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THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST | SATURDAY-SUNDAY, MAY 3-4, 2025

FEDERAL

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underway through Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, all while pumping up billions for the administration's mass deportation agenda.

The budget drafters echo Trump's promises to end "woke programs," including preschool grants to states with diversity programs. And they reflect his vow to stop the "weaponization of government" by slashing the Internal Revenue Service, even as critics accuse him of using the levers of power to punish people and institutions he disfavors.

Overall, it's a sizable reduction in domestic accounts — some \$163 billion, or 22.6% below current year spending, the White House said.

At the same time, the White House said it is relying on Congress to unleash \$375 billion in new money for the Homeland Security and Defense departments as part of Trump's "big, beautiful bill" of tax cuts and spending reductions. His goal is to repel when he calls a "foreign invasion," though migrant arrivals to the U.S. are at all-time lows.

House Speaker Mike Johnson welcomed the proposal as "a bold blueprint that reflects the values of hardworking Americans and the commitment to American strength and prosperity."

Budgets do not become law, but serve as a touchstone for the coming fiscal year debates. Often considered a statement of values, this first budget since Trump's return to the White House carries the added weight of defining the Republican president's second-term pursuits, alongside his party in Congress.

It comes as Trump has unilaterally imposed what could be hundreds of billions of dollars in tax increases in the form of tariffs, setting off a trade war that has consumed CEOs and foreign leaders worried about a possible economic



House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., speaks as President Donald Trump listens during a National Day of Prayer event Thursday in the Rose Garden of the White House.

downturn. Trump, in an interview with NBC News' "Meet the Press" taped Friday, pushed back against recession talk.

Asked by Meet the Press host Kristen Welker about Wall Street analysts who have expressed concerns that the chances of a recession are increasing, Trump insisted the economy will do "fantastically."

"Well, you know, you say, some people on Wall Street say," Trump said. "When I tell you something else. Some people on Wall Street say that we're going to have the greatest economy in history."

Democrats assailed the budget as a devastating foreshadowing of Trump's vision for the country.

"President Trump has made his priorities clear as day: he wants to outright defund programs that help working Americans," said Sen. Patty Murray in Washington, the top Democrat on the debt almost

Committee. This, she said, "while he shovels massive tax breaks at billionaires like himself and raises taxes on middle-class Americans with his reckless tariffs."

The White House Office of Management and Budget, headed by Russell Vought, a chief architect of Project 2025 from the conservative Heritage Foundation, provided contours of a so-called skinny version of it.

It covers only the federal government's discretionary spending, now about \$1.83 trillion a year on defense and nondefense accounts. Trump's team drops that spending by \$163 billion, to \$1.69 trillion, a portion of the nation's nearly \$7 trillion budget that includes far more programs and services.

Federal budgets have been climbing steadily, as have annual deficits that are fast approaching \$2 trillion, with annual interest payments on the debt almost

\$1 trillion. That's thanks mostly to the spike in emergency COVID-19 pandemic spending, changes in the tax code that reduced revenues and the climbing costs of Medicare, Medicaid and other programs, largely to cover health needs as people age. The nation's debt load, at \$36 trillion, is ballooning.

"We need a budget that tells the full story, and it should control spending, reduce borrowing, bring deficits down," said Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a fiscal watchdog group.

Among some of the White House's proposed highlights:

The State Department and international programs would lose 84% of their money and receive \$9.6 billion, reflecting deep cuts already underway, including the U.S. Agency for International Development. The Health and Human

Services Department would be cut by \$33.3 billion and the Education Department's spending would be reduced by \$12 billion. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health would all face steep reductions.

"The Defense Department would get an additional \$113.3 billion and Homeland Security would receive \$42.3 billion more. Much of that is contingent on Congress approving the Trump big bill. That approach drew criticism from leading defense hawks, among them the former GOP Leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

McConnell called the proposed boost in defense money in the president's budget a "gimmick."

