



American Bridge

Trump Policy Brief: “American Heroes Week”

7.24.17

“AMERICAN HEROES WEEK”

The White House declared the week of July 24th “American Heroes Week,” but the Trump Administration has sought cuts to some of the very programs that support American heroes.

Trump’s budget proposed nearly \$700 million in cuts to grants for local first responder programs, which would devastate proven counterterrorism efforts in the nation’s largest cities and hamper programs designed to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks in airports and other public places. The cuts would also impact the abilities of cities and states to respond to natural disasters like hurricanes and tornadoes.

Trump has also sought to cut benefits from the heroes who have served our country but rounding veterans’ benefits payout down to the nearest dollar, costing veterans a collective \$20 million in 2018. His budget would also eliminate the Limb Loss and Paralysis Resource Centers, callously denying critical resources for veterans who have endured tragic injuries.

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THE WHITE HOUSE DECLARED THE WEEK OF JULY 24TH “AMERICAN HEROES WEEK”

The White House Declared The Week of July 24th “American Heroes Week.” According to CNN, “The White House announced three more weeks’ worth of messaging centered on specific themes Sunday, with the focus this week on US manufacturing. [...] White House spokeswoman Helen Aguirre Ferré told reporters the administration had dubbed the week starting Monday ‘Made in America’ week. The week after would be ‘American Heroes Week,’ followed by ‘American Dreams Week,’ with the details of the latter remaining under wraps for now.” [CNN, [7/16/17](#)]

Rather Than Supporting American Heroes, Trump Has Sought Cuts To First Responder, Counterterrorism, And Veterans’ Benefits Programs

TRUMP’S BUDGET PROPOSED NEARLY \$700 MILLION IN CUTS TO GRANTS FOR LOCAL FIRST RESPONDERS

Trump’s Budget Would Cut Nearly \$700 Million From Grant Programs For Local First Responders. According to the Associated Press, “Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly defended President Donald Trump’s proposed budget cuts for his department, even as he told Congress that the United States ‘cannot invest too much in security’ after recent terrorist attacks in Europe. Trump proposed a budget last month that would cut nearly \$700 million from grant programs for local first responders. Overall, Homeland Security would face a reduction of 3.2 percent for a budget that would total more than \$49 billion.” [Associated Press, [6/7/17](#)]

The Cuts Would Devastate Proven Counterterrorism Efforts In The Nation’s Largest Cities

Rep. Bill Keating, In Regards To The Boston Marathon Bombing: “We Know In Boston How Important That Training Was.” According to the Associated Press, “House Republicans and Democrats

on Wednesday raised concerns about the proposed cuts to the grant programs that local and state first responders use to prevent and prepare for attacks involving bombs, chemical weapons or computer hacking. ‘We know in Boston how important that training was,’ said Rep. Bill Keating, D-Mass., referring to the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013.” [Associated Press, [6/7/17](#)]

New York City Police Commissioner James P. O’Neill: The Cuts Would Target “The Backbone Of Our Entire Counterterrorism Apparatus.” According to The Washington Post, “According to the Senate committee report, grant programs aimed at helping local efforts to fight terrorism would also be cut back, something that has drawn some ire from local law enforcement leaders. When Trump’s budget proposal was released, James P. O’Neill, the New York City police commissioner, said that the changes would target ‘the backbone of our entire counterterrorism apparatus.” [Washington Post, [7/13/17](#)]

The Budget Would Cut Programs Designed To Prevent And Respond To Terrorist Attacks In Airports And Other Public Places

Trump’s Budget Would Cut ¾ Of The Funding To Visible Intermodal Prevention And Response Teams (VIPR), Which Are Visible Police Presences To Deter Terrorism. According to The Washington Post, “The proposed cuts, according to the report, would include stripping three-quarters of the funding to Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response Teams (VIPR), which place officers at airports as a public show of force to deter terrorism — in effect, a visible police presence. During Trump’s inauguration earlier this year, such teams were placed at the three Washington-region airports as well as Union Station and the Metro system. Under the proposed budget, VIPR funding would drop to \$15 million from \$58 million and the number of VIPR teams would be cut to 8 from 31, with 277 full-time positions being eliminated, according to the report. The Democratic staff members of the Senate Homeland Security Committee say in the report they were told that even though federal officials say eight VIPR teams can ‘maintain an acceptable security posture,’ the three-quarters funding cut will ‘limit’ the presence of teams nationwide.” [Washington Post, [7/13/17](#)]

Trump’s Budget Would Eliminate A Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program To Increase Airport Security Outside The Gates. According to The Washington Post, “The report also says a law enforcement officer reimbursement program, which helps beef up security at airport terminals outside the gates, would be eliminated, something that would ‘disproportionately impact’ smaller airports.” [Washington Post, [7/13/17](#)]

Former Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff And Two Former TSA Administrators: “An Administration That Decreases Its Investment In, And Diminishes Its Focus On, Emergency Management, Runs The Risk Of Large-Scale Calamity When Disaster Inevitably Strikes.” According to The Washington Post, “In an Atlantic article, former Homeland Security secretary Michael Chertoff and two former Transportation Security Administration administrators argued against changes to airport security staffing, saying that ‘an administration that decreases its investment in, and diminishes its focus on, emergency management, runs the risk of large-scale calamity when disaster inevitably strikes.” [Washington Post, [7/13/17](#)]

The Cuts Would Hamper Cities’ Abilities To Respond To Natural Disasters Like Hurricanes And Tornadoes

