



# Baby Bonuses and Motherhood Medals:

## Why We Shouldn't Trust the Pronatalist Movement

### INTRODUCTION

Baby bonuses. Motherhood medals. Fertility tracking. You may have heard of these policy proposals as solutions from the [Trump administration](#) to help encourage women to have more children.

Besides falling short of ensuring that people have what they need to raise a family, these ideas have another thing in common: they stem from an obscure, dangerous, and increasingly influential movement of people who call themselves "[pronatalists](#)."

As an organization dedicated to advancing policies that help women and girls thrive—which importantly includes allowing people to decide when and whether to start a family—we at NWLC have some serious concerns about what it means to have pronatalists dictating family policy in the White House.

In this report, we explore the pronatalist movement, their history of eugenics and racism, the Trump administration's concerning ties to the movement, and what we should be doing instead to support women and families.



### WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS REPORT

Over the next few pages, we'll give you **all the information that you need to call a pronatalists' bluff.**

From racist eugenics to harmful policy solutions, this movement is steeped in controlling women's bodies and creating a dystopian, white supremacist future.

Finally, we'll tell you (*and any pronatalists reading*) what can be done instead.

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## BUT FIRST...WHO ARE THE PRONATALISTS?

Pronatalism literally means “pro-birth.” The National Women’s Law Center is also pro-birth. However, our definition of “pro-birth” differs from the pronatalists.

For us, “pro-birth” means ensuring that anyone who wants to create or expand their family can do so safely, on their own timeline, and with the support and resources that they need. For pronatalists, “pro-birth” means preserving the traditional family structure while encouraging women to have a lot of children. They also believe our society, as well as [our government](#), has a duty to encourage people to produce more children.

The modern pronatalist movement is largely made up of two groups:

- One group is led by Silicon Valley tech elites, who believe that more [“high-IQ” people should be having children](#), and who see technologies like in vitro fertilization (IVF) as a tool for engineering an [“elite”](#) human race.
- The other group is made up of [traditional](#) conservatives who oppose abortion, idealize the nuclear family (i.e., straight married couples with children), and love traditional gender roles. Importantly, that means believing that a woman’s inherent value is to stay at home to care for her many children, even if that is not the path she would choose for herself.

The rise in popularity of today’s pronatalist movement is strongly tied to fears over declining births rates.

As women gain more [independence](#), and [babies become more expensive](#), there has been a marked decline in birth rates both in the [United States](#) and [around the globe](#). Fewer babies mean fewer future workers, which means slower economic growth. Pronatalists and their allies often [point to these declining birth rates](#) as one of the main reasons policymakers and the public should embrace their problematic worldview.

## RACISM, EUGENICS, AND THE PRONATALIST MOVEMENT

Pronatalism goes beyond simply encouraging people to have children. At its core, this movement is built on racist, sexist, and anti-immigrant ideologies. It’s not “pro-baby”—it’s pro-certain-kinds-of-babies. Specifically: white babies from heterosexual Christian conservative couples.

Pronatalists often speak of [“declining genetic quality”](#) in the United States. They promote selective procreation and eugenics\* to create [“good quality children.”](#) People in the movement rarely say outright that white children are superior. However, their [acceptance of white supremacists](#),

[embracement of eugenics](#), and clear preference for [white conservative members](#) makes their position abundantly clear.

These pronatalists also tend to be deeply anti-immigrant, or at least, anti-non-European immigrant. One of the most straightforward responses to a declining birth rate would be to make it easier for immigrants to come to the United States to live and work. More immigrants mean more workers, which would address some of the economic concerns raised by declining birth rates.

But policies that would increase immigration are [not a solution](#) you'll hear from pronatalists. That's because pronatalists only want to see certain populations increase (i.e., white people), and there are many immigrants who don't fit into that narrow qualification.

The movement is also inherently sexist. Many in the movement believe that the best way to increase birth rates is to encourage women to [abandon their careers](#) in favor of getting pregnant and raising children. The idea that a woman would want to pursue a career over having a child is [routinely ridiculed](#) in pronatalist circles.

And even those in the movement who admit that women can do it all—raise children and have a career—do so in a way that [completely dismisses the economic and social realities of child-rearing](#) in this country.



#### \*WHAT IS EUGENICS?

**Eugenics is a [fake science](#)** that claims to show that certain races have different levels of intelligence and health outcomes.

Eugenics, which was formally created by a [white European man in 1883](#), puts the [white European race at the top of the hierarchy of desirable traits](#), with other races following behind.

