



***Stop the Coup 2025***  
a public education and mobilization campaign

## **SECTION FOUR. THE ECONOMY**

In the first lines of an introduction to reforms they plan to implement to reshape America's economy, Project 2025's authors state the problem they want to fix: "For several decades, establishment 'elites' have failed the citizenry by refusing to secure the border, outsourcing manufacturing to China and elsewhere, spending recklessly, regulating constantly, and generally controlling the country from the top down rather than letting it flourish from the bottom up." That said, they disagree on how to achieve this, apart from a shared view that a limited federal government is best to support their vision of an unfettered free market economy as they key to building prosperity for more Americans.

Chapter 26 co-author Kent Lassman, president of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, wants to expand free trade by reducing the government's role in regulating large corporations in particular, and increase domestic manufacturing, to make American businesses more competitive in global markets, and less reliant on outsourcing of manufacturing and importing of cheaper goods from China and elsewhere. He would cut government spending, and remove "Leftist" policies that "push climate change and equity-based activism" which represent hurdles to doing business. Lassman suggests the US lower or repeal tariffs -- including eliminating "the destructive Trump-Biden tariffs" -- to make goods more affordable for Americans.

Chapter 26 co-author Peter Navarro, former White House director of trade and manufacturing policy, sees the problem of global competition differently. He suggests tackling the World Trade Organization's (WTO) "most favored nation" rules that "encourage our trade partners to adopt high tariffs, which lead to our "chronic" trade deficits and make us "the globe's biggest trade loser and victim of unfair, unbalanced, and non-reciprocal trade." He suggests America's trade policy be guided "by 'the principle of reciprocity,' in which the US coaxes other countries to lower their trade barriers if possible and raise America's as necessary. America should 'decouple' its economy from China." He and Lassman disagree on their view of trade deficits and how they impact our economy.

In this section, China -- and US trade policies with China -- get a lion's share of attention as the major economic rival. Argues Navarro: "...our current trade policy enriches our allies and adversaries while hurting us, weakens our industrial base while strengthening China's, and shortchanges 'Main Street manufacturers and workers.' Such non-reciprocal 'free' trade is slowly undermining our capabilities and our freedom."

Among targets for reform, authors in this section cite the Commerce Department and the Census Bureau, which, they feel, "need far more political leadership" so that the Commerce Department implements the president's agenda, and the Bureau of Economic Affairs, housed at Commerce, "conducts its statistical analysis in a consistent and objective manner" to make economic data easier to access and assess. They also call for reforming tax policy, "primarily by reducing marginal tax rates, reducing the cost of capital, and broadening the tax base to eliminate tax-induced economic distortions by eliminating special-interest tax credits, deductions, and



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exclusions.” They also want to “promote tax competition rather than supporting an international tax cartel.”

Conservatives plan to target the Internal Revenue Services to reduce its “intrusiveness” on American business, and take special aim at the Small Business Administration, which is accused of “waste, fraud, and mismanagement” and guilty of “mission creep.” Moreover, its “initiatives aimed at ‘inclusivity’ are in fact creating exclusivity and stringent selectivity in deciding what types of small businesses and entities can use SBA programs,” state the authors.

The most radical proposal is to get rid of the Federal Reserve entirely, replace it with “free banking,” whereby “neither interest rates nor the supply of money” would be “controlled by government.” That would, they argue, produce a “stable and sound” currency and a “strong” financial system, “while allowing lending to flourish.” Alternatively, one author proposes, the next Administration should “consider the feasibility of a return to the gold standard.”

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**Chapter 21. Department of Commerce.** Author: Thomas F. Gilman, Director of ACLJ Action, Chairman of Torn-gat Metals; former Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Administration and Chief Financial Officer, US Dept. of Commerce in the Trump administration. Former CEO, Chrysler Corporation. Chapter input from James Rockas, Nazak Nikakhtar, Louis Heinzer, Robert Burkett, Iain Murray, Michael Gonzalez, David Legates, and Kristen Eichamer, among others.

Gilman starts his call to reshape the Department of Commerce (DOC) by stating it “has suffered from decades of regulatory capture, ideological drift, and lack of focus.” Yet, the DOC, he feels, is actually a critical lever of the economy, “central to any plan to reverse the precipitous economic decline sparked by the Biden Administration and to counter Communist China.” He calls for tackling red tape and bloat, with the goal of “consolidation, elimination, or privatization” of bureaus or roles within DOC, to improve its operations and philosophical alignment with conservative principles.

