

PROMISE #1: RESTORE THE FAMILY AS THE CENTERPIECE OF AMERICAN LIFE AND PROTECT OUR CHILDREN.

The next conservative President must get to work pursuing the true priority of politics—the well-being of the American family.

In many ways, the entire point of centralizing political power is to subvert the family. Its purpose is to replace people's natural loves and loyalties with unnatural ones. You see this in the popular left-wing aphorism, "Government is simply the name we give to the things we choose to do together." But in real life, most of the things people "do together" have nothing to do with government. These are the mediating institutions that serve as the building blocks of any healthy society.

Marriage. Family. Work. Church. School. Volunteering. The name real people give to the things we do together is community, not government. Our lives are full of interwoven, overlapping communities, and our individual and collective happiness depends upon them. But the most important community in each of our lives—and the life of the nation—is the family.

Today, the American family is in crisis. Forty percent of all children are born to unmarried mothers, including more than 70 percent of black children. There is no government program that can replace the hole in a child's soul cut out by the absence of a father. Fatherlessness is one of the principal sources of American poverty, crime, mental illness, teen suicide, substance abuse, rejection of the church, and high school dropouts. So many of the problems government programs are designed to solve—but can't—are ultimately problems created by the crisis of marriage and the family. The world has never seen a thriving, healthy, free, and prosperous society where most children grow up without their married parents.

If current trends continue, we are heading toward social implosion. Furthermore, the next conservative President must understand that using government alone to respond to symptoms of the family crisis is a dead end. Federal power must instead be wielded to reverse the crisis and rescue America's kids from familial breakdown. The Conservative Promise includes dozens of specific policies to accomplish this existential task.

Some are obvious and long-standing goals like eliminating marriage penalties in federal welfare programs and the tax code and installing work requirements for food stamps. But we must go further. It's time for policymakers to elevate family authority, formation, and cohesion as their top priority and even use government power, including through the tax code, to restore the American family.

Today the Left is threatening the tax-exempt status of churches and charities that reject woke progressivism. They will soon turn to Christian schools and clubs with the same totalitarian intent.

The next conservative President must make the institutions of American civil society hard targets for woke culture warriors. This starts with deleting the terms sexual orientation and gender identity (“SOGI”), diversity, equity, and inclusion (“DEI”), gender, gender equality, gender equity, gender awareness, gender-sensitive, abortion, reproductive health, reproductive rights, and any other term used to deprive Americans of their First Amendment rights out of every federal rule, agency regulation, contract, grant, regulation, and piece of legislation that exists. Pornography, manifested today in the omnipresent propagation of transgender ideology and sexualization of children, for instance, is not a political Gordian knot inextricably binding up disparate claims about free speech, property rights, sexual liberation, and child welfare. It has no claim to First Amendment protection. Its purveyors are child predators and misogynistic exploiters of women. Their product is as addictive as any illicit drug and as psychologically destructive as any crime.

Pornography should be outlawed. The people who produce and distribute it should be imprisoned. Educators and public librarians who purvey it should be classed as registered sex offenders. And telecommunications and technology firms that facilitate its spread should be shuttered.

In our schools, the question of parental authority over their children’s education is a simple one: Schools serve parents, not the other way around. That is, of course, the best argument for universal school choice—a goal all conservatives and conservative Presidents must pursue. But even before we achieve that long-term goal, parents’ rights as their children’s primary educators should be non-negotiable in American schools. States, cities and counties, school boards, union bosses, principals, and teachers who disagree should be immediately cut off from federal funds.

The noxious tenets of “critical race theory” and “gender ideology” should be excised from curricula in every public school in the country. These theories poison our children, who are being taught on the one hand to affirm that the color of their skin fundamentally determines their identity and even their moral status while on the other they are taught to deny the very creatureliness that inheres in being human and consists in accepting the givenness of our nature as men or women.

Allowing parents or physicians to “reassign” the sex of a minor is child abuse and must end. For public institutions to use taxpayer dollars to declare the superiority or inferiority of certain races, sexes, and religions is a violation of the Constitution and civil rights law and cannot be tolerated by any government anywhere in the country.

But the pro-family promises expressed in this book, and central to the next conservative President's agenda, must go much further than the traditional, narrow definition of "family issues." Every threat to family stability must be confronted.

This resolve should color each of our policies. Consider our approach to Big Tech. The worst of these companies prey on children, like drug dealers, to get them addicted to their mobile apps. Many Silicon Valley executives famously don't let their own kids have smart phones.² They nevertheless make billions of dollars addicting other people's children to theirs. TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms are specifically designed to create the digital dependencies that fuel mental illness and anxiety, to fray children's bonds with their parents and siblings. Federal policy cannot allow this industrial-scale child abuse to continue.

Finally, conservatives should gratefully celebrate the greatest pro-family win in a generation: overturning *Roe v. Wade*, a decision that for five decades made a mockery of our Constitution and facilitated the deaths of tens of millions of unborn children. But the *Dobbs* decision is just the beginning. Conservatives in the states and in Washington, including in the next conservative Administration, should push as hard as possible to protect the unborn in every jurisdiction in America. In particular, the next conservative President should work with Congress to enact the most robust protections for the unborn that Congress will support while deploying existing federal powers to protect innocent life and vigorously complying with statutory bans on the federal funding of abortion. Conservatives should ardently pursue these pro-life and pro-family policies while recognizing the many women who find themselves in immensely difficult and often tragic situations and the heroism of every choice to become a mother. Alternative options to abortion, especially adoption, should receive federal and state support. In summary, the next President has a moral responsibility to lead the nation in restoring a culture of life in America again.