

COUNTERING PROJECT 2025 WITH LOVE: A UCC RESPONSE

Project 2025 is a compilation of policy proposals and presidential transition project launched by the Heritage Foundation. The document outlines an extreme set of policies that, if implemented, would threaten basic freedoms, punish the most vulnerable, and dismantle not only the structure of our federal government but attack deeply held values of religious freedom and the separation of church and state. Split into four components, this Project includes a policy guide for the next presidential administration and a playbook of actions to be taken within the first 180 days in office. Most importantly, Project 2025 stands in direct opposition to the United Church of Christ's values and work.

We know many have likely seen summaries of this Project, so now it's time to dive deeper and break down how the UCC's closely held values of extravagant welcome, abundance, and justice for all compare with the values of Project 2025.

Gender Justice

Project 2025 encourages the federal government to pause all enforcement of Title IX, leaving victims of sexual discrimination and assault on their own.

The United Church of Christ seeks to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. We seek to welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all. Project 2025's mission to disband protection for human life across the spectrum of gender is a direct assault on the biblical root of loving our neighbors as we love ourselves ([Luke 10:25-37](#), NRSV).

Project 2025's intent to eliminate Title IX places students at a higher risk of physical, mental and spiritual abuse and cuts off access to the processes that seek justice from such harm. This goes directly against many UCC resolutions upholding the [dignity of human rights](#) (GS2, 1959, GS12, 1979), supporting and advocating for survivors of assault through [Breaking the Silence Sunday](#), and the reaffirmation of the UCC's commitment to [full equality](#) for persons of any sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

LGBTQ+ Rights

Project 2025 defunds trans healthcare and creates huge barriers to transgender youth in transition. It also proposes lenience towards business owners and hospitals seeking to refuse service for LGBTQ+ families.

As language evolves and expansive experiences of LGBTQ+ siblings become more well known, the United Church of Christ remains steadfast in its support and advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights. Spanning

more than 20 years, the UCC continues to choose loving their LGBTQ+ neighbor over hatred, from [supporting human rights related to sexual orientation and gender identity](#) in 1979 to [actively affirming the human dignity of transgender and non-binary persons](#) in 2023. Attempts to disembody and oppress any of God's kin-dom goes directly against the values and work of the United Church of Christ in our commitment toward a just world for all.

When the rights of transgender siblings are oppressed from their true authentic selves, our siblings run a higher risk of experiencing gender dysphoria— a serious medical condition that, if left untreated, can result in severe anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidality. Project 2025's encouragement to defund transgender healthcare places youth at [risk of harassment and bullying that can lead to loss of life](#). Under the [Human Dignity for Trans and Non-Binary Persons Resolution](#), the UCC is called to advocate for the full legal equality of transgender, nonbinary, and gender diverse people. This most recent resolution leans into scripture to love our neighbor as ourselves and God with our whole hearts. Stripping trans siblings of their personhood is a direct violation of such hope.

Reproductive Care and Abortion

Project 2025 proposes defunding Planned Parenthood, criminalizing traveling for abortions and abortions by mail, and puts at risk insurance coverage of contraception.

Since 1971, the United Church of Christ has passed multiple [resolutions](#) supporting the freedom of choice regarding pregnancy, the right of each person to follow their personal religious and moral convictions regarding the completion or termination of a pregnancy and calling on the church in all settings to provide educational resources and programs to reduce unintended pregnancies and promote responsible sexual behavior.

The United Church of Christ promotes bodily autonomy for all people and supports the rights of each person to access health care that upholds their dignity and humanity. A [2023 resolution](#) proclaimed abortion as healthcare, forced birth an act of violence, and calls for systemic measures to increase access to the full spectrum of reproductive healthcare. Additionally, the resolution calls upon Local Churches and their members to engage with the Our Whole Lives: Sexuality and Our Faith curriculum to promote holistic sexuality education, including information and education about contraception, and to support and offer access to contraceptives. This affirms the long history of the United Church of Christ in supporting education as a means toward building sacred community in which we care for one another, as Jesus commanded us to do in John 13:34-35.

Environmental Justice

Project 2025 calls for shredding regulations to curb greenhouse gas pollution from cars, oil and gas wells and power plants, dismantling almost every clean energy program in the federal government, and boosting the production of fossil fuels — the burning of which is the chief cause of planetary warming.

Multiple UCC resolutions passed at General Synod, such as a [2015 resolution](#) calling for a rapid transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy by 2040, have called for strong action at the federal level of government to address the climate crisis.

