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CBS to End The Late Show with Stephen Colbert in 2026

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CBS has confirmed it will bring *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* to a close in May 2026, ending one of America’s most enduring late-night franchises after more than three decades on the air.

Stephen Colbert announced during a taping at the Ed Sullivan Theater, telling his audience that next season would be the final one. “The network will be ending The Late Show in May,”

Colbert said in his opening monologue. “This is all just going away. And I do want to say that the folks at CBS have been great partners.”

CBS, a division of Paramount Global, said the cancellation was based solely on financial considerations. “This is purely a financial decision against a challenging backdrop in late night,” read a joint statement from Paramount co-Chief Executive Officer (co-CEO) George Cheeks, CBS Entertainment head Amy Reisenbach, and CBS Studios President David Stapf. “It is not related in any way to the show’s performance, content, or other matters happening at Paramount.”

Despite Colbert’s show maintaining the No. 1 spot in its time slot for nine consecutive seasons and drawing millions across broadcast, digital, and social platforms, the network made it clear the decision had nothing to do with the host himself. “We consider Stephen Colbert irreplaceable and will retire The Late Show franchise at that time,” the executives added.

The cancellation comes amid broader turbulence within CBS’s parent company, Paramount Global, which is in a high-profile merger with Skydance Media. The company also faced criticism for recently settling a defamation lawsuit with United States President Donald Trump for \$16 million. The lawsuit stemmed from a segment aired by CBS’s 60 Minutes that Trump argued was misleading.

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Colbert didn’t shy away from addressing the controversy. “As someone who has always been a proud employee of this network, I am offended,” he said on-air earlier this week. “I

don't know if anything will ever repair my trust in this company. But just taking a stab at it, I'd say \$16 million would help," he joked.

Still, CBS insists the Trump settlement played no part in the show's cancellation. "Our admiration, affection, and respect for the talents of Stephen Colbert and his incredible team made this agonizing decision even more difficult," the statement said. The network pledged to honor the show and its host over the next 10 months leading up to the finale.

The 61-year-old Colbert took over hosting duties in 2015 following the retirement of longtime host David Letterman, who launched the series in 1993. The program quickly rose to the top of the late-night ratings under Colbert's leadership, known for its sharp monologues and wide-ranging guest interviews.

As late-night television continues to evolve with shifting viewer habits and tightening media budgets, CBS's decision marks a turning point in the genre. With Colbert's exit, the era of legacy late-night giants is nearing its final chapter.