

# 100 Days Later: The Harm So Far to Latinx Communities

A report by **LatinoJustice PRLDEF**  
April 2025



## INTRODUCTION

Ahead of the 2024 elections, LatinoJustice PRLDEF recognized that the goals laid out in the [Project 2025 Presidential Transition Project](#), if taken up by the next administration, would hurt Latinx communities by rolling back many transformative civil rights advances achieved by Latinos, by immigrants, by women, by working people and by LGBTQ+ people.

In our October 2024 report, [A Promise to Harm: What's at Stake for the Latino Community in Project 2025](#), LatinoJustice forewarned that many of Project 2025's proposals "strike at the heart of the very rights, services, and programs that Latinos identify as crucial to their advancement and wellbeing" by threatening the ability of Latinos and Latinas to fully participate in almost all important aspects of U.S. life, including civic engagement, education, and employment.

Recognizable echoes of Project 2025 proposals are found in many of the executive orders and directives issued thus far by President Trump. One press report found that nearly two-thirds of the executive orders and actions issued during his first week in office—[36 out of 53](#)—bore a striking similarity to the plan's proposals. The fact that President Trump has issued more executive orders and presidential actions by this time than any president in history—214 from January 20 through April 15, 2025—points to one of the overarching goals of Project 2025: to concentrate power in the office of the President and the executive branch, bypassing the checks and balances fundamental to our country's democratic government structure.

Almost half of the objectives in Project 2025 have already been enacted or have a significant foundation, according to a project [tracker](#) set up by a watchdog group. In large part, this is because some of the bodies that are supposed to serve as a check and balance are not pushing back against these sweeping changes. Many federal agency heads appointed by the president execute his orders and decisions even when these plainly violate established law, precedent, and in some cases the Constitution.

Congress has taken little to no action to check executive actions that clearly overstep constitutionally assigned Congressional powers, such as the "[power of the purse](#)," and violate core separation of powers principles. Many courts—not all—are attempting to put the brakes on the administration's illegal actions. But we have seen the White House stall or blatantly ignore these ruling and the key question is, what will the Supreme Court do if the president continues to defy court orders?

Following up on our October 2024 report, this report lays out the notable harm that Latino communities are already experiencing and potential longer-term harm down the road, and identifies steps to shore up systems that ensure that everyone has a fair shot to achieve their full potential, live freely and thrive.

## How the Erosion of the Federal Workforce Harms Latinos

One of the goals explicitly stated in Project 2025 is to “dismantle the administrative state,” reducing the size of the corps of career civil servants who do critical work to ensure our wellbeing and safety.

Since January 20, 2025, the White House, with the assistance and support of the unofficial Department of Government Efficiency, and the support of agency heads appointed by the president, has moved to decimate staffing at a wide variety of federal agencies and departments. In some cases, the removal of tens of thousands of federal employees has almost halted these agencies’ ability to provide vital services, collect needed data, and enforce laws that protect people in the US.

In some cases, the administration has had to reverse efforts to fire key federal employees without cause or justification. For example, [hundreds of nuclear safety employees](#) responsible for the nation’s nuclear weapons arsenal had to be called back to work to protect national security.

But as of mid-April 2025, tens of thousands of civil servants, including many with decades of experience and institutional memory in managing complex systems that affect the lives of millions of people in the US, had been removed from their positions with next to no notice or preparation. This is already affecting the effectiveness of everyday functions of the federal government. And because many of the agencies involved serve some of the most vulnerable people in our country, these cuts are already having catastrophic consequences for those who need services the most.

Cutting hundreds of thousands of unionized civil service jobs also hurts the families of the estimated [450,000 Latinos in the federal workforce](#).

Agency personnel cuts that will have a strong adverse effect on the entire Latino community include the following:

**Social Security Administration** – Cutting staff by 12%, shutting down offices, and requiring people to apply for benefits online will likely pose difficult challenges for many people. Currently, Latinos make up about 6% of elderly Social Security beneficiaries, but that number is estimated to increase to 15% by 2050.