"America cannot expect our allies to heed calls for greater annual defense spending if we are unwilling to lead by example," McConnell said in a blistering statement. "Fortu-

nately, Presidential budget requests are just that: requests. Congress will soon have an opportunity to ensure that American power — and the credibility of our commitments — are appropriately resourced."

It's Congress, under its constitutional powers, that decides the spending plans, approves the bills that authorize federal programs and funds them through the appropriations process. Often, that system breaks down, forcing lawmakers to pass stopgap spending bills to keep the government funded and avoid federal shutdowns.

Congress is already deep into the slog of drafting Trump's big bill of tax breaks, spending cuts and bolstered funds for the administration's mass deportation effort — a package that, unlike the budget plan, would carry the force of law.

Vought is also expected on Capitol Hill in the weeks ahead as the Trump administration presses its case. Among the more skilled conservative budget hands in Washington, Vought has charted a career toward this moment. He served during the first Trump administration in the same role and, for Project 2025, wrote an extensive chapter about the remaking of the federal government.

Vought has separately been preparing a \$9 billion package that would gut current 2025 funding for the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which involves the Public Broadcasting Service and National Public Radio.

Trump signed an executive order late Thursday that instructs the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and federal agencies to cease funding for PBS and NPR.

Vought has said that a package of so-called budget rescissions would be a first of potentially more, as the Trump administration tests the appetite in Congress for lawmakers to on record and vote to roll back the money.

Tenn. police release video of Abrego García traffic stop

By STEVE THOMPSON, MARÍA LUISA PAUL The Washington Post

Tennessee state law enforcement officials on Thursday released video footage of a 2022 traffic stop of Kilmar Abrego García, the Maryland resident who is mistakenly deported to El Salvador in March and is still being held in prison there.

Abrego García was stopped for speeding by Tennessee Highway Patrol troopers near Cookeville, Tennessee. Police said he was going 75 mph in a 65 mph zone along Interstate 40, according to the video released by the state's Department of Safety & Homeland Security.

There were about eight other people inside the SUV, and before the encounter was over police said they suspected Abrego García of carrying undocumented immigrants from Texas to the Maryland area for money. The encounter ended with just a warning issued to Abrego García for driving with an expired license.

Despite the more serious suspicions, both the officers and Abrego García struck a friendly tone during most of the 1-hour, 22-minute stop. At one point, Abrego García thanked the officer for letting him sit inside

the car for warmth and joked about the cold.

The stop has been highlighted by Trump administration officials during what has been an aggressive campaign to depict Abrego García as a dangerous gang member involved in crimes, reasons they give for not returning him from El Salvador after he was deported to a high-security prison there in March despite an immigration judge's order barring his removal to that country.

"Hello, sir," Abrego García said to the trooper in English after rolling down the window during the 2022 stop, and they exchanged pleasantries.

"You've got a bunch of people in here, don't you?" the trooper commented. Abrego García replied with a quip that was hard to make out in the video, and the officer laughed.

During the stop, which occurred about 8 p.m. on Nov. 30, 2022, Abrego García said he was coming from St. Louis, and the trooper whose body camera was recording asked for his driver's license, registration and insurance.

Abrego García told the trooper the men in the SUV, owned by his boss, were fellow construction workers he was driving back to Maryland.

EDUCATION

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The draft option for the redistricting is scheduled to be presented to the Frederick County Board of Education at its meeting on Wednesday.

The school board will not be voting on whether to approve the draft, but will discuss the draft and potentially direct staff members to make certain changes.

As required by FCPS Policy 200, which governs school attendance areas and redistricting, several community engagement sessions are scheduled throughout May and June, including virtual and in-person meetings, and a general feedback form. No dates have been set yet.

FCPS hosted two community engagement sessions last month. A public hearing for the redistricting is also scheduled for October. A date has not been set yet.

The school board is scheduled to vote on a final redistricting plan for the area in November or December, which would take effect at the beginning of the 2026-27 school year.