***Key proposed reforms include:***

- ✓ Streamline the International Trade Administration (ITA) and parts of the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) and move to the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR), along with the Development Finance Corporation; the US Trade and Development Agency; the Export-Import Bank; and other trade-related programs and consider whether these programs should exist
- ✓ Consolidate or eliminate the Economic Development Administration’s grant programs, which are duplicative and overlapping
- ✓ Consolidate the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Census Bureau



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- ✓ Consolidate the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics into a more manageable, focused, and efficient statistical agency
- ✓ Make the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) into performance-based organization under the Office of Management and Budget (OMB); alternatively, consolidate the USPTO with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in a new US Office of Patents, Trademarks, and Standards. Eliminate or move non-mission-critical research functions to other, more focused, federal agencies
- ✓ Dismantle the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or transfer its functions to other agencies; control of states or territories, or privatize

### ***Other:***

#### ***Office of the Secretary***

- ✓ Do more to digitize and modernize the department's processes to free resources for secretarial and presidential priorities
- ✓ Fully staff OS with political appointees; send all existing detailees back to their home bureaus on Day One, to execute the President's agenda
- ✓ Immediately install political leadership at the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA); ensure funds align with Administration priorities
- ✓ Mandate political appointees to communicate with external partners and career staff at every stage of budget and appropriations process
- ✓ Review and/or abolish advisory groups to DOC hostile to conservative principles; mandate Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) compliance

#### ***International Trade Association***

- ✓ Counter the malign influence of China and other US adversaries
- ✓ Enforce agreements vigorously and defend against trade violations
- ✓ Secure access to critical supply chains and technology
- ✓ Enable the private sector to drive innovation and remain globally competitive
- ✓ Quickly fill Assistant Secretary and Deputy Assistant Secretary positions by appointees

#### ***Enforcement and Compliance***

- ✓ Re-establish and expand suspended in-person pandemic-related verifications, particularly regarding the People's Republic of China. Ensure that verifications are rigorous
- ✓ Implement advanced analytics and artificial intelligence to identify opportunities for self-initiation, detect circumvention, and prevent bad actors from gaming the system
- ✓ Work with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and other relevant agencies to address circumvention and duty evasion, and promote policies that encourage full duty collection
- ✓ Work with CBP, the DOJ, the DOT, and relevant agencies to aggressively enforce import duty payments; review, consider policy changes to reduce uncollected duties
- ✓ Set a policy and fair AD/CVD proceedings process for companies with high US imports





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- ✓ Revive the China-specific non-market economy unit, and provide transparency in the surrogate country list development process
- ✓ Develop a new methodology to determine normal values in Chinese anti-dumping cases
- ✓ Support steel and aluminum market analysis and import monitoring crucial to US defense industrial base and health of global manufacturing

### ***Industry and Analysis***

- ✓ Permanently restructure I&A to do supply-chain analysis for the US to identify market vulnerabilities
- ✓ Establish permanent standing teams of loyalists and trusted career staff to spur action on:
  - Strategic decoupling from China; defense industrial base strength; critical supply chains; emerging technologies

### ***Global Markets (GM) and the US and Foreign Commercial Service (CS)***

- ✓ Strategically overhaul GM and CS resource allocation to:
  - Counter the malign influence of adversaries, particularly China; foster US innovation; maintain access to critical supply chains and technology; address market hurdles for US companies; untapped export market size and expansion
- ✓ Promote the Advocacy Center and SelectUSA as low-cost tools to drive large-scale export transactions and foreign direct investment (FDI)

### ***Bureau of Industry and Security***

- ✓ Strengthen US rules on technology transfer; reverse “Export Control Reform” process to loosen the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) governing exports of dual-use items
- ✓ Give lead authority to BIS’s Under Secretary to resolve export license disputes
- ✓ Eliminate BIS’s authority to overrule other agency votes; give NSA final vote, with Secretaries of Defense, State, Commerce, Energy
- ✓ Require quarterly BIS reporting of Automated Export System data to Congress

### ***End-Use Checks***

- ✓ Improve enforcement of export control violations by Export Enforcement officers
- ✓ Deny export licenses to countries that do not permit adequate end-use checks

### ***EAR policies***

- ✓ Revise or reverse 2008 to 2016 EAR policies; tighten governing licenses to countries of concern
  - Reduce *de minimis* threshold for critical technologies from 25% to 10% or zero
  - Tighten technology transfer rules for foreign nationals from countries of concern
  - Tighten the definition of “fundamental research” to address exploitation of the open US university system by authoritarian governments
- ✓ Add more companies to the Entity List; do license review to stop exports to them
- ✓ Place export violators on the BIS Denied Persons List; they lose export privileges;



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- Have Department of Treasury sanction significant violations

***Data Transfer and Apps Used for Surveillance***

- ✓ Draft and implement an Executive Order (EO) based on the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to regulate and restrict exports of US persons' data to countries of concern
- ✓ The EO should establish a framework for the types of personal data subject to export controls and licensing policy by country, and the BIS should implement the EO through regulations
- ✓ BIS should add to Entity List app providers such as WeChat and ByteDance/-TikTok; this would stop user app program updates and make companies non-operational in US

***National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration***

- ✓ Break up and downsize agencies of NOAA that are main drivers of climate change alarm:
  - National Ocean Service; Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service; National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); and Office of Marine and Aviation Operations and NOAA Corps
  - Consider outsourcing its functions to private commercial sector
- ✓ Review National Hurricane Center; National Environmental Satellite Service to require neutral data forecasts as related to climate change