**Internal Revenue Service** – A recent internal agency memo [outlined](#) cuts of almost half of the tax agency’s staff, in addition to [planned shutdowns](#) of 110 taxpayer assistance offices, including 14 offices in states with high Latino populations (California, Massachusetts and Arizona). More troubling, a recent agreement between DHS and Treasury that would allow tax data to be used to identify undocumented immigrants [violates long-standing privacy practices](#) and threatens the billions of dollars that immigrants contribute yearly (2023: \$66B).

**Labor Department** – Plans to [reduce by 90%](#) staff in an office that enforces equal employment opportunity laws will likely halt most if not all enforcement of these laws, greatly affecting Latinos and others who have historically suffered discrimination in the workplace.

**Department of Veterans Affairs** – [Planned cuts](#) to VA staffing of more than 80,000 workers beginning in June will make it harder for hundreds of thousands of veterans to get crucial health care. Latinos make up about [8% of the total US veteran population](#), with 1.5 million who have served, including 330,000 in Puerto Rico. Additionally, veteran preferences in federal hiring means that nearly 30 percent of federal workers are veterans, so this group has been especially hard hit by federal workforce cuts.

**Health and Human Services** – Among the HHS functions hardest hit by staffing cuts and department consolidations at this expansive agency will be oversight of Medicare and Medicaid (serving [5.85 million](#) and [18.2 million](#) Latinos, respectively), research and public health responses to diseases and outbreaks, and the Head Start program ([37% of children in Head Start programs are Latino](#), the largest ethnic/racial group).

**Department of Education** – While educational policy and curricula are mostly set at the state and local district levels, cutting the federal department staff in half will affect programs essential to many Latino families. This includes cuts to the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), charged with helping over 5 million students learn English while progressing in all academic subjects, [which has now been reduced to a single staffer](#), and to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which collects and [analyzes data](#) used to determine eligibility for funding for low-income and rural schools. More than 9.5 million Latino children attend schools receiving Title I funding, the largest racial/ethnic group to do so.

**Environmental Protection Agency** – Hundreds of employees in the agency's Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights are being laid off, cutting down on investigations and the enforcement of environmental regulations that affect people living in areas affected by air and water pollution. More than [7 in 10 Latinos](#) live in counties that have violated federal air pollution standards, and water systems in counties with populations that are 25% or more Latino are [twice as likely](#) to violate rules for water contamination than those in the rest of the country.

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** – Weather forecasting work, especially in areas prone to hurricanes and affected by extreme weather events, will be severely curtailed by the expected loss of 20% of this agency's workforce. [More than half](#) of US Latinos live in areas affected by extreme weather events.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency** – Likewise, families who need help after natural and man-made disasters will be hurt by the loss of hundreds of workers in this agency, including [some of the most experienced and knowledgeable managers of disaster response](#).

## How Legislating by Executive Order Harms Latinos

The current administration has advanced its agenda, including policies directly lifted from Project 2025, primarily through issuing executive orders and memos, presidential actions that bypass the checks and balances of the two other co-equal branches of government.

In his first week in office, the president issued a record-breaking 36 executive orders, and the pace of these orders has continued at a bracing clip, with 129 executive orders total issued through April 15, 2025. These orders cover a broad variety of issues, from immigration and economic policies to architectural aesthetics and geographic designations.

Many of these executive orders directly contravene constitutional principles, existing laws, and the federal government's established separation of powers.

By sidestepping rules and norms for changing how our government is organized and how these systems allocate resources and funding, the president's governing-by-executive-order harms all people in the US: it disrupts fundamental, life-sustaining services for those who need them most, it unsettles planning and diverts time, effort and resources to restoring functions or settling new systems, and it instills uncertainty and fear.

Organizations like LatinoJustice have for decades fought for a future that unwinds harmful systems and builds access to opportunities that promote wellbeing for all. We are already hard at work trying to curb these unlawful and unconstitutional policies and practices.

## THE HARM SO FAR... Overall

In the past 100 days, we have seen dramatic and direct harm to Latinos across geographies, socioeconomic classes and immigration or citizenship status, as well as to the communities that depend on and benefit from Latino's economic, civic, social and cultural contributions.

