

**Testimony of Senator Eric S. Schmitt**  
**“A Review of the President’s Special Message of June 3, 2025”**  
**Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing**  
**June 25, 2025**

Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, friends and colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak about this administration’s rescissions request. I am pleased to join Director Vought to discuss why the Senate should urgently consider this nearly \$9.4 billion package.

In early June, the President transmitted a special message triggering a 45-day review by Congress of specific appropriations made in Fiscal Year 2025. President Trump tasked Director Vought and his team to begin a thorough scrub of federal programs to ensure they align with the clear mandate to limit waste, fraud, and abuse.

The mandate received by all of us from the voters in November 2024 was to shrink Washington, and a part of that means asking tough questions regarding the perceived partisan leanings of government entities that should otherwise be apolitical. These questions should be followed up with action, which is why taxpayer funded entities such as NPR and PBS should be scrutinized. While the Corporation for Public Broadcasting is legally mandated to be “nonpolitical [in] nature” and not “contribute to or otherwise support any political party,” the data shows something entirely different. Research shows that “congressional Republicans faced 85 percent negative coverage, compared to 54 percent positive coverage of congressional Democrats,” on PBS’s flagship news program. And of course there’s NPR, a left leaning news source that refused to cover the Hunter Biden laptop coverup, simply stating that they, “don’t want to waste our time on stories that are not really stories, and do not want to waste the listeners’ and readers’ time on stories that are just distractions.”

It is worth noting that Congress isn’t the only payer for entities under the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) umbrella—most are largely funded and sustained by hundreds of millions of private dollars through donors, corporate sponsors, foundations, and state and local governments.

Furthermore, and for those who have expressed concern, by moving forward with this rescission, Corporation for Public Broadcasting accounts would not be touched in Fiscal Year 2025. In fact, for the last 50 years, Congress has provided two-year advance appropriations to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to help facilitate long-term programming decisions for stations. The rescissions we are discussing for Corporation for Public Broadcasting are **not** for FY 25. For Corporation for Public Broadcasting, this would reduce funding for FY 26 and FY 27. Entities who receive funding under the Corporation for Public Broadcasting have time to readjust their budgets and plan accordingly.

For foreign aid, the President’s rescission package leaves intact a significant amount of funding for PEPFAR—something I’m aware many members on this committee care deeply about. We can and should have a broader debate about our role, but for the purposes of this rescissions package, these cuts are surgical and specifically preserve life-saving assistance. In

fact, this program will continue to allow PEPFAR to carry out its long-established mission to provide life-saving services.

What this package does cut is numerous instances of egregious examples of blatant government waste and abuse. Just to name a few:

- \$35 million to address 'vasectomy messaging frameworks' and 'gender dynamics' in Ethiopia.
- \$3 million for Iraqi Sesame Street
- Half a million dollars for electric buses in Rwanda
- \$800k for "transgender people, sex workers and their clients and sexual networks" in Nepal.
- \$4.4 million in funding to recruit 'Gender and Inclusive Development Experts'
- \$2.5 million for teaching young children how to make environmentally friendly "reproductive health" decisions
- \$4 million for "sedentary migrants" in Colombia

This Committee didn't line item these programs. An appropriation was sent to the State Department and some bureaucrat violated the trust of the American people with these outrageous programs. Why are we investing millions of dollars in something as wasteful as recruiting gender and inclusive development experts? Or \$800k for prostitution rings in Nepal? Turning over rocks and seeing what's underneath them is exactly what Congress should be doing. Just in the last 10 years, we've seen a 40 percent increase in State and Foreign Operations funding. With such a large influx in spending, it can be easy for executive branch bureaucrats to get comfortable and insert U.S. taxpayer dollars in places far beyond the scope of Congressional intent.

Reining in power that the Administrative State has seized is critical as we stare down a \$37 trillion debt and is crucial to restoring trust in government. Just like hardworking Americans across this country who make difficult choices to balance their budgets and cut unnecessary costs, so too must their government. We owe it to the people we serve to be responsible stewards of their hard-earned tax dollars. That's why I support this rescissions request from President Trump.

Just as Ronald Reagan once famously quipped, "No government ever voluntarily reduces itself in size."

I'm proud to work with an administration who is taking a tough look at itself and is willing to come to Congress and make reforms. As I sit before this committee, I look forward to working with you all to examine every dollar we spend, cut what we don't need, and invest where it matters most. Because restoring fiscal responsibility isn't just good policy—it's a commitment to the future of our country.

Thank you madam chair and I appreciate the opportunity to engage with this committee on this important piece of legislation. I yield.