends the Biden administration’s “categorical parole programs” and the Department o abuse of the [CBP One application](#) to allow aliens to schedule illegal entry into the U.S.

—*Simon Hankinson, Senior Research Fellow, Border Security and Immigration Center at The Heritage Foundation*

Rescinding Biden EOs on gender identity, DEI, and more

In his executive order, “Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions,” President Donald Trump revoked 67 executive orders issued by his predecessor and 11 “Presidential” memoranda.

They cover everything from “gender identity,” the “climate crisis,” and “diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility” to withdrawing areas of the country from “oil or gas leasing,” rescinding Cuba’s designation as a “state sponsor of terrorism,” and weakening enforcement of our immigration laws.

In revoking these orders and memoranda, Trump says that the Biden administration “embedded deeply unpopular, inflationary, illegal, and radical practices within every agency and office of the Federal Government.”

The “injection” of DEI “into our institutions has corrupted them by replacing hard work, merit, and equality with a divisive and dangerous preferential hierarchy.” On immigration, Trump says Biden’s orders opened “the borders” and “endangered the American people.” The orders on the climate amounted to “extremism” that “exploded inflation and overburdened businesses with regulations.”

Executive orders are not the legal equivalent of laws passed by Congress. They are orders from the president as the chief executive directing the behavior and actions of federal agencies and employees in carrying out their responsibilities under those laws and the duties of the president as the commander in chief.

—*Hans von Spakovsky, manager of the Election Law Reform Initiative and a senior legal fellow with the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation*

Restoring Accountability to Policy-Influencing Positions

President Trump issued an executive order, “Restoring Accountability to Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce,” which reinstates Trump’s EO 13957 of Oct. 21, 2020. Trump’s original EO created—and this EO restores—Schedule F, or Schedule Policy/Career, which is a new class of Excepted Service, for career civil servants in “positions of a confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating character.”

The directive also calls for guidance from the director of the Office of Personnel Management about additional categories of positions that the administration should consider for Schedule Policy/Career.

The EO specifies that employees in Schedule Policy/Career positions “are not required to personally or politically support the current President or the policies of the current administration.”

But “[t]hey are required to faithfully implement administration policies to the best of their ability, consistent with their constitutional oath and the vesting of executive authority solely in the President. Failure to do so is grounds for dismissal.”

Because the Biden administration finalized a rule to undo Trump’s initial creation of Schedule F, much of this new EO is inoperable until the Trump administration reverses the Biden-era rule. Thus, the EO specifies: “The Director of the Office of Personnel Management (Director) shall promptly amend the Civil Service Regulations to rescind all changes made” by the Biden administration’s final rule “Upholding Civil Service Protections and Merit System Principles.”

The purpose of the rule is to ensure accountability for individuals who hold policy-influencing roles so that they cannot resist, undermine, and slow-walk administrative directives without consequence.

—*Rachel Greszler is senior research fellow on workforce and public finance with the Roe Institute of The Heritage Foundation.*

Realigning Refugee Admissions

Another of Trump’s executive orders, “[Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program](#),” suspends the USRAP until the further entry of refugees aligns with U.S. interests. The suspension takes effect Jan. 27 to allow traveling refugees to arrive in the U.S. The order directs the secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General to: (1) propose how state and local jurisdictions can have greater involvement in determining the placement or resettlement of refugees; and (2) submit a report to the president every 90 days regarding whether resumption of refugee entries would be in the U.S. interests.

Heritage has called for the [suspension](#) of immigration benefit applications when unmanageable application backlogs exist.

—*Simon Hankinson, senior research fellow, Border Security and Immigration Center at The Heritage Foundation*

More Stringent Screening of Foreign Nationals

Trump on Monday issued an executive order, “[Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats](#),” which directs the departments of State and Homeland Security to enhance the vetting of aliens both before they come to the U.S. and while they are here.

The order seeks to return to the more stringent screening of foreign nationals that was in place when Trump left office in January 2021. It requires U.S. security officials to identify any countries for which “vetting and screening information is so deficient as to warrant a partial or full suspension” on allowing their nationals into the U.S.