As many expected, immigrants and those perceived to be immigrants are experiencing the most serious harm. Whether staging [made-for-TV](#) immigration raids, displaying "[mug shots](#)" of detained immigrants on the White House driveway, detaining US citizens who are [Puerto Rican](#) or [Native American](#), or, most notably, steamrolling over due process to [send immigrants accused of being gang members](#) to a notorious prison in El Salvador, and to [remove US-born children](#) from the US when their undocumented parents are deported, the administration has turned its promise for a "[shock and awe](#)" approach to undocumented immigrants living in the US and to radically shrink paths to migrate legally into a house of horrors, instilling fear in millions in the US.

The administration's Project 2025-modeled goals are also harming Latinos and others by moving to reverse many of the advances to more equal access to opportunity won by civil rights movements. Under the guise of "[eliminating illegal DEI](#)," the administration has [sought to force the closure](#) of programs and initiatives in agencies, educational institutions and corporations that would effectively remove anti-discrimination protections, erase the presence and contributions

of women, non-whites and LGBTQ+ people to these institutions, and impose McCarthyite speech prohibitions in [government](#), [classrooms](#) and [university campuses](#).

Highly visible attempts to [erase the presence of trans people](#) from public life and strip protections from LGBTQ+ people [at schools](#) and [at work](#) [closely mirror](#) Project 2025 objectives. Especially at risk as visible minorities are the 2.9 million Latinx and 2.9 million other non-white people who identify as LGBTQ+.

## **THE HARM SO FAR... for Latino immigrants and their families**

In his time in office, the president has focused on taking actions and promoting policies that render immigrants—and anyone identified as “immigrant”—as criminals, an invading force, and an “enemy within,” and therefore unworthy of the Constitutional rights that protect everyone in the US.

The Trump administration has taken [175 immigration-specific executive actions through April 22](#) that have affected hundreds of thousands of people in the US, including: designating so-called gang members as “enemy aliens” without credible proof; eliminating lawful ways for immigrants to live and work in the US, such as [Temporary Protected Status](#) (TPS), [refugee](#) resettlement and [asylum](#); cancelling visas for students and others (though some have recently been [restored](#)); cancelling a policy keeping immigration enforcement out of “sensitive locations” such as churches, schools and hospitals; and an unconstitutional attempt to [eliminate birthright citizenship](#).

Foremost among these actions has been the deployment of aggressive immigration enforcement, purportedly to remove undocumented people who are eligible for deportation due to criminal activity. The president promised to deport [one million people yearly](#), an endeavor that immigration experts estimate would cost at least [\\$315 billion](#) to remove the 11 million undocumented people currently in the US.

In the first month of the current administration the number of detentions and removals [did not meaningfully increase](#) over the numbers under President Biden, though ICE [touts](#) a record-breaking number of detentions and deportations since January. CBP has encountered fewer people at the US-Mexico border than at any point since 2000 yet [more resources](#) are being deployed for border immigration enforcement.

These actions have sown [widespread fear](#) within Latino and immigrant communities, and many are withdrawing from public life, from [work](#) and from [sending their kids to school](#).

The potential expansion of these and other anti-immigrant policies could hurt US economic sectors that rely heavily on immigrant laborers, and the estimated [\\$90 billion in taxes](#) contributed yearly by undocumented immigrants.

An especially troubling aspect of current immigration enforcement actions are due process violations that set a dangerous precedent for eroding this fundamental right for everyone in the

US, including citizens. Deportations to [third countries](#), removals of people barred from deportation, such as [Kilmar Abrego Garcia](#), and [removal of US citizen children](#) all open the door to illegal denials of due process to people who have contact with the criminal justice system, protesters, and beyond.

*What may come next:*

- [Domestic use of military](#) for immigration enforcement
- Increased [budget](#) for and construction of [immigrant detention facilities](#)
- [Increased use](#) of third country sites for immigration detention.

