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Vought Refuses to Rule Out More Illegal End-Runs Around Congress & Refuses to Detail How Trump Will Execute Cuts If Rescissions Bill Passes— Murray Urges Congress to Reject Package in its Entirety

*****WATCH** and **READ**: Senator Murray's opening
remarks***

*****WATCH**: Senator Murray questioning Director
Vought***

*****WATCH** and **READ**: Senator Schatz's
testimony***

*****FACT SHEET: Rescission Package Would
Devastate Local Public Radio, TV Stations Across
America*****

*****FACT-FICTION: Trump's Rescission Package
Would Gut Bipartisan Foreign Policy Investments*****

Washington, D.C. — Today, during a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on President Trump's \$9.4 billion rescission request—U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, underscored in how Republicans passing the package would devastate local public radio and TV stations nationwide, gut investments Congress has made to support longstanding bipartisan foreign policy objectives, and undermine the bipartisan annual appropriations process.

Senator Murray and her colleagues pressed Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Russell Vought on all manner of details on the request and this administration's actions, and Senator Murray specifically pressed Vought on his plans for future rescissions requests, lack of details about the current rescission package, and his plans to illegally withhold even more funding.

Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI), Ranking Member of the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee, and Eric Schmitt (R-MO) also provided testimony on President Trump's \$9.4 billion rescission request.

[KEY TAKEAWAYS]

Throughout the hearing, Director Vought faced bipartisan pushback over the sweeping cuts in the package, his refusal to provide detail about what exactly the administration will cut if the package passes, and his insistence on justifying the proposed cuts with a highly-selective list of previously funded projects despite the fact that this administration now has discretion over how funding is allocated—and President Trump himself signed a majority of the funding into law himself.

Among much else, Director Vought:

- Refused to rule out doing an end-run around Congress through his illegal notion of a “pocket rescission.”
- Refused to rule out doing an end-run around Congress through an illegal scheme to request sweeping deferrals under the Impoundment Control Act, run out the clock, and then unilaterally impound funding.
- Refused to commit to getting out the funding that the Government Accountability Office has determined he is illegally impounding.
- Repeatedly lied about this administration’s and his own office’s actions—even going so far as to absurdly claim: “We have not impounded any funding.” This despite the fact that the Government Accountability Office has now **twice** ruled he has illegally impounded funds in its first investigation findings (not to mention courts across America)—and despite the fact that at the very same hearing, Vought insisted impoundment is an option on the table.

- Refused to spell out exactly how the Trump administration will cut specific programs if the rescissions package passes.

[MURRAY'S OPENING REMARKS]

“After Congress failed to pass full-year bills in the FY25, it is so important we pass full-year spending bills that deliver the investments that our communities need. And this hearing today asks a very important question: will Congress stand up and protect its constitutional power of the purse—and will this Committee band together to finally say, ‘enough is enough,’ and show bipartisanship still matters? Or will we, for the first time ever, pass an entirely partisan rescissions package and jeopardize the bipartisan work? I hate to be blunt—but that question is at the heart of this first rescissions request, which would gut bipartisan investments in foreign assistance, reliable local news, and high-quality educational programming,” said Senator Murray in her opening remarks. **“I have offered to the Chair and others in this room to do what this Committee has always done: consider bipartisan rescissions in our bills through the annual process, which is the right way to do it. If President Trump and Director Vought get their way—and Republicans pass this package—they will not only gut the heart of compromise that this Committee is built around, but zero out longstanding bipartisan investments.”**

[TRUMP'S PLANS FOR MORE RESCISSION PACKAGES]

Senator Murray began her questioning by emphasizing that Congress passes funding bills after bipartisan negotiations, and partisan rescissions packages that cut up bipartisan spending deals undermine that bipartisan negotiation process: **“When I cut a deal with Chair Collins, or Senator Graham, or any of my Republican colleagues, there may be parts of it I do not like or they do not like—but we know what we agreed to and passed into law is something we can count on. And that is absolutely essential to getting the 60 votes to make this Appropriations process work. But what we are here today talking about is one party rescinding funding provided with 60 votes with just a simple majority. And if that becomes the new normal for how this body operates, that is going to make Appropriations bills extremely hard to negotiate. So, as we consider this package, this committee deserves to understand the whole picture of this administration’s plans before making a decision on this request.”**

Senator Murray asked, **“So, if this package passes, do you intend to send more rescission requests to Congress?”**

Director Vought declined to rule the possibility out, stating, **“Senator, that’s up to the President. It’s certainly an option that I’ve stated publicly that we will strongly consider but that’s up to the President. And you know, we will take that on a week-by-week basis. But there is more honestly than \$9.4 billion**

that we have identified. There's \$163 billion in fiscal year 26 that we have identified for less spending than prior budgets."

"So, these were bills that this Committee approved on a bipartisan basis, how many packages are you talking about? And what they are?" pressed Senator Murray.

"Again, we have—no decisions on those have been made. But we do want to see how successful this effort is," said Director Vought, in part.

Senator Murray said: "Correct, and I will just remind all of us that the Appropriations Committee worked on those in a bipartisan way. They were not partisan packages that were sent up. So, what I'm hearing you answer me is that there will be more. You don't know how many more but there will be more so this Committee and this Congress could spend a lot of time going forward on requests for cuts if this package passes."

