

Testimony of Senator Brian Schatz
“A Review of the President’s Special Message of June 3, 2025”
Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing
June 25, 2025

Thank you, Chair Collins and Vice Chair Murray.

The foreign assistance funding that’s being rescinded in this bill was appropriated just a few months ago, and the administration has until the end of *next year* to align it with its priorities, consistent with bipartisan objectives. We don’t have to continue spending foreign assistance in the same exact way that we were before. There’s plenty of room for reform. But the way to do that is through regular appropriations, which we’re trying to do right now – *not* an arbitrary rescissions process where we don’t even know which programs will be cancelled until they’re gone.

That brings me to what’s in this package:

- \$900 million in cuts to global health programs, including PEPFAR, efforts to combat diseases like malaria, TB, and polio, and support for GAVI and nutrition programs.
- \$1.3 billion in cuts to humanitarian assistance, which helps save lives; provide food, shelter, and water; and support victims of sexual assault. It also undermines our work with organizations like the World Food Programme and Catholic Relief Services.
- \$4.6 billion in cuts to economic and development assistance to key partners, whether it’s Jordan during increasing regional tension, the Philippines as it counters PRC aggression, the Burmese opposition, or Ukraine.
- \$1 billion in cuts to treaty dues and support for international organizations like UNICEF. Meanwhile, the PRC is *increasing* its funding to gain influence and re-write rules.
- \$1.1 billion in cuts to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting which people across the country rely on.

These investments are about who we are as a country and how we show up in the world. And members of this committee, on both sides of the aisle, have understood that and supported them for decades.

But this isn’t just a question of foreign policy. It’s also about what this committee is even for. Being Senate appropriators is supposed to mean something. It means that the executive branch proposes and the legislative branch disposes. It means that *we* hold the purse strings. What’s at stake here is more than just the particular provisions of this rescissions package. It’s whether we’re willingly setting up a situation where the bipartisan appropriations deals that we negotiate are ripped up whenever there’s a trifecta.

If that’s what you want, then vote for this. But if you want to preserve your prerogative – for yourself, for your home state, for this institution – then this shouldn’t be a close call. Why would you ask to be an appropriator and work so hard, just to turn around and surrender your authority?

It’s the State and Foreign Operations bill today. But it’s the Defense bill; or the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development bill; or the Commerce, Justice, and Science bill tomorrow.

The administration has made it very clear that they're not stopping here. I encourage colleagues on both sides of the aisle to think hard about the precedent we'd be setting and oppose this package.