This fake and racist “science” proved a useful tool to those who wanted to excuse their cruel treatment of people of color, particularly [Black women](#).

**The so-called “science” behind this movement has been completely and totally debunked, but this fake and immoral science is still cited today to espouse racist beliefs about superiority.**

To underscore this pattern of bigotry within pronatalist circles, we've pulled out just a few of the most outrageous comments made by leaders in the movement:

- Arguing that women [don't belong in the workforce](#);
- [Blaming people](#) who have abortions for causing workforce shortages;
- Pushing the racist and xenophobic conspiracy of the "[Great Replacement Theory](#)," which is a belief that white people are being systematically oppressed by immigrants and people of color;
- Calling the Civil Rights Act of 1964 "[the most destructive set of laws in American history](#)"—which, as a reminder, is the law that banned, among other things, race discrimination and sex discrimination at work.

These comments are obviously disgusting, and we hate even calling attention to them. But we're doing so because these obscene comments are being amplified by pronatalists who have the ear of President Trump.

One example is Jack Posobiec, a Trump loyalist of "[Pizzagate](#)" fame with [significant sway](#) in the White House. He was a speaker at a 2025 pronatalist conference, where he [repeatedly told the crowd of overwhelmingly conservative, white males](#) that they must have more children if they are to save "the West." He warned the group: "We are not replacing ourselves. Meanwhile, those who don't share our values are." \*

*\*To translate—when Posobiec says "we" he means "white conservatives," and by "those who don't share our values," he means Black people, people of color, immigrants, and liberals. So, in sum, he is saying: White conservative families aren't having enough children.*

*Instead, it's people of color, immigrants, and those we disagree with who are having the children, which means us white conservatives are threatened.*

So no, this movement isn't just about birth rates or making sure that we have enough workers to take over when older workers retire. It's about increasing the number of white babies compared to non-white babies, reducing women's options by forcing them into motherhood and out of the workplace, and restoring a less equal, less just, and more sexist and racist version of the United States. And it goes [hand in hand](#) with restrictions on reproductive freedom, including access to [birth control](#) and abortion.

## TRUMP'S PRONATALIST ARMY

It's not just pronatalists outside Trump's administration who have the president's ear; he has also installed pronatalists among his close advisors.

Take his former senior advisor Elon Musk. Musk is on a self-declared mission to father what he calls a ["legion" of genetically superior children](#) (he's currently up to at least 14). Musk has also:

- [Elevated misinformation](#) to discourage women from taking birth control;
- Told women they should fear [childlessness, not pregnancy](#), even as maternal deaths in the United States [continue to rise](#); and
- Predicted the [collapse of civilization](#) due to declining birth rates.

The number two in the White House, Vice President J.D. Vance, also has made clear his stance about what a woman's role in society should look like, including by:

- Mocking ["childless cat ladies"](#) who prioritize having a [career over children](#);
- Undermining child care investments by claiming everyone can rely on their [grandmas](#) to babysit (ignoring the fact that, while it can work for some families, it's not for everyone);
- And championing policies that [restrict access to abortion](#).

Then you have his Cabinet, which includes [Russell Vought](#), director of the Office of Management and Budget and chief architect of [Project 2025](#)—a policy playbook that seeks to ban abortion nationwide and plainly states that our country would be stronger if [more straight couples married and had babies](#).

And let's not forget Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, [a former MTV reality television actor](#) and father of 11 children. Like Vance, he [scorns](#) single women who identify as progressive. He also believes that birth control makes you ["sad, fat & attracted to beta males,"](#) and most consequentially, directed his department to [prioritize](#) transportation projects in areas with high birth and marriage rates.

With men like this leading the so-called "pro-baby agenda" in the White House, it's no wonder why we're extremely concerned about the future of family policy under this administration.

## ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS: TRUMP'S ANTI-WOMEN, ANTI-FAMILY AGENDA

While the Trump administration claims to be pursuing a pro-baby agenda, their actions tell a different story. Rather than advancing policies that would actually support families—like lowering costs,

expanding access to housing and food, or investing in child care—they've prioritized [dismantling basic need supports](#), [rolling back longstanding civil right protections](#), and [ripping away people's bodily autonomy](#).

So, when this administration [boasts that they're](#) "proudly implementing policies to uplift American families," they're either lying, or they truly believe that ripping away people's freedoms and basic needs is somehow "pro-family." Either way, we're not impressed.

Here are just a few ways that his administration is actively making life harder for women and families:

## Project 2025

The White House has made it clear that the far-right Project 2025 agenda is the playbook of the U.S. government. Its overarching goal is to force people into so-called "traditional" family structures, which it seeks to accomplish by taking away benefits and supports that allow all families to thrive, including those that allow parents, women especially, to enter and remain in the workforce.

