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## Senate Backs Trump's \$9 Billion Spending Cuts, AIDS Funding Spared After GOP Pushback

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The U.S. Senate has advanced President Donald Trump's proposed \$9 billion rescissions package, a move that seeks to reclaim unspent federal funds by slashing appropriations in areas like foreign aid and public broadcasting. The package, which includes \$8.3 billion in cuts to foreign assistance and \$1.1 billion from domestic programs such as the Public

Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR), was pushed forward after a tie-breaking vote by Vice President J.D. Vance.

Importantly, Republican senators, including Susan Collins, Lisa Murkowski, and Mitch McConnell, negotiated to preserve \$400 million in funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The decision to exclude global AIDS relief from the cuts followed concerns that an indiscriminate approach would harm vital health initiatives supported across party lines.

Supporters of the rescissions argue the move demonstrates fiscal responsibility and curtails unnecessary government expenditures. They say it reins in spending bloat and redirects taxpayer funds more efficiently. Critics, however, warn that the process bypasses normal legislative scrutiny. Because rescissions can be approved with a simple majority, the Senate avoided the usual 60-vote threshold, drawing criticism that the process sidelines deliberative budgeting.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune acknowledged that additional modifications may be necessary to secure full passage of the bill. While Republicans broadly support spending cuts, some remain wary of political fallout from targeting popular programs. Public broadcasting cuts, in particular, have drawn objections from lawmakers in rural states who argue these services remain essential to underserved communities.

President Trump has aggressively supported the measure, describing public broadcasting as wasteful and outdated. He has made it clear that Republicans who oppose the cuts risk losing his political support, framing the vote as a loyalty test within the party.

The rescissions bill must be finalized before the July 18 deadline, or the proposed cuts will lapse and existing funding levels will stay in place. The outcome will not only influence how unspent federal dollars are treated but also serve as a litmus test for Trump's continued leverage over congressional Republicans.

As budget battles intensify, this vote illustrates the growing tension between populist cost-cutting and institutional budgeting, highlighting the evolving power dynamics within the GOP and Washington at large.