

Project 2025

UPDATE

Donald Trump respected a 92-year-old tradition by attending a church service on the start of a busy Inauguration Day. He was seen entering St. John's Episcopal Church, with his wife and son. Spotted in the crowd attending this service were tech billionaires Elon Musk; Mark Zuckerberg; and Jeff Bezos; Representative Michael Waltz (Republican, Florida), Trump's incoming national security adviser; Ivanka Trump; Lara Trump; Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.; Tulsi Gabbard; as well as European leaders, Argentinian President Javier Milei and former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. What an interesting group of people to be seen gathered together at a church.

How many people pushing Project 2025 are serving in positions of power? Sixteen people who contributed to Project 2025 are now serving in positions of power. Here is the list: Tom Homan, Border Czar; Brendan Carr, Federal Communications Commission Chair; Stephen Miller, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy; Karoline Leavitt, House Press Secretary; Russ Vought, Office of Management and Budget Director; John Ratcliffe, CIA Director; Pete Hoekstra, Ambassador to Canada; James Braid, White House Director of Legislative Affairs; Peter Navarro, Senior Counselor for Trade and Manufacturing; Monica Crowley, Ambassador, Assistant Secretary of State, and Chief of Protocol; Paul Atkins, SEC Chair (SEC: U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission); Michael Anton, Director of Policy Planning for the State Department; Brian McCormack, National Security Council; Troy Edgar, Department of Homeland Security Deputy Secretary; Steven Bradbury, Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary; and Paul Lawrence, Veterans Affairs Deputy Secretary. God only knows how many members in the government have gone through the Project 2025 training series.

Person of Interest

Russ Vought has been agitating the amending of the Fair Labor Standards Act (establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, and child labor standards) to include Sunday as a rest day. Vought is a Christian nationalist who advocates for what he calls "radical constitutionalism" to reverse a current "post-Constitutional time," which he asserts has resulted from decades of corruption of laws and institutions by the political left. He characterizes the federal bureaucracy as "woke and weaponized" and advocates

replacing it with "radical constitutionalists." (Radical: fundamental and basic) Vought supports expanding presidential authority; proposing the use of the military for domestic law enforcement; and revisiting the president's ability to withhold congressionally appropriated funds, a practice Congress banned in 1974. He proposes to "gut the FBI" and end the tradition of political independence of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). (Gut the FBI means to significantly weaken or dismantle the Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI] by severely reducing its funding, staff, power, or capabilities, and essentially crippling its ability to effectively function as a law enforcement agency; it is often used, in a political context, to express a desire to significantly decrease the FBI's operations.) Yikes, imagine standing before a DOJ full of Christian nationalists, and you are there to answer for your unpatriotic act of keeping Saturday holy.

Other Interesting Developments

Over 30 states have implemented policies that Project 2025 wants to federalize: affecting reproductive rights, public education labor rights, and more. Please note the majority of these laws were passed in 2023 and 2024. I did not find any that involved Sunday rest. The majority had to do with abortion rights, etc.

There has been talk of using the Antiquities Act of 1906, as a law to protect Sunday. This law originally protected the natural and cultural heritage of the United States. It has been noted in Project 2025's *Mandate for Leadership* as being the blueprint to "dismantle the administrative state and return power back to the states and American People." Perhaps this is because it was the first law, in our country, to provide general legal protection for these resources (natural and cultural); and they intend to make laws based on this principle. It is also possible they will try to use the actual law to protect Sunday observance as "cultural heritage." They have considered using the language of the "veto period" (a ten-day stretch for the governor to approve or reject any bills) listed in Art. I, § 7, Cl. 2 of the U.S. Constitution "within ten days (Sundays excepted)" as proof that having Sundays off is part of American heritage and the Constitution. (Art. I, § 7, Cl. 2 of the U.S. Constitution outlines the process for

2 a bill to become law. It states that a bill must be presented to the president for his signature or veto after it passes both the House and the Senate.) “Every bill, which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the President of the United States. If he approves, he shall sign it; but if not, he shall return it, with his objections to that House in which it shall have originated.”

Move for Sunday Law in North Dakota

On January 15th, 2025, North Dakota State Representative Matt Heilman introduced an interesting bill. Its title: “Sunday closing laws and retail agreements,” which would provide a penalty. Heilman said he was prompted by an article written in 2019 by Father Dominic Bouck at the University of Mary, stressing how critical blue laws are. He said it should be passed because it would provide “numerous benefits.” He listed the following:

- Rest and Recovery improves mental health and productivity, helping mankind understand they have a purpose beyond work.
- Incentivises (motivates) community and family time. People who are religious wouldn’t need to jump hurdles to practice religion.
- Heilman thought it would help North Dakota address its work force shortage. He stated that the benefits would attract workers.
- He also admitted there would be drawbacks, such as loss of revenue and customer convenience, and that different businesses would be differently impacted.