**The Trump administration has wasted no time implementing some of these horrendous Project 2025 policies. Here are just a few:**

### Project 2025 Goal: Eliminating Head Start

**Status:** The Trump administration has yet to fully eliminate Head Start, but they are working hard to undermine the program in other ways. For instance, the administration [restricted funding](#) to this federal child care program, which supports children in low-income families, limiting the program's ability to serve the children in their community.

### Project 2025 Goal: Undermining civil right protections for women in the workforce.

**Status:** [Trump rescinded protections](#) against discrimination, including sex discrimination, for federal contract workers, and ordered federal agencies to stop enforcing civil right protections.

**Project 2025 Goal: Implementing anti-abortion policies to effectively create a nationwide abortion ban.**

**Status:** [Eliminated efforts](#) at the federal level to protect reproductive health care, including those related to health data privacy and access to emergency abortion care, and [restricted access to abortion care for service members, veterans, and their families](#).

**Project 2025 Goal: Cutting benefits and legal statuses for certain immigrants with the intent of suppressing immigration into the United States from certain countries.**

**Status:** Issued a notice blocking [certain immigrant families](#) from accessing a range of vital federal programs, including Head Start, mental health and substance abuse services, adult education programs, and the Title X Family Planning Program.

## Cutting Basic Needs Programs

As further evidence that the administration does not actually care about the well-being of women and families, we need look no further than the administration's signature law: the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act."

This legislation, which is far from "beautiful," is a perfect example of the Trump administration's true priorities. Rather than investing in families, the new law facilitates the largest transfer of wealth from everyday people to the billionaire class in our country's history. And it pays for these billionaire tax breaks by raising costs on families' health care and groceries.

Making life more expensive is not an effective strategy for encouraging families to have more children. The law also makes pregnancy [more dangerous](#) and more expensive by slashing funding for Medicaid, which covers [nearly half of all pregnancies](#) in the United States.

The law also includes the largest ever cut to food stamps, now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), thereby endangering the [42 million of women and children](#) who rely on SNAP benefits for their daily meals.

These attacks on families, which will raise costs for people already struggling to make ends meet, are entirely designed to fund billionaire tax breaks that benefit Donald Trump and his Cabinet. And of course, his signature legislation also provides huge amounts of money for illegal deportations, exacerbating workforce shortages and decreasing our country's population.

### CASE STUDY: IVF ACCESS

While there are [many, many examples](#) of how the Trump administration is undermining its own "pro-family" agenda, one of the most blatantly hypocritical is the administration's attack on in vitro fertilization—or IVF, a technology that can help increase the odds of pregnancy.

Trump proclaimed himself the "[fertilization president](#)," which is a reference to his alleged support for expanding IVF. However, this was quickly undercut just days later by his decision to [eliminate](#) the federal agency division responsible for researching this treatment and providing data that could improve outcomes.

## WHAT A REAL PRO-FAMILY AGENDA LOOKS LIKE

We believe that anyone who wants to raise a child should be able to do so without going into enormous debt or sacrificing all of their life goals.

We also believe that promoting racist, sexist, and outdated ideals around gender roles and family structures, as well as undermining women's freedom, is not the way to help women and families have more children.

Our advice to anyone interested in supporting women is to ignore the pronatalists and their obsession with birth rates. Instead, we ask that you join us in advocating for policies that meaningfully and holistically support women, children, and families throughout their lives. When we enact policies that make it easier to raise children, we help ensure that every child, and their parents, has a real chance to thrive.

### **Here's what we can do to meaningfully and comprehensively support women and families:**

- Expand access to affordable child care, health care, food, and housing -- ensuring that everyone is able to meet their basic needs.
- Ensure that pregnant people have safe pregnancies, aren't criminalized when they have miscarriages, seek abortions, or when they need emergency care, and aren't fired when they need accommodations at work.
- Allow people to decide if and when they have a child, which includes robust access to health care, including preventive care, as well as pregnancy-related care like birth control, abortion, and IVF.
- Protect pregnant people and caregivers from discrimination at work and school.
- Ensure that people have quality jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families with dignity, including paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, and stable and predictable work schedules.
- Support safe, inclusive, high quality public schools.
- Make billionaires and big corporations pay their fair share in taxes so that we have more public dollars to invest in everyday families.
- Ensure everyone feels safe in their own country, which includes having a leader who is not actively trying to make life harder and more dangerous for women.