This order requires a review of visa programs to ensure integrity and [assess risks](#). It also requests that U.S. senior security officials recommend actions to protect Americans from aliens who advocate sectarian violence, preach hate, or aid terrorists.

Heritage has explained the legality of enhanced vetting and [travel restrictions](#) during Trump’s first term, and it also [supports](#) enforcing immigration laws against temporary visa holders who support terrorist organizations.

—*Simon Hankinson, senior research fellow with the Border Security and Immigration Center at The Heritage Foundation*

Reversing Biden’s ‘Radical Anti-Energy Agenda’

President Donald Trump issued an executive order, “Unleashing American Energy Resources,” which will begin reversing the energy crisis created by the previous administration through its radical anti-energy agenda.

This executive order lays out a bold policy agenda that encourages resource development, including rare earth minerals; prioritizes access to abundant energy supplies; eliminates the electric vehicle mandate; protects consumers’ choices of appliances; and eliminates federal funding for programs that stand in the way of these objectives.

To achieve these goals, the order calls for an immediate review of all regulations, orders, guidance, policies, settlements, and other federal actions that create barriers to American energy development and creates a process to implement reform.

Critically, the order also brings former Biden’s disastrous climate policies to an end. It starts by disbanding the Interagency Working Group on the Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases, which provided the highly questionable framework for most federal actions related to global warming policies.

It also revokes, rescinds, or reverses all or most aspects of nearly every executive action taken on climate, including pausing any actions associated with the Green New Deal as implemented by the Inflation Reduction Act. It then terminates, defunds, and abolishes the offices and programs associated with those activities.

Finally, the order begins the process of cutting the red tape facing America’s energy and infrastructure industries. That includes directing federal agency and council heads to take all available actions to eliminate permitting delays and to expedite the adjudication of federal permits.

It also begins the process of implementing long-term reform by ordering White House officials to prepare recommendations to Congress for more sweeping reforms of the permitting and environmental review process for energy and infrastructure projects.

The order also rescinds EO 11991 (1977), which is the only explicit authority for the White House Council on Environmental Quality's so-called regulation of the National Environmental Policy Act; therefore, the order arguably leaves the CEQ regulation without force and effect. That sets the stage for White House guidance for agencies that is prescriptive and mandatory for agencies, but not judicially enforceable.

The Heritage Foundation has consistently argued that the United States should develop its untapped rare earth mineral and energy resources and that doing so would result in significant and broad economic benefits. Heritage research has also detailed how the path set by Biden would lead to foreign dependence, restrictions on consumer choice, scarcity-induced price inflation, and blackouts.

Heritage has further argued that the CEQ regulation should not be judicially enforceable and that the U.S. needs sweeping permitting reform for more efficient and predictable permitting.

—*Jack Spencer, senior research fellow for energy and environmental policy with the Center for Energy, Climate, and Environment at The Heritage Foundation*

'Total and Efficient Enforcement' of Immigration Laws

President Donald Trump on Monday issued an executive order, "[Protecting the American People Against Invasion](#)," to achieve "total and efficient enforcement" of immigration laws against all inadmissible and removable aliens.

The order directs the attorney general and secretary of Homeland Security to establish Homeland Security task forces in all 50 states to provide logistics, intelligence, and operational support to end the presence of criminal cartels, foreign gangs, transnational criminal organizations, and human smuggling and trafficking networks throughout the U.S.

The order directs a long list of tools to be used to enforce immigration laws, including alien registration, visa sanctions, and incentives to self-deport. It also requires a pause and analysis of contracts and grants given to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that have facilitated mass migration, including termination and claw back authority, if appropriate.

Heritage has consistently called for a return to [fully enforcing immigration laws](#) and [defunding the NGOs](#) that have been enriched for implementing mass illegal immigration to, and throughout, the U.S.

