

Trump administration orders federal agencies to begin cutting jobs and programs

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The Trump administration issued a memorandum Tuesday ordering federal agencies to begin drafting plans to restructure and downsize. The memorandum, written by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), calls for elimination to be considered for “non-essential” programs and “ineffective” agencies.

The creation of the OMB memo was ordered by the Trump administration via executive order on March 13. The memo marks the end of the federal hiring freeze imposed by the Trump in the first days of his presidency, ordering agencies to begin “taking immediate actions” to cut jobs and reduce costs to comply with the federal budget for 2018.

The memo does not give estimates of the number of jobs that would be cut from federal agencies. However, the preliminary budget outlined by the Trump administration proposes the elimination of 19 government agencies, cuts billions of dollars from domestic social programs, and would lead to the destruction of as many as 200,000 jobs.

Public employee jobs are already near historic lows, accounting for 1.5 percent of all jobs in the US, compared to 3 to 4 percent in the 1960s.

Federal agencies have until June 30 to submit restructuring plans for fiscal years 2018–2022 in compliance with both the federal budget for 2018 and not-yet-released 2019 budget submission guidelines. The heads of the affected federal agencies would then meet with the federal Chief Financial Officers Council to begin finalizing the plans in July. The memo advises federal agencies to eliminate vacant posts immediately.

Trump’s Director of the OMB, Mick Mulvaney, during a press conference announcing the memo on Tuesday, callously shrugged off the destruction of the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of public employees. “[Downsizing] is the same thing that every

one of you has been through in the last couple of years. You all are the last remaining people who actually work in journalism, right? So your entities have gone through this. It shouldn’t be anything new... It’s part of what working in a free economy entails.”

The memo openly advocates the privatization of entire agencies. “Consideration should be given... where there is another entity that may more appropriately fulfill part or all of the role,” and to services that could be “better performed” by private companies.

“We met this morning with CEOs from all across the nation,” Mulvaney explained at the press conference, “and said, look... we’re trying to rebuild the executive branch of government, give us some ideas. By the way, they did.”

The White House is soliciting “suggestions” from the “general public”—that is, industry interests—on both restructuring plans, and the not-yet-implemented Obama-era federal regulations that have been frozen by Trump’s initial executive orders. “If you’ve always had an idea why NASA should be in the Department of Agriculture, now is your time to speak up,” encouraged Mulvaney.

The memo calls for programs and agencies to be slashed, merged, or eliminated outright “[if] the long-term savings from shutting down... are greater than expected costs” to maintain them.

Mulvaney said that this ravaging of social programs in the service of inflating funding for the military was “how you drain the swamp,” referring to Trump’s demagogic pledge to reduce corruption.

If one takes the Trump budget as a guide, one would conclude that the largest sources of filth and grime in the federal government would include the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human

Services and NASA; and that the task of fostering culture and welfare is largely carried out by the Department of Defense.

The Democrats, posturing as opponents to most of the Trump administration's proposed cuts, have spearheaded the privatization or destruction of education, welfare and unemployment assistance, and other basic infrastructure over the last several decades. Mulvaney expects bipartisan support from both Republicans and Democrats for the new OMB guidelines.

“Wasting money—giving money to people who don't deserve it, is something that Republicans and Democrats alike don't care for and want to fix.”



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