### ***What LJP is doing***

Despite the administration's pushback against court orders to curb some of these policies and actions, the courts remain a viable channel to stop and reverse illegal and unconstitutional moves against immigrants.

Since January, LatinoJustice PRLDEF has joined peer civil rights and immigrant rights organizations in legal actions that challenge the end of birthright citizenship, agreements between ICE and local law enforcement to carry out immigration enforcement, defunding of programs that assist immigrants seeking citizenship.

Our organization has also advocated against the "immigrant registry," the opening of new immigrant detention centers, and increased militarization on the US-Mexico border.

And we have conducted dozens of "know your rights" workshops in English and Spanish with dozens of community and educational organizations, and created bilingual public education materials.

### **THE HARM SO FAR... for Latino children, youth and workers**

The president has taken up plans contained in Project 2025 to dismantle public education, reduce resources to help families pay for college, and decimate protections for workers when it comes to their health and safety, right to organize and combatting discrimination in the workplace.

The president and his supporters have defined many laws, policies and programs that aim to reduce discrimination in the workplace and in education as "illegal DEI," which they see as antithetical to merit-based systems.

The president has wielded two primary tools to pressure public, private and non-profit entities (such as universities) to comply with his goal of removing any policies, practices, and even language that relates to the advancement of equal rights: threats of investigation by the Department of Justice, and the illegal removal of federal funding.



Plans to close down the federal Department of Education, which cannot be done [without the approval of Congress](#), would gravely affect Latino families. An important function of the federal agency is to administer funding to schools with large low-income populations under Title I, and to provide additional resources for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Latino children currently make up [29% of public school enrollment](#), and they are the only racial/ethnic group whose share of the total is increasing. Latinos make up the largest number of students enrolled in schools receiving Title I funding. This includes [almost half](#) of Latino high schoolers.

To date, we have seen a mix of responses among states and local school districts to the threats to federal education funding. Some have [adapted their curricula](#), while others have made [few to no changes](#), maintaining that this is beyond the purview of federal education authorities.

In higher education, the administration has threatened to withdraw federal funding for scientific research, a big source of funding for large private and public universities, unless the schools meet demands to change what is taught and to eliminate programs that promote equal access to opportunity. Here too, we have seen a mix of reactions from schools, with some elite schools such as Columbia University [acceding to demands](#), and others, such as Harvard, [bringing legal action](#) to halt the move.

The administration's changes to [student loan forgiveness and repayment programs](#) will have grave consequences for the ability of Latino youth to access a college education; these youth are more likely to face additional [financial stress and caregiving responsibilities](#).

Beyond the firings of tens of thousands of federal workers, where Latinos make up about 10% of the workforce, and the elimination of "DEI" within federal offices, the prohibition of "DEI" policies in [private companies](#) with grants or contracts from the federal government is starting to have a chilling effect on hiring and advancements within the private sector, and is driving some Latinos to [downplay their ethnicity](#) or culture in the workplace.

Other significant threats to guarding employees against discrimination include a recent executive order dismissing the use of "[disparate impact](#)" that will hamper legal challenges to discrimination in the workplace, moves to [obstruct the work](#) of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), two of the main federal agencies supporting the rights of workers, as well as cuts to the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (NIOSH) and the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA), which protect conditions for workers on the job.

We also see signs that the current administration may loosen restrictions on child labor, a move we are already seeing in [an increasing number of states](#). There have been cuts to [international programs](#) fighting the use of child labor. Broadening the use of child labor in the US would likely have the strongest effect on Latino and immigrant children, who [already work in large numbers](#) in dangerous conditions.

*What may come next:*



- Attacks on [Pell Grants](#) and other forms of support and financing for college
- Support for [faith-based curricula](#) in public schools and [increased funding](#) for “school choice”
- A nearly full stop to all enforcement of labor violations, employment discrimination, and health and safety regulations.

### ***What LJP is doing***

LatinoJustice PRLDEF has long litigated and advocated for equal access to opportunity at schools and in the workplace, and is leaning in to protect Latino communities from these threats to the rights and resources available to them in these areas vital to advancement and wellbeing.

