



Pocket Rescissions Package Targets Foreign Aid Funding

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Action: On August 29, the Administration [submitted a rescissions package](#) to Congress requesting the cancellation of nearly \$5 billion in funding Congress appropriated in fiscal year (FY) 2025 for the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of State, and contributions to international organizations. While the Administration did not provide a comprehensive list of all affected programs, the package does include examples of what the specified accounts fund: programs for development assistance (\$3.2 billion), programs to fund democracy promotion activities (\$322 million), contributions to the United Nations (UN) and UN-affiliated organizations (\$521 million), and contributions for the US share of UN peacekeeping activities (\$393 million) and other peacekeeping operations (\$445 million). The Administration [argues](#) that the identified funding is “woke, weaponized, and wasteful,” does not advance American interests, and undermines American values.

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- Under the Impoundment Control Act, the President can [request](#) a rescission of funds by submitting a special message outlining the request to Congress, and funds may be withheld for up to 45 days as Congress considers the request (the funding must be released if Congress does not approve the request). Because the Administration submitted this rescissions package with fewer than 45 days left in the fiscal year, the package is [known](#) as a “pocket” rescission, as the funding is essentially withheld until the end of FY2025 on September 30 regardless of Congressional action.

- Groups that had received foreign aid funding **challenged** the Administration's actions in court, in a continuation of **litigation** filed earlier this year. The case has now been returned to US District Judge Amir Ali, who issued a new order requiring the spending of foreign aid money (including the money at issue in the pocket recession) by the end of FY2025. The Administration has asked the Supreme Court to intervene in this case for the third time since February, arguing that the pocket rescission it submitted to Congress makes it impermissible for the Administration to release the foreign aid funding while Congress considers the rescission request.
- Some Republicans in Congress criticized the pocket rescission. Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) **said**, "Given that this package was sent to Congress very close to the end of the fiscal year when the funds are scheduled to expire, this is an apparent attempt to rescind appropriated funds without congressional approval." Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) **called** the pocket rescission "unlawful," noting that "Congress alone bears the constitutional responsibility for funding our government, and any effort to claw back resources outside of the appropriations process undermines that responsibility."
- Congress still must negotiate and pass the 12 appropriations bills that fund the Federal government for FY2026 by the start of the fiscal year on October 1 or risk a government shutdown. Democrats have **pushed** for a bipartisan appropriations process and claim the pocket rescission undermines the will of Congress. Some Republican Senators are concerned the use of rescissions impedes bipartisan negotiations to fund the government. Senator Mike Rounds (R-SD) **said**, "I do not think this is a good idea and I think it's going to give our Democratic colleagues a reason not to work with us on an appropriations process." Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) **added**, "I think we need to appropriate, and the appropriations process needs to be adhered to and strengthened."

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