—*Lora Ries, director of Border Security and Immigration Center at The Heritage Foundation*

Undoing Biden's Illicit 'Promoting Access to Voting'

Among the many prior “illegal and radical” executive orders of Biden that his successor, President Donald Trump, revoked on the latter's first day in office in his “Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions” was Executive Order 14019 (March 7, 2021). That EO, which Biden misleadingly titled “Promoting Access to Voting,” should have been titled “Illegally Using the Federal Government to Manipulate Election Outcomes for the Democratic Party.”

Biden's EO ordered federal agencies and federal employees to implement a get-out-the-vote operation using government resources and taxpayer funding that was clearly intended to benefit his political party. He had no constitutional or statutory authority to engage in such reprehensible actions and, in fact, spending federal funds on such activity violated federal law.

Biden's Justice Department used its resources in court to fight all attempts to get the administration to disclose what it was actually doing and to stop its misbehavior.

More information about this attempted election interference can be found at The Heritage Foundation, “[Biden Executive Order 14019: Unlawful interference in State Election Administration](#),” and at The Daily Signal, “[Latest Federal Takeover of Elections Violates Federal Law](#).”

The new administration should ensure that all information hidden by the Biden administration is now publicly disclosed.

—*Hans von Spakovsky, manager of the Election Law Reform Initiative and a senior legal fellow with the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation*

Putting Jan. 6 Behind Us With Pardons, Commutations

President Donald Trump's proclamation, “[Granting Pardons and Commutations of Sentences for Certain Offenses Relating to the Events At or Near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021](#),” ends, as Trump says, “a grave national injustice” and “begins a process of national reconciliation.”

Such an action [is authorized](#) under Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution, which provides the president with the “Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States.” That power only extends to federal crimes, not state crimes. A reprieve or commutation only reduces the sentence a defendant has received, while a pardon completely voids a conviction.

This proclamation commutes the sentences of 14 named individuals convicted of various offenses related to what happened on Jan. 6, 2021, allowing their immediate release from prison. It grants a “full, complete, and unconditional” pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to Jan. 6, also allowing the immediate release of any individuals still incarcerated.

Finally, the proclamation directs the attorney general “to pursue dismissal with prejudice of pending indictments against” any other individuals, ending all further Justice Department actions.

—*Hans von Spakovsky, manager of the Election Law Reform Initiative and a senior legal fellow with the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at The Heritage Foundation*

Curbing Biden’s Inflation Wrecking Ball

President Donald Trump’s [executive order on price relief](#) shows that he’s serious about reversing the damage done by the Biden administration on American family finances. The order recognizes the tremendous increase in the cost of living that has resulted from Biden’s [reckless government spending](#), [war on energy production](#), and [regulatory onslaught](#) that has needlessly increased the cost of everything Americans need to thrive—including that 25% of the cost of building a new home is due to regulations.

The order pledges, over the next four years, to reduce the annual cost of federal regulations by \$11,000 per household and instructs all federal agencies to work to identify and remove regulations and restrictions that increase the cost of living for all Americans—including removing onerous regulations on the cost of appliances, homebuilding, and the production of affordable energy.

—*Richard Stern, director of the Grover M. Hermann Center for the Federal Budget at The Heritage Foundation*

‘Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential’

President Donald Trump issued an executive order, “Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential,” which rescinds the previous administration’s efforts to stop resource development in Alaska, clears federal bureaucracy, and empowers Alaskans to develop their resources for the benefit of Alaska and the United States.

This executive order will help lower energy prices and empower Alaskans to develop their resources while protecting critical habitat and Alaska’s cultural heritage. It opens the Arctic National Wildlife Preserve to development, expedites permitting and leasing in Alaska, prioritizes the development and sale of liquefied natural gas, orders federal agency heads to facilitate Alaskan resource development, and essentially clears a path for energy development in the state.

The Heritage Foundation has consistently argued that developing Alaskan resources will benefit Alaska and the country. The gas and oil industry, for example, supports nearly 50,000 Alaskan jobs, accounted for 35% of the state’s economy at \$19.4 billion, and generally provides nearly 90% of the Alaskan government’s general fund, putting over \$180 billion in the state’s coffers since Alaska became a state in 1959.