In addition to continuing legal challenges to keep race-neutral admissions in various school districts, LJP has joined civil rights colleagues to defend schools from threats to eliminate federal funding, and we are prepared to defend the rights of workers.

## **THE HARM SO FAR... for Latinos Seeking Health Care and Support from Environmental Harm and Disaster**

The administration’s moves to cut federal benefits such as Medicare and Medicaid, to defund Planned Parenthood and to cut services available to veterans will have a devastating effect on Latino families who rely on these health care services.

Latinos have one of the highest rates for being uninsured ([17.9%](#)) so access to public health care benefits is a matter of life and health for many families. About [575,000 Latinos](#) use Planned Parenthood health centers annually, for a wide variety of health care issues, often paid through public health coverage.

With [more than half](#) of the US Latino population experiencing extreme weather events and natural disasters annually that devastate their housing and means of employment, downsizing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), as the administration would like to do, threatens the ability of millions of Latino families to recover from mounting natural disasters.

### ***What LJP is doing***

Currently, our work in this area is focused on legal challenges to federal and state actions that threaten access to health care and disaster relief resources, and weaken environmental protections that affect Latino communities.

We have supported a lawsuit challenging FEMA assessments for rebuilding Puerto Rico’s energy infrastructure, a coalition call for the administration to preserve environmental regulations, and we filed a legal complaint against FEMA for neglect and discrimination against the deaf and hard of hearing community in Puerto Rico.

## THE HARM SO FAR... for Latinos participating in democratic processes

By casting doubt on the citizenship of all Latinos through attacks on immigrants, and continued attacks on the rights of voters through unnecessary restrictions on the voting process, this administration threatens the ability of Latino eligible voters to exercise their constitutional right to the ballot.

An [executive order](#) requiring documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote in federal elections ([partially blocked](#) as of this writing) is not only redundant, but it is likely illegal because the president does not have the authority to change federal election laws on his own. Were the executive order's provisions to be enacted (or if the similar [SAVE Act](#) were to pass), it would disenfranchise the estimated [21.3 million eligible voters](#) in the US who do not have ready access to the required documents. Requirements to review voter lists to purge people deemed to be ineligible to vote would also likely affect Latinos disproportionately, given multiple past examples of [mistaken purges](#) from voter rolls.

*What may be next:*

- Continued attempts at federal and state level to restrict access to the ballot

### ***What LJP is doing***

We have joined civil rights and voting rights organizations challenging restrictions to access to the ballot in the courts, and will continue to support similar efforts in the courts and in the states. We are continuing to support strengthening voting rights protections through state legislation in New Jersey, Maryland and Michigan, as we have in New York and Connecticut.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The radical changes to US society laid out in Project 2025 and pursued by the current administration are extremely dangerous, but they are not inevitable.

As dozens of these changes have been emitted by executive order and action, we have seen several instances where the legislative and judicial branches of government have failed to assert their co-equal powers vis a vis the executive branch. Congress members and the Supreme Court have taken actions that support or neglect to challenge presidential actions, even when they are illegal or unconstitutional, or even when they usurp powers assigned to other branches or other governmental bodies.

This does not mean the power of the courts or legislatures has been mooted, or that we should not take action in these arenas. Some of the greatest checks to harmful policies and actions have come from federal court decisions, [legal challenges](#), actions in the states by [governors](#), legislatures and [attorneys general](#).

And we have seen members of the public across the country get activated, at mass protests, at town halls, and in other public forums where they can take back the power they have granted to their representatives, including the president.

LatinoJustice PRLDEF is working closely with our peers who advocate for civil rights, for Latinos and other people of color, for immigrants and for other populations under attack. Together, we can join resources and expand our reach in this challenging time.

The drastic changes proposed to our laws and the systems that uphold vital aspects of our everyday life have stoked fear and uncertainty among a vast number of people in the US, and are making some people feel powerless to stop it. But the tools for democratic change—though beaten down a bit—are still of use by any and all of us. We still can, and must, wield them fully, to safeguard our present and bring about our future.