WXY Architecture + Urban Design of New York led the redistricting study and created the draft option.

The redistricting will cost the school

district approximately \$250,000 from Elementary School #41's project fund.

The agency has previously provided reports and recommendations to Prince George's County Public Schools and Montgomery County Public Schools for school district boundary changes.

After the draft option is presented to the school board, WXY plans to post the draft option to the project website, which is available at redistrictingstudy.org. To create the draft option, WXY looked at student enrollment data, such as the number of students who are eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals, who are eligible for an Individualized Education Program and who attend special programs at any of the eight schools.

FCPS recently accepted submissions for a name for the new elementary school. Submissions closed on April 25.

On May 6, the school district is scheduled to announce a list of five to 10 names for the community to provide feedback. The deadline to provide community feedback on the shortlist of names is May 23.

The committee will then select three names to recommend to the school board in August. The school board makes the final decision.

SHUTDOWN

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officials or with The Frederick News-Post upon request.

Allen Etzler, a spokesperson for the city of Frederick, said on Thursday that the federal government did not make city officials aware of the work stoppage at IIR-Frederick.

Frederick County spokesperson Vivian Laxton said she checked with heads of multiple county divisions and departments that would likely have been made aware of issues at the lab, but none of them had received information from the federal government either.

Representatives of HHS and the National Institutes of Health, which oversee NIAID, declined on Thursday to answer a detailed list of questions about the work stoppage at IIR-Frederick and instead deferred to a Fox News article.

NIH spokesperson Bradley Moss on Friday afternoon said he was still not authorized to release additional information to the News-Post.

In a joint statement on Friday, Frederick Mayor Michael O'Connor and the Frederick City Council said they were "deeply troubled by the sudden cessation of operations" at the facility, which they called "a vital asset in global infectious disease research and a cornerstone of our local economy."

Due to the work stoppage, the city officials wrote, the livelihoods of 168 people who work at IIR-Frederick "are now uncertain."

Their statement continued: "Halting research on high-consequence pathogens like Ebola and Lassa fever undermines decades of scientific progress and preparedness. This facility is one of the few in the world equipped to safely study these threats, and its closure represents a setback for both national and global public health."

"Equally troubling is the absence of communication with local leadership and stakeholders from the federal government. Unilateral decisions of this magnitude erode trust and hinder our ability to support our constituents effectively during times of uncertainty."

"We are coordinating with our federal delegation members and urge federal authorities to immediately engage with local and state partners to collaboratively develop a path forward that protects both the critical public health mission of NIAID's IIRF and the economic stability of the City of Frederick and Frederick County. We stand ready to be part of that solution."

Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater, County Council President Brad Young and Council Member Jerry Donald also released a joint statement on Friday about the work stoppage at IIR-Frederick. "The recent decision to halt research at the NIAID's Integrated Research Facility



Stephanie Monticelli, a postdoctoral research fellow in USAMRIID's Virology Division, is pictured in a Biosafety Level 4 laboratory in April 2022. Work at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease's Integrated Research Facility, also housed at Fort Detrick, was stopped earlier this week by federal officials.

(IIRF) at Fort Detrick is deeply concerning for Frederick County," the county officials said. "This facility has been at the forefront of studying deadly infectious diseases, including Ebola, and its work is crucial for public health and safety. The indefinite pause in its operations not only jeopardizes ongoing research but also undermines our preparedness for future outbreaks."

The statement continued: "Frederick County has long been a hub for scientific innovation and research. The IIRF's contributions have not only advanced our understanding of infectious diseases but have also brought significant economic benefits to our community. The closure of this lab threatens to disrupt our local economy, potentially leading to job losses and a decline in scientific collaboration."

"We urge the federal government to reconsider this decision and recognize the vital role that the IIRF plays in safeguarding public health and supporting our local economy. The work conducted at this facility is too important to be halted indefinitely."

As of Friday, it was still not clear how long IIRF-Frederick would remain shut down.