

# TRUMP'S STRANGLEHOLD ON THE GOP IS A VULNERABILITY

Kamala Harris' first couple of stump speeches as Presidential candidate included three parts:

- Set up of prosecutor versus felon contrast ("I know his type")
- Tribute to Joe Biden
- Lay out promise for the future ("Not going back")

Last night's speech (at least until CSPAN's feed crapped out) swapped the second part – the tribute to Biden – and replaced it with *an attack* on Trump's role in tanking the border bill.

That swap came after the Vice President's campaign released this ad, similarly *targeting* Trump for his role in killing the bill.

To be sure – this is the same approach Biden has taken: imputing from Trump's deliberate tanking of the border bill opposition to fixing the border. It was undoubtedly one of the reasons Biden spent so much time negotiating the border bill, only to have Congress tank it.

But when Biden used that approach, he explained it. Harris turned it into an attack on Trump's selfishness.

These ads will not deflate Republican efforts to turn Harris' role in working with Central America to try to decrease the flow of migrants, which they've spun into being the border czar in charge of the entire border, into fear about her approach to the border. But it succinctly flips

the script.

It holds Trump accountable for things he made other Republicans do at his behest.

The same is true of the departure of Paul Dans, the head of Project 2025, from Heritage Foundation.

Trump's campaign managers – Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles – released a statement crowing after Dans' departure.

Reports of Project 2025's demise would be greatly welcomed and should serve as notice to anyone or any group trying to misrepresent their influence with President Trump and his campaign – it will not end well for you.

And Dans booked, then no-showed, an appearance with Kaitlan Collins show.

But ultimately, if you're making the personnel decisions, as it appears Trump's campaign did on Dans' departure, then you own it. It only serves to reaffirm Trump's role in the project.

And none too soon. Multiple outlets are publishing the forward that JD Vance did for Heritage Foundation president Kevin Roberts, including his adoption of Roberts' call to "circle the wagons and load the muskets" to take out government.

Vance has deep ties to the Heritage Foundation, and in particular to Kevin Roberts, who has been president of the right-wing think tank since 2021 and is the architect of Project 2025. Vance has praised Roberts for helping to turn the organization "into the de facto institutional home of Trumpism" and has endorsed elements of Project 2025. Vance is also the author of the foreword to Roberts's upcoming book, Dawn's Early Light, which The New Republic has obtained in full even though the book's publisher, HarperCollins's Broadside

Books, has apparently tried to suppress it amid the scrutiny of Project 2025 and Vance's ties to Roberts.

The subtitle and cover of Roberts's book were softened as scrutiny of the Trump campaign's ties to Project 2025 grew. The book was originally announced with the subtitle "Burning Down Washington to Save America" and featured a match on the center of its cover. The subtitle is now "Taking Back Washington to Save America," and the match is nowhere to be seen. Promotional language invoking conservatives on the "warpath" to "burn down ... institutions" like the FBI, the Department of Justice, and universities has also been removed or toned down, though it is still present in some sales pages.

But the inspiration for that extreme language can be found in Vance's foreword, which ends with a call for followers to "circle the wagons and load the muskets," and describes Roberts's ideas as an "essential weapon" in the "fights that lay [sic] ahead." (The New Republic downloaded Dawn's Early Light earlier this month from NetGalley, which provides advance copies of books to reviewers and booksellers. Copies were removed from the platform earlier this month.)

Trump might yet replace Vance – though he has only a few weeks before ballot finalization would make that far more difficult.

But he can't disown the hundreds of top Trump aides associated with this project.

Because of Trump's stranglehold on the Republican Party, Kamala Harris is in a sweet spot: She can claim credit for Joe Biden's successful policies. But she can also treat Trump as a near-incumbent, holding him

accountable for all the things Republicans have been doing to help Trump beat Joe Biden for the last two years.

That may turn out to be a serious vulnerability for Trump going forward.

Update: Roger Sollenberger confirms that LaCivita pushed Dans out.

The Trump campaign forced the architect of the ultraconservative Project 2025 manifesto out of his job on Tuesday as it sought political cover from a controversy dogging Republicans, the Daily Beast can report exclusively.

Trump campaign manager Chris LaCivita “put the screws” to mastermind Paul Dans in an effort to force him out and shut down the right-wing shop behind Project 2025, a sprawling blueprint that sought to overhaul the federal government and implement an array of far-right policies for a potential second Trump administration, a well-placed source told the Daily Beast.