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Senate Narrowly Approves \$9 Billion in Spending Cuts Targeting Foreign Aid and Public Broadcasting

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In a closely contested 51–48 vote, the U.S. Senate passed a \$9 billion rescissions bill on July 17, 2025, aiming to claw back previously approved funds from foreign aid and public broadcasting programs. The measure, advanced under the Impoundment Control Act, delivers a

significant win for President Trump's fiscal agenda and now moves to the House for final consideration.

The legislation rescinds nearly \$8 billion from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and international humanitarian assistance programs. An additional \$1.1 billion is being pulled from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which provides funding to National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Although \$400 million for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was preserved, critics contend that broader cuts will undermine global health initiatives and limit access to media in rural America.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune described the bill as a "small but important step toward restoring fiscal sanity." Supporters argue the measure exemplifies responsible budgeting and demonstrates that the federal government can reverse unnecessary spending without compromising core operations.

However, opposition to the bill was swift and vocal. Republican Senators Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski sided with Democrats in rejecting the measure, citing a lack of transparency about which programs will be affected. Senator Patty Murray warned the move could derail bipartisan appropriations talks, referring to the bill as "an old-fashioned double cross." Senator Brian Schatz of Hawaii echoed those concerns, suggesting the cuts could weaken America's leadership in global development and diplomacy.

The vote followed a tense, overnight session in which several proposed amendments, aimed at restoring funds to global health programs and public media, were defeated. Among the supporters of those

amendments were Senators Mitch McConnell, Murkowski, and Collins, who argued that some targeted cuts may have unintended consequences.

Vice President JD Vance cast tie-breaking votes earlier in the process, highlighting the razor-thin margin and high political stakes involved. Although the bill passed, it sparked debate about the broader implications of using rescissions as a budgetary tool, particularly when bypassing standard congressional appropriations procedures.

As the bill heads to the House for a final vote, fiscal conservatives have praised the move as overdue restraint. Critics, however, warn that relying on executive-led rescissions could set a precedent for further top-down budget rollbacks. The outcome may redefine how Washington manages taxpayer money in the months to come.