Heritage has also argued against the false premise that Americans must choose between economic development on one hand and environmental protection and cultural traditions on the other. Indeed, responsible resource development provides the means to protect the natural environment and cultural traditions.

To that end, rather than use alleged environmental concerns to justify federally imposed anti-energy policies, this executive order empowers Alaskans to drive policies forward that protect the state's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and economic interests.

—*Jack Spencer, senior research fellow for energy and environmental policy with the Center for Energy, Climate, and Environment at The Heritage Foundation*

Pulling Out of World Health Organization, Again

Shortly after his inauguration, President Donald Trump signed an [executive order](#) withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO). That was expected. In 2021, Trump [initiated](#) the process for withdrawal after heavily criticizing the WHO for mismanaging the international response to COVID-19 and for failing to hold China to account for its lack of cooperation and transparency.

As he signed the EO, he referenced these past complaints, but also highlighted that the U.S. was unfairly and disproportionately charged for the costs of the organization.

The EO is broader than the 2021 action in that it would immediately terminate all U.S. engagement and support for the WHO. Specifically, the order announces the intent of the U.S. to withdraw, suspends transfer of all U.S. funds to the WHO, recalls all U.S. government personnel seconded or contracted to work in the WHO, and terminates U.S. participation in the negotiations for the WHO Pandemic Agreement and the amendments to the International Health Regulations.

The process for withdrawal takes a year, but the aforementioned restrictions take immediate effect. That will impair the operations of the WHO. However, it does not mean that the U.S. will no longer support international health. In FY 2024, [funding for U.S. global health](#) was about \$12 billion—roughly [12 times the amount that the U.S. provided to the WHO](#) last year. Most of that was provided on a bilateral basis to dozens of low- and middle-income countries around the world.

In addition, the EO does not mention the Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; UNICEF; or Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The U.S. government works with and provides funding for all of these multilateral efforts and that engagement presumably will continue. Indeed, the EO directs the secretary of State to “identify credible and transparent United States and international partners to assume necessary activities previously undertaken by the WHO.”

Finally, while the EO is definitive in terminating the U.S. relationship, Trump [appeared open to reconsidering](#) if the WHO and its member governments adopt changes to address his complaints. “They [the WHO and its member governments] wanted us back so badly; so, we’ll see what happens,” he said. The ball is in their court.

—*Brett Schaefer, Jay Kingham senior research fellow in international regulatory affairs, Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at The Heritage Foundation*

‘National Emergency at the Southern Border’

President Donald Trump on Monday issued a proclamation, “[Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States](#),” in which he invoked Title 10 of the U.S. Code for military support in the federal government’s emergency response at the southern border.

The president directed the secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security to deploy personnel and resources, construct additional physical barriers, counter unmanned aerial systems, and prioritize the impedance and denial of aliens’ illegal entry across the southern border.

Heritage has consistently [warned](#) about America’s increased national security threats caused by the Biden administration’s open-border policies.

—*Lora Ries, director of Border Security and Immigration Center at The Heritage Foundation*

‘Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture’

President Donald Trump on Monday signed a “[Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture](#)” memorandum to revive traditional architectural standards for government buildings.

The memorandum directs the administrator of the General Services Administration, along with other U.S. department heads, to submit recommendations within 60 days to advance this policy.

The order comes after the Biden administration revoked Trump’s [first-term executive order](#) to promote classical architecture for future federal buildings, over the modern brutalist style that emerged in the 1950s.

Heritage has supported Trump’s and congressional Republicans’ efforts to [restore](#) traditional civic buildings, which uplift our public spaces and foster respect for our American heritage.

—*Gillian Richards Augros, research associate in the B. Kenneth Simon Center for American Studies*

Deep-Sixing International Tax Deal

President Donald Trump wasted no time in torpedoing the Biden administration’s tax deal with the 38-country Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that saddled American companies with extraterritorial taxes to foreign governments.

