

Bryan, Plaskett Raise Concerns Over Trump's Federal Funding Pause – SNAP, Medicare, and Other Personal Assistance Not Impacted

Bryan and Plaskett raise concerns over Trump's temporary federal funding pause, while the White House confirms that individual assistance programs—including Social Security, Medicare, SNAP, welfare benefits, and Head Start—will continue unaffected

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr. and Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett have expressed concerns over a directive from the Trump administration that temporarily pauses federal financial assistance programs, potentially affecting various grants, loans, and agency activities. However, the White House has confirmed that individual assistance programs, including Social Security, Medicare, SNAP (food stamps), welfare benefits, and Head Start, will not be affected by the pause?.

Judge Temporarily Blocks Federal Funding Pause

Minutes before the pause on federal grants and loans was set to take effect on Tuesday afternoon, U.S. District Judge Loren L. AliKhan issued a temporary block on the Trump administration's directive. The administrative stay, prompted by a lawsuit filed by nonprofit groups that receive federal funding, will remain in place until Monday afternoon.

The court's decision applies only to existing programs, meaning that while the freeze is temporarily halted, the broader legal battle over the executive order is ongoing. The ruling provides short-term relief for federally funded organizations that rely on grants and loans, but uncertainty remains regarding how long the review process will last and whether additional challenges will arise?.

Governor Bryan issued a statement highlighting the potential ramifications of the funding pause, which was ordered by the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB). He noted that federal financial assistance is vital for programs in housing, healthcare, education, infrastructure, and disaster recovery, and any disruption could create hardships for individuals and families.

"Like many leaders across the nation, I am deeply concerned by the potential ramifications of this temporary pause on federal financial assistance programs," Bryan stated. "Any interruption, even temporary, has the potential to create unintended hardships for individuals and families who depend on these resources, as well as hinder ongoing projects vital to our economic growth and stability."

The governor reassured residents that his administration is actively monitoring the situation and engaging with federal partners to ensure the needs of the Virgin Islands are addressed. He also raised legal questions about whether such a sweeping action can be implemented solely through executive authority?.

Ms. Plaskett, a member of the House Ways & Means, Budget, and Intelligence Committees, issued a strong response, warning that while some federal programs are explicitly excluded from the pause, others—particularly those tied to foreign aid, diversity initiatives, environmental policies, and social programs—could see funding halted.

According to Plaskett, programs at risk include HUD housing assistance, Justice Department grants, minority business funding, and energy programs such as REAP (Rural Energy for America Program). She also questioned whether the pause might affect educational institutions that teach Virgin Islands-centric history or support undocumented students.

"This is a direct attack on the American people," Plaskett said. "It jeopardizes critical programs that millions of families and countless communities depend on—programs that fund healthcare, education, infrastructure, and public safety."

She further noted that Congress holds the power of the purse, and many of the affected programs were approved on a bipartisan basis. Her office is organizing meetings with local agencies and the 36th Legislature of the Virgin Islands to assess the territory-wide impact of the directive?.

White House Confirms SNAP, Medicare, and Other Personal Assistance Unaffected

In response to widespread concern, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt provided reassurances that individual assistance programs remain unaffected by the pause.

"Let me provide the certainty and clarity that all of you need. This is not a blanket pause on federal assistance in grant programs. Individual assistance—including Social Security benefits, Medicare benefits, food stamps, welfare benefits—will not be impacted by this pause," Leavitt stated.

She stressed that the temporary pause is focused on reviewing discretionary spending to eliminate wasteful expenditures, including Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, Green New Deal policies, and programs that fund gender ideology and environmental regulations.

Despite these reassurances, federal agencies have been instructed to ‘unwind objectionable policies’, though there is no clear definition of which programs will fall under that directive. Plaskett and Bryan are seeking further clarification on whether this could lead to unintended funding losses for the Virgin Islands?.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration maintains that the pause is temporary, and the U.S. OMB is reviewing programs to ensure compliance with the administration’s policy priorities. However, with no set timeline for when funding decisions will resume, concerns persist over the potential impact on long-term projects and essential services in the Virgin Islands.