



The Daily Dish

Pocketful of Rescissions

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From the outset the Trump Administration has made efforts – notably the actions of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) – to stop spending that has been approved by Congress. This is not easy because in the federal budget world the executive branch cannot simply say “no.” Once Congress has appropriated the funds for a purpose, the president alone cannot stop the spending. He must send a special message to Congress informing it of his intent. Congress then has 45 days to vote on whether to agree with the president. If it does agree, the appropriation is canceled, and the money is not spent – an action known as a [rescission](#).

In short, it takes both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue to stop the spending. Maybe.

As detailed by Jordan Haring in [The \\$810 Million Pocket Rescissions Request: What It Would Cut and Why Its Timing Matters](#), on September 25 President Trump sent House Speaker Johnson a formal rescissions request totaling \$810 million. The trick is that the president sent the request only a few days before the end of the fiscal year on September 30. While the request is being considered, the agencies cannot obligate the funds. So the funds will expire and the money will not be spent even though Congress did not approve the cuts. This move is called a “pocket rescission.”

Is this legit? Per Haring:

The Government Accountability Office [GAO] says the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 [ICA] does not allow congressionally appropriated funds to be withheld through their expiration; the Supreme Court allowed a similar FY 2025 pocket rescission to proceed while litigation continued but did not issue a final ruling on the legality of pocket rescissions.

So, the pocket rescission itself is in legal limbo. Under the ICA the head of GAO, the comptroller general, has the authority to sue the president over inappropriate impoundments. Eakinomics erroneously predicted a pitched legal battle between the president and GAO. Perhaps the ongoing litigation will result in a resolution of whether this latest maneuver will stand up in court.