A [2017 resolution](#) called for the U.S. government to commit to the goals of the UN Paris Agreement—goals that would become unattainable under Project 2025. A [2019 resolution](#) called for federal policies that addressed the multiple justice issues exacerbated by the climate crisis, while Project 2025 would [decimate protections](#) that safeguard protections for communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. The commitments of past General Synod resolutions are presently embodied in the UCC's annual [Climate Hope Campaigns](#) that aim to advance climate justice at the federal level.

Education

Project 2025 proposes to eliminate the Head Start program, defund the federal school meal program, defund the individuals with disabilities in education act, phase out Title I funding, and completely abolish sex education in schools.

The United Church of Christ believes that all children are children of God, whatever race, gender, ethnicity, body, and mind they have. As a people called to love our neighbors as ourselves, we are called to protect and improve public schooling as a matter of justice. The UCC also believes that public schooling should include comprehensive sexual education, reflected in its commitment to the implementation of the Our Whole Lives and Sexuality and Our Faith curriculum.

In 1985 the UCC passed a [pronouncement](#) that reaffirmed our responsibility for quality public that reaffirmed our responsibility to support quality public education and urged the maintenance of school systems that are accountable to local and regional electorates, financed by public tax revenues, and responsible to State standards for curriculum and teacher certification. We advocate for a more equitable distribution of state and federal funds, and we resist the pressures on public schools from sectarian religious groups and ideologies. Finally, we defend the right of parents to choose alternative, private, religious, or independent schools, but continue to declare that those schools should be funded by private sources of income.

Public schools represent our society's commitment to the common good. The UCC also believes that public schooling should include comprehensive sexual education. The Our Whole Lives: Sexuality and Our Faith curriculum, developed by the UCC, is based on the values that knowledge about sexuality is helpful, not harmful, and that all sexualities and gender identities are valid and to be embraced within the human experience.

Economic Justice

Project 2025 suggests banning all public employee unions and allowing employers to terminate its union agreement mid contract. It also suggests allowing states to disregard the national minimum wage, and creating just a 15% and 30% tax rate, placing the financial burden on middle income earners.

For decades, the United Church of Christ has passed numerous [General Synod resolutions](#) committing us to push our elected leaders to concretely realize God’s dreams and pursue a just economy – through progressive taxation, guaranteed health care, labor protections and solidarity, affordable housing, the establishment of reparations, and much more. Our commitments must be renewed and steadfast, now more than ever.

Through scripture, the prophets, the ministry of Jesus, and ever since, humanity is made well-aware that our living God is passionate about seeing us establish systems of governance rooted in manifesting sustenance, equity, and abundance for all. Economic justice is a dominant, divine priority for people of faith and conscience. Collective thriving comes with ensuring all are fed, housed, cared for, educated, robustly paid and protected at work, and given ample rest from labor. Moreover, these divine mandates are also objective requirements for a sustainable future for both the planet and our people. The great news is that this is all possible. At local, state, and national levels, our elected leaders are charged with equitably stewarding our money and shared resources in service of meeting human need and rights.

Racial Justice

Project 2025 destroys all DEI and Civil Rights programming within the administration, including closing every DEI office on college campuses and removing Civil Rights offices in all federal agencies. It also suggests prosecuting universities and states that still use affirmative action and making the teaching of “critical race theory” illegal.

As members of the Body of Christ, we affirm that there is nothing more central to our faith as honoring and coming to know the image of God that lives in each member of the human family. Moreover, we also know that living as siblings together means reckoning with historic harms of racism, colonialism, and all forms of cultural prejudice and creating repair together.

In 2003, the UCC adopted a [resolution](#) to be an Anti-Racist Church. This resolution is as revolutionary as God’s intent in creating human beings in God’s own image and likeness. In the Anti-Racist Church resolution, we committed to “examine both historic and contemporary forms of racism and its effects.” Following Jesus remains a radical movement and working toward racial justice is the nerve center of faith. [At General Synod 31 in 2017](#), the UCC voted to mandate DEI training for authorized ministers saying, “the realization of Jesus’ prayer ‘that they may all be one,’ is impossible without self-reflection, serious study, and by engaging in safe, meaningful, substantive and bold conversations on the brokenness and divisiveness created within the body of Christ by the realities of institutional racism, and by the lack of understanding and the failure to nurture and lift up our cultural differences and gifts.”

Immigration and Refugee Issues

Project 2025 suggests eliminating DACA protections for more than 500,000 recipients, allowing ICE to raid sensitive areas such as schools and religious institutions, integrating the Department of Homeland Security with the military, and supports mass deportation and detention of families. It calls for the Office of Refugee Resettlement resources to be redirected towards border enforcement and to slash the number of refugees resettled in the U.S. as required by the 1980 Refugee Act.

