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Plaskett Discusses Federal Funding Uncertainty Amid Trump Administration's Cost-Cutting Efforts

Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett gathers local agencies to discuss the impacts of the Trump administration's cost-cutting measures, legal challenges to the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), and potential consequences for federal funding.

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Signage removed from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) building in Washington as DOGE dismantles the agency.

On Friday, Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett convened a meeting aimed at sharing information with local agencies about what Democrats and allied groups were doing to resist what they contend are the negative consequences of the Trump administration's push to cut cost in the

federal government, spearheaded by Elon Musk.

“It is lawful for administrations to have advisory committees,” said Megan Uzzell, director of Impact for Democracy Forward, a coalition of unions, civil rights organizations, and other interest groups. “It is not lawful, however, to operate in the way DOGE has been operating; without transparency, without involvement of others,” she argued. The group has filed to argue that position before the court, Ms. Uzzell said, having brought a legal challenge on behalf of veterans and federal employees including teachers and healthcare professionals, “to ensure that DOGE complies with federal advisory committee law.”

The Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, was formed to root out waste in the federal government, and the team has already saved taxpayers billions of dollars. DOGE posts savings to its official X, formerly Twitter, [page](#).

During Ms. Plaskett's meeting, Ms. Uzzell spoke about the several other lawsuits that have been filed, pushing back on several of the new administration's policy moves. In one matter, Quaker, Baptist and Sikh religious groups are contesting the new policy that allows immigration enforcement officials to enter places of worship in pursuit of undocumented immigrants. Litigation against the federal spending freeze ordered by President Trump is also ongoing, Ms. Uzzell noted — though it has [since been rescinded](#) by President Trump — and a restraining order against the cuts and restructuring at USAID is currently being sought. U.S. AID, it seems, is all but shuttered, with signage of its office [removed today](#).

Ms. Plaskett noted that a defunded USAID would not necessarily affect the Virgin Islands directly, but would severely impact the territory's neighbors – the independent Caribbean islands where many Virgin Islanders' family trees have their roots. “Many of those islands depend on the funding that USAID has given them for food, road projects, support for their civil service,” Ms. Plaskett explained. Ceding ground when it comes to the ability to deploy soft power like foreign aid and development funds, the Congresswoman said, allows U.S. adversaries like China and Russia to gain an advantage in that area – and thus leverage. Ms. Plaskett did not mention the [rampant waste and fraud](#) that has mired U.S. AID.

Closer to home, potential ongoing ramifications from the spending freeze were of particular concern, said Ms. Uzzell, mentioning reports of a continued lack of funding at Head Start and the National Institutes of Health as particularly troubling. “There is a pattern of funding for renewable energy, green energy, solar and that category, and then anything related to DEI-A,” she said. “Unfortunately, the funding that we have seen frozen in the DEI — diversity, equity and inclusion — categories, it's very broad and sweeping, which is extremely concerning.”

Ms. Uzzell urged those with knowledge of affected agencies, programs and services to keep her organization informed, either through Ms. Plaskett or via her website's special intake form set up for the purpose. The information is “helping inform our thinking and strategies and that of other organizations that are also attempting to try to think very strategically about it,” she said. “There's actually appropriate ways to go about making those changes, and it's not what's happening now,” Ms. Uzzell declared.

Asked by Congresswoman Plaskett whether she thought that federal dollars flowing to the Virgin Islands might be impacted by the Trump administration's push to shrink spending, given many grants under the previous administration were granted due to the territory's status as a largely minority and/or disadvantaged population, Ms. Uzzell could not say. “Unfortunately there's not been a ton of clarity or clear rationale provided by the administration about why it's taking certain

tacks,” she said. “I think there's a whole range of possibilities and we are just trying very closely to watch them all.”

V.I. Department of Human Services Commissioner Averil George reported that after an initial outage of the payment management system, things returned to full working order the very next day. “If we do experience any problems going forward, you will be our first call,” she assured Delegate Plaskett. Ms. George thanked the congresswoman for “constantly reaching out to us to make sure that we're in a good space.”

Expressing relief that the flow of funds at VIDHS continues smoothly, Ms. Plaskett nevertheless urged vigilance, noting that “they're just starting to go through agencies.” She shared that lawmakers had been informed “by individuals within DOGE that a number of things will happen over the weekend,” and promised to keep local agencies informed of changes as they happen.

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