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White House Defends Epstein Decision as GOP Advances \$9 Billion Budget Cut

July 18, 2025

— Categories: *Politics & Government*



The White House has defended its decision not to release sealed documents relating to Jeffrey Epstein, as House Republicans prepare to advance a \$9 billion spending rollback targeting foreign aid and public broadcasting. The administration dismissed media criticism and affirmed its focus on fiscal discipline and institutional reform.

During a July 17 briefing, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt stated that Republican lawmakers had reviewed the Epstein files under classified access, and that the Department of Justice had opted against a broader public release. Leavitt denounced renewed calls for a special prosecutor as politically charged and accused the press of sensationalizing the issue for partisan purposes.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump's administration continues to push its rescissions agenda in Congress. The proposed \$9 billion rollback would claw back roughly \$8 billion from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and over \$1 billion from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which supports outlets such as National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). The bill, backed by the White House, passed the Senate and is expected to clear the House imminently.

White House Budget Director Mark Meadows noted that while no formal budget proposal has been submitted, the administration's intent is to reprioritize spending, not to expand it. Meadows emphasized that excessive transparency expectations should not override strategic fiscal management.

The administration also announced that President Trump has been diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency, a mild circulatory condition common in older adults. Leavitt described the diagnosis as benign and non-disruptive to the President's duties.

House Republicans, meanwhile, passed their first major cryptocurrency regulation bill, expanding the scope of the GOP's legislative agenda

beyond spending reductions. Trump allies say the strategy is to modernize federal oversight while restoring budgetary balance.

Democratic lawmakers expressed concern that the refusal to release the Epstein records sets a troubling precedent for government transparency. They argue that transparency in cases involving public trust is essential. However, Republicans are framing the push as a necessary exercise of executive discretion amid institutional overreach and media pressure.

As the rescissions bill heads for final passage, the White House is doubling down on its message of budget discipline, streamlined governance, and institutional recalibration. Despite pushback, President Trump continues to press forward with assertive executive action, signaling a governance style that emphasizes control, clarity, and national interest over political appeasement.