**[VOUGHT REFUSES TO RULE OUT "POCKET
RESCISSIONS," MASS DEFERRALS]**

Senator Murray continued by pressing Director Vought on his plans to continue illegally impounding funds already appropriated by Congress, "Director Vought, when asked about this request, you have said that no matter how Congress acts on this request, impoundment is still 'on the table.' And, in

an acknowledgement of how unpopular your cuts to bipartisan priorities are, you even publicly said you may well try to do an end-run around Congress by requesting rescissions in the last 45 days of the fiscal year, and then pretending that even if Congress fails to approve them, you can rescind those funds anyway. So, let me tell you: that is not how the law works. The President does not have a line-item-veto—much less a retroactive line-item veto. Your notion of this ‘pocket rescission’ defies common sense—and by the way the plain text of the law.”

Senator Murray asked, “Director Vought, will you commit to this Committee that you will not attempt to do an end-run around Congress with this so-called ‘pocket rescission’—something members on both sides of this dais have made clear is outright illegal?”

Director Vought refused to commit to not attempt the tactic, instead defending its potential use: “**Senator, there’s a lot of mischaracterizations into my previous comments. I would just say that we believe that we have, under the law, numerous options with regards to how to achieve savings including rescissions that are timed at the end of the fiscal year. General Accounting Office has articulated that earlier in the life of the *Impoundment Control Act*.**”

“This should be a yes or no, and what I hear from you is all kinds of word salad to make sure you are letting us know that you intend to do things that are

outside the intent of the law,” pushed back Senator Murray.

“And it has also been reported that you are considering sending Congress a massive ‘deferral’ package under the ICA in an attempt to run out the clock and avoid legal scrutiny of this administration’s illegal freeze before ultimately impounding the funds at the end of the fiscal year,” Senator Murray said. “Can you commit to this Committee that there be no deferral package?”

“We certainly are aware of the deferral provisions in the *Impoundment Control Act*. There are specific statutory requirements there. That if we are in a situation where funds may meet those definitions. They are certainly on the table but again we have made no decisions. The President has not made any decisions with regard to those different tools that exist. And so I’m here to talk about one package and there’s been one decision on one package, \$9.4 billion,” responded Director Vought.

“Director Vought, I just want to be clear to all of us about what’s going on here: you are actually telling Congress, in total disregard for Congress’s Article 1 powers, you and the president will just impound or rescind funds that you don’t agree with on your own,” said Senator Murray. “And Congress, I will say to all of my committee, should not stand that from this President or any President in the future. And I think that’s really important as we consider this. ”

[REFUSAL TO PROVIDE DETAILS ON HOW ADMIN
WILL MAKE CUTS]

Senator Murray ended her questioning by addressing the complete lack of information that the Trump administration has provided about how it will seek to make the sweeping cuts it proposes: **“Director Vought, to justify the \$8.3 billion you propose in foreign assistance, you’ve argued that these funds were used by the Biden Administration for ‘woke’ programs or things not aligned to Trump priorities. That’s not how this works. Whatever the Biden Administration may or may not have done, most of what you are proposing, as has been talked about here, to rescind is Congress provided this Administration in the FY25 CR—the same CR that President Trump signed into law in March. And while Congress has provided instructions for target countries, and sectors, and purposes, this administration has flexibility to determine how best to meet those bipartisan objectives. So, you are waving around a tiny, cherry-picked list of past initiatives funded by those accounts. It’s irrelevant when the simple fact is you and this administration now determine how those funds are being provided by Congress and are specifically put to use. And yet, conveniently, you have not spelled out for this Committee and the public what you plan to cut if this package passes, even if you ask us to vote on it.”**

“So, will you tell us specifically, and I’m going to ask you two questions, tell us specifically which global health programs—malaria, TB, polio, funding for

GAVI—are you going to cut?” inquired Senator Murray.

Director Vought replied, **“We have two main reductions in global health.”**

Senator Murray pressed, **“Can you tell us specifically on any of those today?”**

“We have \$500 million for family planning and \$400 million to PEPFAR,” said Director Vought, again not noting specific programs or initiatives he plans to cut.

Senator Murray continued, **“But you’re not going to tell us what programs—ok. Will you tell us specifically where—the Philippines, Pacific Islands, Jordan—you’re planning to undermine American interests?”**

Director Vought replied: **“Of course not. We have been very clear in all the administration’s priorities that all of our commitments in regard to Jordan and Egypt are maintained,”** Director Vought said in part.

“I assume you are unwilling to share which humanitarian crises this administration plans to walk away with, which is what we would be voting on—and that is critical information,” said Senator Murray.

[MURRAY'S CLOSING STATEMENT]

In closing, Senator Murray said:

"Thank you very much Chair Collins for holding this hearing. This really is an important discussion with really enormous stakes for our communities, with local news that they rely on, whether they'll go dark. For the world, will America keep its commitments and continue leading on the global stage? And for this Committee, will we keep focused on bipartisan funding bills or will we give that up to spend our time on a wave of partisan rescissions?"

"I've made really clear where I stand. I want us to keep working together to write bipartisan bills that allow us to be a strong voice for our constituents. That's going to prove very difficult, and maybe even impossible, if this body goes down the path Trump is now calling for, a path that would let partisan rescissions rip up our bipartisan agreements."

"I hope my colleagues will join me in rejecting this destructive request outright, and ensuring decisions about what we fund, and even potential rescissions, are made by us through the annual appropriations process."

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