***On Streamline Fisheries Services***

- ✓ Harmonize the Magnuson–Stevens Act with the National Marine Sanctuaries Act
- ✓ Withdraw the 30x30 Executive Order and associated America the Beautiful Initiative to stop closure of vast areas of the ocean to commercial activities, while offshore wind energy development hurts fisheries, ocean-based industries
- ✓ Modify the Regulations Implementing the Marine Mammal Protection and the Endangered Species Act; these harm fisheries, Native American subsistence activities
- ✓ Allow a NEPA Exemption for Fisheries Actions as additional requirements are onerous; have DOC and Environmental Quality collaborate on this
- ✓ Elevate the Office of Space Commerce to coordinate US commercial space policy

***Bureau of Economic Analysis and the Office of Undersecretary for Economic Affairs***

- ✓ Make BEA an effective tool for data, data policy and analysis, and data management of BEA and Census Bureau to support GOP administration goals
- ✓ Do a feasibility study of merger of statistical agencies (Census Bureau, BEA, Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, etc.) under one bureau to increase efficiency

***Census Bureau***

- ✓ Have Office of Personnel Management allocate more political appointee positions to the Census Bureau and align its work with conservative principles



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- ✓ Actively engage with conservative groups to promote their response to decennial census
- ✓ Add a citizenship question (despite a finding that the Trump administration's addition of the citizenship question to the 2020 decennial census violated the Administrative Procedures Act, the Supreme Court held that the Secretary of Commerce has broad authority to do so, argues the author)
- ✓ Review any changes by Biden administration to data collection methods regarding race and ethnicity that may have bolstered progressive political agenda; coordinate with OMB
- ✓ After decennial census, review the American Communities Survey (ACS) to be sure questions are useful, not intrusive; work with HHS, Homeland Security, Labor on usage
- ✓ Plan for 2027 Economic Census, review data collection with other federal agencies
- ✓ Review Supplemental Poverty Measure; how data can help combat homelessness
- ✓ Abolish the National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations (NAC) to counter "leftwing activists...injecting racial and social-justice theory" into Census work

### ***Economic Development Administration***

- ✓ Abolish the EDA; reallocate funds to overlapping grants, or put decision-making under the Assistant Secretary's office to align with conservative agenda
- ✓ Invest in Opportunity Zones to incentivized private sector work in relief sector

### ***Minority Business Development Agency***

- ✓ Conservatives would prefer to abolish the MBDA; alternatively:
  - Make it a data and research clearinghouse for minority enterprises, policymakers
  - Conduct policy analysis "on the benefit of free markets...evils of socialism and Communism...destructive effect of taxes and regulations" on minority businesses
- ✓ Favor private sector over government action; public-private partnerships a middle ground

### ***US Patent and Trademark Office***

- ✓ Support ideologically aligned countries to help lead World Intellectual Property Organization
- ✓ Oppose intellectual property waivers for cutting-edge technologies, including for COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics through WTO agreements

### ***National Institute of Standards and Technology***

- ✓ Evaluate and consolidate the federal government's civilian research footprint
- ✓ Ensure any taxpayer-funded research is in line with conservative principles
- ✓ Privatize the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership
- ✓ Transfer the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program to non-government control

### ***National Telecommunications and Information Service***

- ✓ Consolidate NTIS Tech Transfer and ROI initiatives.





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### ***National Telecommunications and Information Administration***

- ✓ On broadband access policy, rapidly deploy 5G; review value of FirstNet
- ✓ Review and provide federal policy solutions to address big tech's censorship of speech
- ✓ Use former Trump administration's Information and Communications Technology and Services (ICTS) Executive Order as a new tool to eliminate threats to national security
- ✓ Start short-term leasing of federal spectrum while preserving federal agency use rights
- ✓ Push the Federal Communications Commission to make licensing decisions to support US dominance in the commercial space industry

**STC 2025 Commentary:** The main approach advocated by the author to tackle the DOC's perceived red tape and bloat is to privatize or outsource many of the functions and areas of responsibility of the DOC and to align existing policy with conservative principles. In the area of international trade, the goal is to promote policies and initiatives to decrease the Chinese market, including in areas of technology and communications, and promote America-first policies. Some of these are via Executive Orders or policies to try to punish foreign exporters of goods into the US.

On climate, the proposal to break up or decrease the role of key NOAA agencies that oversee environmental policy represents a serious attack on current environmental protections, with a goal of deregulation and opening up natural areas to private commercialization. Meanwhile, the push to add a citizenship question to the Census, a failed Trump effort, reflects an attack on immigrants, while the proposals related to minority businesses reflect an anti-diversity agenda. Short of abolishing the Minority Business Development Agency, conservatives hope to steer minority businesses to embrace their "no government, no taxes" philosophy.

### **Chapter 21 - Key Points:**

- ✓ Reform the DOC by privatizing its functions and roles where possible
- ✓ Take actions to "counter the malign influence of China and other US adversaries."
  - Via the BIS, use the Entity List make Chinese app providers such as WeChat and ByteDance/TikTok non-operational in US
- ✓ Downsize NOAA agencies that raise alarms about climate change
- ✓ On Census, add a citizenship question, despite a 2020 finding that this violated the Administrative Procedures Act, and
- ✓ Promote the benefits of free trade, no taxes and deregulation, for minority businesses