The United Church of Christ has a long history of solidarity in the struggle for dignity and human rights for immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees regardless of their immigration status. The UCC has numerous General Synod Resolutions that call for humanitarian protection for migrants seeking safety and a pathway to citizenship for our immigrant siblings. Throughout our sacred texts and tradition, we're called to welcome and love immigrants as our neighbors.

The [UCC voted in 2017](#) to become an Immigrant Welcoming denomination. Together alongside grassroots pastors and lay leaders we work to share a prophetic stance and lift up the voices of impacted leaders in the struggle for immigrants and refugee rights through accompaniment and advocacy.

Healthcare

Project 2025 imposes work requirements to be eligible for Medicaid and suggests time limits on how long people can be on Medicaid. It also suggests increasing drug prices for Medicare Part D and rescinds the part of the Inflation Reduction Act that allowed Medicare to negotiate drug prices directly with pharmaceutical companies. It also suggests the importance of mental health care and substance abuse treatment yet proposes addressing the opioid overdose crisis through increased sentencing and closing the U.S. border.

For nearly four decades, the United Church of Christ has advocated for health care as a human right and priority for all people. Led by Jesus, a renowned healer, the UCC stands proudly as a community of faith that believes all should have access to affordable, safe, and high-quality healthcare. This includes healing—not criminalizing—the sick, including those struggling with substance abuse.

In 2009, the UCC passed [a resolution](#) supporting universal healthcare, proclaiming that health care is not only a basic human need but also a basic human right. The UCC called on every part of the national setting to transform health care so that it is inclusive, accessible, affordable and accountable. The resolution also affirmed the UCC's support for universal health care which meets the following criteria: 1) it covers all persons; 2) it presents no financial barriers; 3) it provides comprehensive benefits; 4) it offers a choice of physicians and other health providers; and 5) it eliminates racial, ethnic and all other disparities for health care. This has since acted as a guide for comprehensive healthcare advocacy in DC and across the country.

The United Church of Christ has [long pushed](#) for policy that approaches drug use as a health issue with social and economic implications. In 2023, the UCC passed [a resolution](#) calling for a renewed commitment to harm reduction values, including intersectional analysis of the drug overdose crisis, destigmatizing drug use experiences, and building community with individuals and communities experiencing substance use disorders. This resolution actively encourages all settings of the church to develop “harm reduction policies grounded in science, compassion, health, and human rights.” The UCC knows that we are long overdue for a just peace and an end to the war on people who use drugs.

Foreign Policy

Project 2025 calls for the mass militarization of the U.S. foreign policy apparatus by dramatically expanding the country’s nuclear arsenal and taking the U.S. out of key international coalitions, including the IMF, World Bank, Paris Climate Accords, and UN Framework convention on Climate Change. It also suggests ending all economic ties with China immediately and increasing the Army force by more than 50,000 soldiers.

As a Just Peace Church, the United Church of Christ is committed to working towards peace with justice at home and around the world. As such, we are committed to the eradication of all nuclear weapons and promoting peace, not war. We believe that God calls us to love our neighbor and to act in ways that recognizes the inherent dignity of every person, like hearing and responding to the needs of others (providing food, shelter, water, etc.) and caring for all of God’s creation. While humans and the systems and coalitions we create are not perfect, we believe that only by communicating and working together can we bring about God’s kin-dom on Earth.

Within the United Church of Christ’s [pronouncement](#) of becoming a Just Peace church, the UCC affirmed nonviolence as a Christian response to conflict, as shown by Jesus. Selling weapons and other military equipment to foreign governments and increasing the number of soldiers serving in our military is not in line with these beliefs. The UCC also advocates for denuclearization and stands against the institution of war to attain peace and security. The UCC’s overall goal is a just world for all, a goal that is hard to achieve and maintain when there is hegemony coercing the rest of the world to endorse its decisions.

Conclusion

Project 2025 threatens all our freedoms. This 900-page document touches every one of us, in ways this document only begins to outline. But powered by our faith values, we can counter such policies of cruelty, bigotry, hate, and narrow-mindedness with our faith values of love, expansiveness, and generosity granted by God’s love for all of us. We are people of extravagant welcome. Let’s meet fear with love, exclusion with inclusion, and scarcity with abundance. Through God’s grace, a more just and generous world is possible. Join us, as we fight for our freedom to move, love, and thrive. Together, we can build a Just World for All.