

Trump Signs TSA Pay Order as Airport Disruptions Persist Amid Broader DHS Standoff

President Trump ordered compensation restored for TSA employees after weeks of missed pay, resignations and long security lines, but the wider Homeland Security funding fight remained unresolved after House Republicans rejected the Senate's narrower deal.

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President Donald Trump on Friday signed a presidential memorandum directing the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of Management and Budget to use funds tied to TSA operations to provide employees with the compensation and benefits they would have received if not for the ongoing funding lapse. The move came after Congress failed to settle the larger Homeland Security standoff that has stretched into its sixth week and increasingly turned into an airport operations crisis.

In the memorandum, Trump said, “America’s air travel system has reached its breaking point.” The White House document describes the situation as an emergency and says more than 60,000 TSA employees, including about 50,000 transportation security officers working at domestic airports, have gone unpaid during the shutdown. It also states that nearly 500 officers have left their jobs, that thousands more have been calling out sick at record rates, and that security waits at some airports have reached three hours or longer.

The strain had already been visible across the country before Trump acted. About 460 TSA officers have quit their jobs since the current funding dispute began, with absences rising above 10% in recent days and waits stretching to as long as 4.5 hours at some airports. More than 100 airport leaders also urged Congress to end the impasse, warning that the disruptions were growing and could have lasting consequences for airport operations.

The president’s action does not resolve the broader fight in Congress. The Senate had approved a compromise that would restore funding for most of the Department of Homeland Security, including TSA, FEMA and the Coast Guard, while leaving out ICE and Border Patrol. That bill did not include the immigration-enforcement restrictions Democrats had been seeking, even as it was designed to restart pay for screeners and relieve pressure at airports.

That measure stalled almost immediately in the House. Reuters and AP reported that House Republican leaders rejected the Senate plan and instead moved toward a temporary extension that would fund the entire department at current levels until May 22. Speaker Mike Johnson dismissed the Senate bill as a “gambit” and “joke,” while Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said the House proposal would be “dead on arrival in the Senate.”

For TSA workers, Trump’s memorandum could bring immediate relief even as the larger shutdown fight continues. The action was taken with the goal of easing the long lines that have formed at major airports, while the White House memorandum directs DHS and OMB to move forward using funds with a “reasonable and logical nexus” to TSA operations. The order may reduce some of the immediate financial strain on airport screeners, but it leaves unresolved the larger funding battle that has kept much of Homeland Security trapped in a political deadlock.