Trump signed an executive order Monday that notified the OECD that any commitments made by the Biden administration with respect to the tax deal would have no effect. The executive order also warned that the secretary of Treasury would consider protective measures against OECD countries that continue these discriminatory taxes against U.S. companies.

Biden's secretary of Treasury, Janet Yellen, in 2021 traveled to the OECD in Paris and negotiated a global minimum tax deal with the mostly European OECD countries that were eager to get a larger cut of tax revenues from U.S. multinational companies. Under the Biden-Yellen deal, large multinational companies—disproportionately based in the U.S.—were subjected to an “undertaxed” profits rule that arbitrarily allocated taxable income to higher-tax countries adopting the OECD tax framework.

The OECD global tax framework relies on wide-scale adoption by OECD countries. Trump's strong rejection of the Biden-Yellen tax deal is intended to make countries reconsider their support for it.

—Richard Stern, director of the Grover M. Hermann Center for the Federal Budget at The Heritage Foundation

Cartels

On Monday, Trump issued executive order, “[Designating Cartels and Other Organizations as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists](#),” which declares a national emergency, under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), to address cartels and transnational organizations that have flooded the U.S. with deadly drugs, violent criminals, and vicious gangs, including Tren de Aragua and La Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13).

Within 14 days, the order requires: (1) the secretaries of State, Treasury, and Homeland Security, the attorney general, and the director of national intelligence to make a recommendation regarding the designation of any cartel or other organization as a foreign terrorist organization and/or a Specially Designated Global Terrorist; and (2) the attorney general and the secretaries of Homeland Security and State to make operational preparations regarding implementation of any presidential decision invoking the Alien Enemies Act, any qualifying invasion or predatory incursion against U.S. territory, and to prepare facilities to expedite the removal of such designated aliens.

The Heritage Foundation has explained the tools available to an administration to pursue cartels, including the implications of [designating](#) cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

—Lora Ries, director of Border Security and Immigration Center at The Heritage Foundation
Putting America First In International Environmental Agreements

One of the first executive orders posted on the White House website, [Putting America First In International Environmental Agreements](#), withdraws the United States from the Paris Agreement immediately and sends the withdrawal request to the United Nations.

This action will save American taxpayer trillions of dollars, [increase economic growth](#), lower electricity and transportation costs, and preserve freedom of choice in vehicles and appliances. China's President Xi Jinping [withdrew from the Paris Agreement in July 2023](#), when climate envoy John Kerry was visiting, but no one complained. The Paris Agreement is an excuse for the federal government and radical environmentalists to impose burdensome and costly rules on Americans. One example is the Environmental Protection Agency's tailpipe rule, which would require 70% of cars sold to be battery-powered electric or plug-in hybrid by 2032, up from a mere 8% today. Another example is the power plant rule, which requires some power plants to close in 2040 if they cannot sequester 95% of their emissions by the early 2030s.

Withdrawing from the Paris Agreement will not affect the climate. Even if the United States were to get rid of all fossil fuels, this would only make a difference of two-tenths of one degree Celsius in the year 2100, [according government models on The Heritage Foundation website](#).

—*Diana Furchtgott-Roth, director of the Center for Energy, Climate, and Environment at The Heritage Foundation, and Steven Groves, director of policy campaigns at The Heritage Foundation*

Eradicating DEI

Trump's [Executive Order](#) ending Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the federal government, its contractors and grantees takes a necessary sledgehammer to these racist practices. Trump signed "Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing" in his first day in office, demonstrating the importance of the issue and fulfilling a campaign promise.

The private sector began to move away from the divisive DEI practices three years ago, but Biden's federal apparatus had remained DEI's main line of support.

All that ended in the early evening of Inauguration Day 2025 with a stroke of Trump's pen. Trump accomplishes his purpose by immediately rescinding Biden's EO 13985, which he too signed in his first day in office on Jan. 20, 2021. Trump revoked Biden's EO 13985 in a separate EO issued earlier in the day.

Executive Order 13985, "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government," may have been the most fateful act of the Biden years, with reverberations throughout his term. It had mandated that all departments and federal agencies issue "Action Plans" that detailed how deeply they were implementing DEI practices.