Brian Baker, Department Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management For Washington, DC, Said The Cuts Would Cost The District \$30 Million And Hamper Its Ability To Respond To Weather Events Like Tornadoes And Hurricanes. According to The New York Times, “In his budget blueprint for 2018, Mr. Trump wants to reduce FEMA’s state and local program grants by \$600 million. The administration says many of the grants were not authorized by Congress. Officials at the Department of Homeland Security said the administration wanted to encourage states and cities to budget for their own

preparedness and shift the cost of paying for disaster preparation and response away from the federal government. Brian Baker, director of Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management for Washington, D.C., said the proposed cuts would cost the capital city millions in funding. ‘While I applaud the fact that the Trump administration has put an actual emergency management practitioner in that office, these cuts would cost the District close to \$30 million,’ Mr. Baker said. Mr. Baker said grants were crucial to the city’s efforts to support larger events as well as deal with disasters like tornadoes and hurricanes that have hit the city in recent years.” [New York Times, [7/21/17](#)]

NYT: “The Budget Eliminates Money For Efforts To Improve And Redraw The Nation’s Flood Maps.” According to The New York Times, “The budget also eliminates money for efforts to improve and redraw the nation’s flood maps and cuts about \$90 million from the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. The program provides funding to local communities to move people to safer locations and to help rebuild schools, hospitals and police and fire stations so they can better withstand the impact of hurricanes and coastal storms.” [New York Times, [7/21/17](#)]

The Budget Would Cut About \$90 Million From The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program That Help Local Communities Relocate Residents To Safer Areas And Rebuild Schools, Hospitals, And Other Public Buildings To Better Handle Storms. According to The New York Times, “The budget also eliminates money for efforts to improve and redraw the nation’s flood maps and cuts about \$90 million from the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. The program provides funding to local communities to move people to safer locations and to help rebuild schools, hospitals and police and fire stations so they can better withstand the impact of hurricanes and coastal storms.” [New York Times, [7/21/17](#)]

Both Democratic And Republican Members Of Congress Expressed Concern With Trump’s Proposed Cuts

Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX): “I Would Be Remiss If I Didn’t Express Concern About The Cuts To Grants And Training Programs That Are Vital To First Responders.” According to the Associated Press, “Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, R-Texas, said he supported the president’s proposed budget, praising an increase for cybersecurity operations, but ‘I would be remiss if I didn’t express concern about the cuts to grants and training programs that are vital to first responders.’” [Associated Press, [6/7/17](#)]

Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS): Trump’s Assumption That States And Localities Can Make Up Lost Federal Funding For Preparedness Programs Is Wrong And “Completely Contrary To The Message The President Often Telegraphs To The Nation’s Law Enforcement Officers.” According to an opinion piece by Rep. Bennie Thompson in The Hill, “In his budget, the president makes clear that he believes the responsibility for developing these capabilities rests at the local level. His budget aims to ‘encourage’ states and cities to budget their own preparedness and demands that the cost burden be shifted from the federal government to our states and cities. However, this shows ignorance in how localities handle preparedness. State and local governments have budgetary problems of their own and do not have the resources to simply absorb this new cost. Acts of terror, while rare, have national impact and consequence, and we cannot expect every state, city and town to carry this burden on their own. This “you’re on your own” policy is completely contrary to the message the president often telegraphs to the nation’s law enforcement officers during his rallies and speeches.” [Rep. Bennie Thompson – Opinion, The Hill, [6/20/17](#)]

TRUMP’S BUDGET PROPOSED ROUNDING VETERANS’ BENEFITS PAYOUTS DOWN TO THE NEAREST DOLLAR, WHICH WOULD COST VETERANS A COLLECTIVE \$20 MILLION IN 2018

Trump's Budget Proposed Rounding Veterans' Benefits Payouts Down To The Nearest Dollar, Which Would Amount To \$20 Million In Cuts In FY 2018 And Nearly \$2.7 Billion Over The Next Decade. According to Military Times, "President Donald Trump's 'taxpayer focused' budget for fiscal 2018 includes smaller cost-of-living adjustments for veterans benefits payouts and eliminating those adjustments for some federal civilian retirees altogether. [...] It also includes the cost-of-living adjustment changes. The White House plan would extend the practice of rounding down veterans payouts to the nearest whole dollar, trimming a few cents off their checks. Veterans groups have successfully fought the practice in recent years, arguing the small amounts build up to significant losses for veterans over time. White House officials say the move will save about \$20 million in fiscal 2018 alone and almost \$2.7 billion over the next decade." [Military Times, [5/22/17](#)]

TRUMP'S BUDGET PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF THE LIMB LOSS AND PARALYSIS RESOURCE CENTERS FOR VETERANS WHO SUFFER SUCH INJURIES

Trump's Budget Proposed Elimination Of The Limb Loss And Paralysis Resource Centers. According to ThinkProgress, "Another easily-forgotten budgetary item is the decision to zero out funding for the Limb Loss Resource Center, which helps individuals with limb loss and their families, as well as the Paralysis Resource Center, which does the same for individuals with paralysis. While the VA does offer programs and care for the veterans who experience these kinds of injuries, programs like these provide support and help applying for VA benefits. Veterans experience a disproportionate number of paralysis and amputee injuries. Through June 1, 2015, at least 1,645 veterans in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria have battle-injury major limb amputations." [ThinkProgress, [5/23/17](#)]