I think it is beneficial to explore the reasoning behind this law. The following is a brief synopsis of his conversation with lawmakers in the “Q&A period.” I captured as much of their language as possible, but it is not always in the exact words: word for word. Because of space constraints, my focus is on the ideas and attitudes.

Questions: Section 1, line 9, and subsection 2 says this: The law does not apply to someone who observes another sabbath. What if someone observes Saturday? Can they be open on Sunday?

Answer: Since they keep another day, then the law would not apply to them; that is the way I read it. (This could easily be amended out. [Amended: changed or modified especially to make a correction or improvement])

Question: Why does a state need to mandate a day off?

Answer: It is because of the different benefits I mentioned.

Response: I feel that, within the free market society, our employers should be able to dictate

their own rules. I am probably not in agreement with this bill.

Heilman: I feel that the free market society needs parameters for our safety. (While “parameters” can sometimes be used interchangeably with “guidelines” in certain contexts, technically, a parameter is more specific, representing a boundary that acts as a constraint within a system.)

Question: When I go out, I see employees stocking and preparing several hours before a store opens; so my question is: “Does this law intend to keep people from working or from shopping? Because it is not stopping them from working.”

Answer: That is true of the bill; it does not keep people from working.

Response: That is what convinced me to repeal the original bill. If I wanted to go fishing, it would keep me from purchasing bait, for instance, while the worker would still be working.

Heilman: The bill isn’t perfect, but I didn’t try to nitpick (to criticize, find fault) too much; I just tried to file what I could in order to meet the bill’s filing deadline. (This is nearly verbatim.)

Question: To question again: “Is the purpose of this law to keep people from working or from shopping? What if someone observes Saturday? Can they be open on Sunday?”

Answer: Section 1, line 9, and subsection 2 says this: The law does not apply to someone who observes another sabbath.

Response: Why don’t you find a happy medium and make a bill that says you cannot force someone, under threat of termination, to work on Sunday? Most people don’t work on Sunday. This bill feels more like we are trying to tell people what to do during their time off.

Heilman: (eagerly) I already have a bill drafted for that; if that is what the assembly wants, it is ready to be introduced. But I think, in a free market world, there should be some parameters.

Question: What about people who work six days and have Sunday off? How would they be able to shop if the stores are closed half the day?

Answer: That is the tradeoff of the bill, in my opinion; I don’t think that these restricted businesses are necessities. (Tradeoff: an exchange that occurs as a compromise. Clothing, furniture, kitchen utensils, watches, and many other things are banned while very specific other things are not banned. It was interesting to note that groceries were listed in neither category; hence Walmart would be closed because the majority of its merchandise is banned. Very clever!)

Response: You probably aren’t old enough to remember the stores being chained up on certain aisles because of the stricter blue laws that have been repealed. But we can’t have Walmart closed

because they also sell watches; then everyone has to go to gas stations to get what they need. Right?

Heilman: I do see your point there. I think this bill is striking up the right conversation. I think we have kind of gotten into the mentality of consuming 24/7; and everything has to be about material wealth. I think just talking about the idea that there is more to life than just shopping for a watch on a Sunday morning is a good conversation, even if people get really fired up about it. (No one had been fired up, and all the conversation regarded actual necessities. Heilman was the only one bringing up watches; everyone else was concerned about groceries, which was a gray area in the law.)

Question: What about shopping online? This will put any local store at a disadvantage. They will still be shopping, just not doing it locally. This will put all the mom and pop stores at a greater disadvantage. (Mom and pop stores are small business entities that are independent or family-owned.)

Answer: (flippant) Yeah, you can shop at any hour of the day. This is just the world we live in; there is nothing we can do about it.

Question: Are all the churches you know closed six and a half days of the week? (audible chuckle) Are you only allowed to practice religion on Sundays, or can you practice religion throughout the week?

Answer: I don't really see the purpose of the question. Sunday is Christianity's big day of the week; please clarify.

Response: Sure. Why Sunday? I know churches are open more than just Sunday. So why are we being so restrictive to our communities?

Heilman: I see your point there. I am a Catholic; so I can go to Mass on Saturday, and it counts for Sunday. It is certainly valid, but it has been tradition, for thousands of years, that Sunday is a day of rest.

The proposed law permits nearly every form of entertainment. Punishment for breaking the law is a class A misdemeanor. This is the most serious misdemeanor. A misdemeanor is a criminal offense that can result in up to 11 months and 29 days in jail; up to \$2,500 in fines (dependent on the state); and other consequences, such as difficulty getting a job or buying a house.

The Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of blue laws, citing secular reasons like providing a day of rest for workers and societal stability. "Laws setting aside Sunday as a day of rest are upheld, not from any right of the government to legislate for the promotion of religious observances, but from its right to protect all persons from the physical and moral debasement which comes from uninterrupted labor." This quote is from the Supreme Court case, "*McGowan vs. Maryland*" (1961). What an interesting

concept, uninterrupted labor is morally debasing.