Because of Trump's action, the director of the Office of Management and Budget will coordinate with the attorney general and director of personnel management to ensure that all these program, as well as all "chief diversity officers," are now terminated.

"Federal employment practices, including Federal employee performance reviews, shall reward individual initiative, skills, performance, and hard work, and shall not under any circumstances consider DEI or DEIA factors, goals, policies, mandates, or requirements," Trump's order said.

—Mike Gonzalez, *Angeles T. Arrendo E Pluribus Unum* senior fellow, Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy at The Heritage Foundation.

Birthright citizenship

On Monday, Trump issued Executive Order, “[Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship](#),” which ends “universal birthright citizenship” by prohibiting U.S. government agencies from issuing or accepting documents recognizing U.S. citizenship for children born in the U.S. if neither the mother nor father were a lawful permanent resident or a U.S. citizen at the time of the child’s birth.

This new policy is prospective, not retroactive; it only applies to children born within the U.S. after Feb. 19, 2025. The secretaries of state and homeland security, the attorney general, and the commissioner of Social Security are responsible for issuing regulations and policies and enforcing them.

The Heritage Foundation has long [criticized](#) the erroneous “universal birthright citizenship” [interpretation](#) of the Fourteenth Amendment and explained that children born in the U.S. to illegal aliens or temporary visitors should not be considered U.S. citizens because the parents are not “subject to the jurisdiction of” the United States, a requirement of the Amendment.

—Lora Ries, *director of Border Security and Immigration Center at The Heritage Foundation*

Gender Ideology

Trump’s [executive order on gender ideology](#) draws precisely the line that Joe Biden and the gender ideologues advising him spent four years trying to erase. In place of confusion and equivocation about “gender identity” and “sex assigned at birth,” this executive order seeks to ground federal law and policy in the bedrock of biology.

In human beings, there are two, and only two sexes—male and female. They are immutable and complementary but not interchangeable.

Given this basic truth, the madness of gender ideology collapses. This executive order seeks to expunge the federal promotion of gender ideology that Biden called for on his first day in office.

It protects private spaces, including federal prisons, for women. And it calls for an end to federal funding of gender “transition” procedures for federal prison inmates.

Trump has thrown down the gauntlet and made clear that his administration will protect women and girls and fight the gender ideologues who have enjoyed free rein for the past four years.

Of course, what can be done by executive order can be undone in the same way. I hope that this executive order will motivate the new Congress to establish, in law, a precise definition of male and female for all federal purposes, and to do whatever is in its constitutional purview to protect minors from the madness of gender medicine.

Since 2015, Heritage scholars have called out the [dangers of gender ideology](#). And in [recent years](#), we have underscored the need for [state](#) governments and the federal government

to [anchor the definitions of male and female](#) in the bedrock of human biology, not the whims of fashionable postmodern philosophy.

—*Jay Richards, director of Richard and Helen DeVos Center for Life, Religion, and Family at The Heritage Foundation.*

DOGE

On Monday, Trump issued [an executive order](#) establishing the new Department of Government Efficiency.

This executive order, which is effective immediately, renames an existing federal office, the United States Digital Service, as “the United States DOGE Service,” and stands up a new organization within USDS named “the U.S. DOGE Service Temporary Organization” to pursue what the executive order describes as the president’s “18-month DOGE agenda.”

The order likewise instructs agency heads to stand up DOGE teams within each agency to coordinate with USDS and advise the agency heads on carrying out regulatory reform. And it directs the head of USDS to begin a software modernization program to improve the federal government’s efficiency.

Trump has also [revived](#) many of his first-term executive orders on the regulatory process, such as [E.O. 13771](#) (the 2-for-1 order), [E.O. 13891](#) (on guidance), and [E.O. 13892](#) (on administrative enforcement). He has followed standard practice by [pausing regulations](#) that have not yet issued and by urging agencies to delay recently-issued regulations pending reconsideration by his team.

—*Paul Ray, director of the Roe Institute at The Heritage Foundation*