Trump Considers Cutting HIV and COVID-19 Funds in Liberal Cities

AIDS groups counter that such a move is “deeply harmful and even illegal.”

October 22, 2020 By Trent Straube

The Trump administration is looking into slashing federal funds to over 200 health programs in Democrat-led cities President Trump has labeled “anarchist jurisdictions,” reports Politico based on documents it obtained.

Potentially on the chopping block are millions in federal grants from the Department of Health and Human Services for HIV treatment, coronavirus relief, screenings for newborns, housing for people in recovery, and nutrition and mental health counseling for seniors.

On September 2, Trump issued a directive to federal agencies to cut funding to jurisdictions that “disempower” police and promote “lawlessness.” Cities in the crosshairs include New York City; Portland, Oregon; Seattle; and Washington, DC.

> My Administration will do everything in its power to prevent weak mayors and lawless cities from taking Federal dollars while they let anarchists harm people, burn buildings, and ruin lives and businesses. We’re putting them on notice today. @RussVought45
>
> — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) September 3, 2020

As Politico notes, the move is an escalation in Trump’s war against liberal cities that don’t support him.

A group of prominent AIDS organizations issued a joint statement in response to the possible funding cuts:

> “Any effort by the Trump administration to slash coronavirus relief funds or lifesaving HIV treatment, under the misguided guise of scoring political points, would be deeply harmful and even illegal under current appropriations laws.
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> “The programs identified by the White House are critical components in our ongoing efforts to end the HIV epidemic and global pandemic, and curtailing these lifesaving services would put this administration’s own goal of reducing new HIV transmissions by 90% by 2030 at risk. Jeopardizing the health of underserved and at-risk communities is a clear abdication of presidential responsibilities, and we vehemently oppose any such actions.”

The statement’s signatories include AIDS United, NASTAD (formerly the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors), the National Coalition of STD Directors, NMAC (formerly the National Minority AIDS Coalition) and The AIDS Institute.

According to the Politico article, Department of Health and Human Services didn’t state when the cuts might occur or what criteria might be used to decide on the budget cuts. But the health department recently sent the White House budget office a list detailing the funding that has been disbursed to the four above-mentioned cities since 2018. Federal departments must get their lists to the Office of Management and Budget by Friday.

The Transportation Department reported that it is already factoring Trump’s funding cut wishes into its review of grants that support COVID-19 safety measures.

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