Observation

Heilman was very noncombative (not eager to fight or argue) and yet very firm. He was fishing for anything he could get. Whenever anyone made a suggestion, he seized and pushed as far as the members would handle it. He was testing the waters. It reminds me of the sentiments held in 1888:

"They did not ask for too much at first. As was said in a ministers' meeting in San Diego, California, about two months ago. 'In this thing, you must not ask for too much at first. Ask just what public sentiment will bear; and, when you get that, ask for more.' And as was said upon this bill by Dr. Crafts in this Capitol—'We will take a quarter of a loaf, half a loaf, or a whole loaf. If the government should do nothing more than forbid the opening of the post-offices at church hours, it would be a national tribute to the value of religion, and would lead to something more satisfactory.'"—*The National Sunday Law Argument of Alonzo T. Jones, p. 80.*

What was the result of this bill in the North Dakota House? It failed; 89 voted against it and 4 voted for it. Those who proposed the law mentioned that changes would be made, so the bill is more defined in hopes of passing it at a later date. Surely they have noted where the problem lies: grocery shopping; and I expect they will find a way to skirt that issue. As noted, groceries were cleverly left out, making them able to close stores, like Walmart, because of things they sold that were contrary to the law. The next proposal will be just what public sentiment can bear. Let us hear what Sister White has to say on this topic:

"There is no place in America of greater importance than Washington. The recent developments in that place show that our brethren moved there none too soon. Angels of heaven directed their course in planting the standard of truth in Washington. Men of influence are being aroused to study the truth for this time. No opportunity should be left unimproved to establish the work firmly in this important place. And our efforts are not to stop there. In many cities the truth has not yet been proclaimed. Workers are to come to the front; men and women who are wise in reaching human minds are to be set at work in every place where there is an opening. Every one who is interested is to be judiciously labored for. The men in high places are to hear the message of truth. Angels of heaven will unite with the Lord's appointed ministers and medical missionaries, aiding them to exert on the minds of the people an influence in favor of the truth. Philadelphia and other important places should be worked. Evangelists should be finding their way into all the places where the minds of men are agitated over the question of Sunday legislation and of the teaching of religion in the public schools. It is the neglect of Seventh-day

Adventists to improve these providential opportunities to present the truth that burdens my heart, and keeps me awake night after night.—*Review and Herald, April 20, 1905.*

“Heretofore those who presented the truths of the third angel’s message have often been regarded as mere alarmists. Their predictions that religious intolerance would gain control in the United States, that church and State would unite to persecute those who keep the commandments of God, have been pronounced groundless and absurd. It has been confidently declared that this land could never become other than what it has been, the defender of religious freedom. But as the question of enforcing Sunday observance is widely agitated, the event so long doubted and disbelieved is seen to be approaching, and the third message will produce an effect which it could not have had before.”—*1911 Great Controversy, 605-606.*

Brothers and sisters, God has been calling each of us to share the Three Angels’ Messages in love. Study them, master them, obey them. Then, when we are called of God to speak, we will have something to say right to the point. There is no time to waste; the final movements will be rapid ones. The people in power have expressed their plans. Will they not now execute them while they can? It is high time that our sleepy Church awakes.

A Christian spirit is critical in this time. We cannot be sharing the Truth in a spiteful, angry way. The reputation of Adventists as law-abiding, compassionate, selfless citizens contributed greatly to the weight of their arguments against these laws in 1888. The Bible tells us:

“Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour (the taste or smell of something): so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.”—Ecclesiastes 10:1. (Apothecary: the art, practice, or profession of preparing, preserving, and dispensing compounds for healing purposes)

We would prevent a great deal of damage to the cause if we kept silent, online, about the mistakes and sins of our leadership and Church family. The world can see our churches hypocrisy and unchristian characters on display. If only we had followed the advice of Jesus.

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the

mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”—Matthew 18:15-17.

I have discovered that, when this form of conflict resolution is not obeyed, the inevitable result is backbiting. (Inevitable: incapable of being avoided) The mistakes of others are secretly repeated; the individual is secretly condemned; and he is suddenly set upon by a mob. The worldly way that many followers of Christ respond to problems with their brothers and sisters is shocking. And even more shocking is that we do this in front of the unbelievers and children. Many reveal that they know nothing of the grace of God. I fear for the future. God’s faithful will have a storm of opposition; and yet I am comforted by the words of Peter:

“Many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”—2 Peter 2:2 (Pernicious: highly injurious or destructive) It is best to read verses 2-9.

God foresaw even this, and made provision. His grace is sufficient for us, and we need not be bitter victims. We have one who is mighty to save as our witness; He will justify us. Christ told us:

“Ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.... The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub (Satan or any devil or demon), how much more shall they call them of His household?”—Matthew 10:22, 24-25.

Christ was beaten and condemned for things He never did. Our sins, that He took no part in, were laid to His case. It is enough that the disciple be as his Master. The future holds the soon return of Jesus. In a spirit of love, let us be most active everywhere that the issues of Sunday legislation and religion in public schools are agitated.

For a finished work



Jonathan Taylor

Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35

More Food for the Little Flock —