

POLITICS

Trump administration fires over 400 DHS employees as mass firings continue

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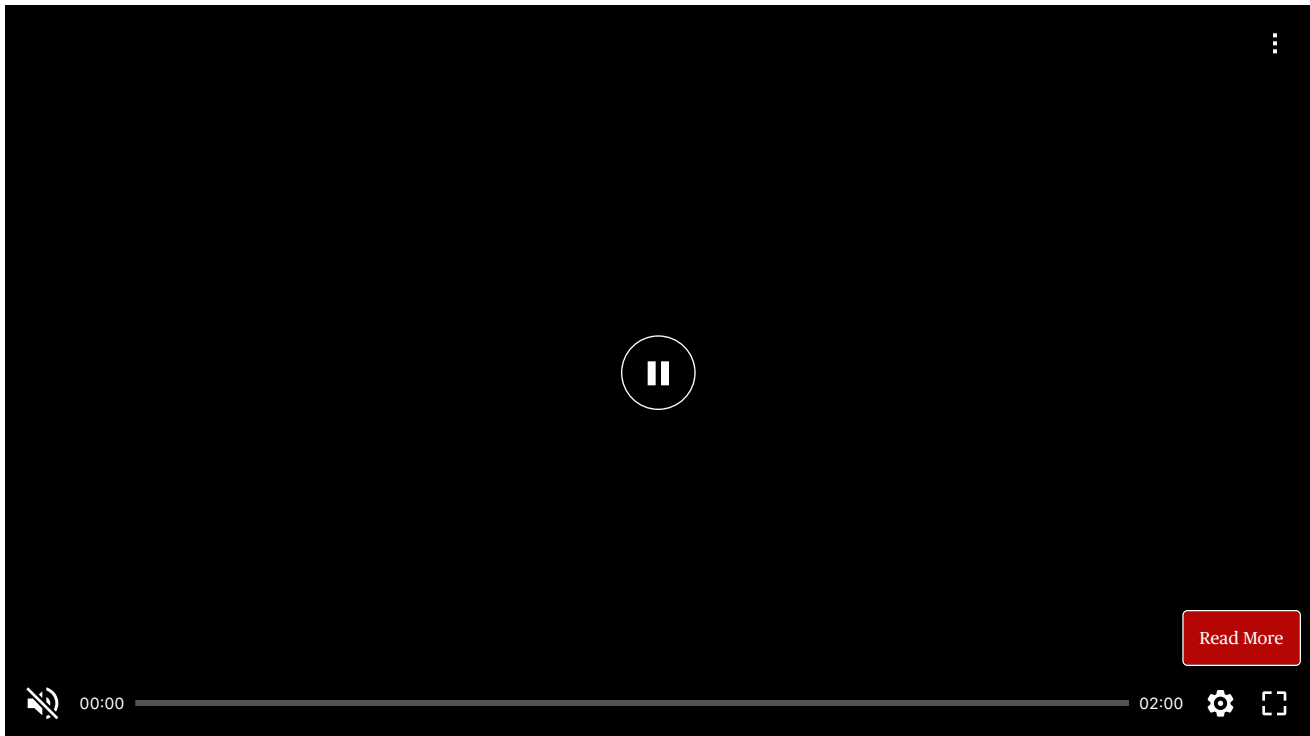
Washington – The Trump administration on Friday moved to fire more than 400 employees at the Department of Homeland Security, the latest effort in a government-wide campaign to dramatically reduce the federal workforce.

Officials at DHS said they had fired hundreds of employees across several of its agencies after supervisors identified "non-mission critical personnel in probationary status" within the nation's top cybersecurity agency, known as CISA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which administers the nation's legal immigration system, among others.

Over the weekend, probationary workers across DHS and multiple federal government agencies received virtually identical letters informing them they were being terminated from their positions.

"Unfortunately, the Agency finds that you are not fit for continued employment because your ability, knowledge and skills do not fit the Agency's current needs, and your performance has not been adequate to justify further employment at the Agency," read one letter sent to a DHS employee and obtained by CBS News.

Despite receiving boiler-plate letters notifying them they are no longer up to the task, several department supervisors granted anonymity to speak candidly said some of those fired were top performers. Among those fired were employees who had been aggressively recruited and had left better-paying jobs for the opportunity to join the federal service, the officials added.



"Under President Trump's leadership, we are making sweeping cuts and reform across the federal government to eliminate egregious waste and incompetence that has been happening for decades at the expense of the American taxpayer," DHS spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin said in a statement to CBS News.

McLaughlin said the personnel cuts will result in roughly \$50 million in savings, and be "incalculably valuable" to the administration's efforts to cut red tape, adding that the department is "actively identifying other wasteful positions and offices that do not do not fulfill DHS' mission."

In total, more than 200 personnel were fired from FEMA, the nation's disaster relief agency, including senior members of the policy team.

The eliminations follow DHS' announcement earlier this week that four FEMA employees would be terminated over payments to reimburse New York City for hotel costs for migrants. The workers were accused of circumventing agency leadership to make the transactions, which have been part of a routine reimbursement program that offsets costs related to a spike in migration along the southern border.

The mass firings also include over 130 cuts within the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. Among the newest federal agencies, CISA was established during the first Trump administration in 2018 to spearhead a national effort to oversee cyber and physical risk to U.S. critical infrastructure. Among other duties, the top cyber agency partners with states and local jurisdictions to secure U.S. election infrastructure.

The department has also offered a dozen members of the U.S. Coast Guard currently placed on administrative leave a new assignment at the southwest border in support of border security efforts. Those service members previously worked on a team dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts within the Coast Guard workforce.

The cuts include nearly 50 workers at USCIS, which processes a broad class of applications for immigration benefits, including requests for citizenship, green cards, asylum and work permits, plus an additional 10 employees from DHS' Science and Technology Directorate.

Cuts at USCIS baffled some within the leadership ranks of the agency, who noted the agency is largely funded by immigration application fees, not congressional appropriations.

"We make money," one DHS official told CBS News.

Notably, two large DHS agencies spearheading President Trump's highly-publicized crackdown on illegal immigration, Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, were spared in Friday's firings.

Mr. Trump signed an executive order Tuesday informing agency leaders to plan for "large-scale reductions in force."

Office of Personnel Management officials convened a meeting with agency leaders across government Thursday, instructing them to begin terminating employees still in their probationary period, according to administration officials. Federal employees typically remain on probation between one to two years after being hired, a status that offers some workplace protections but also makes them easier to remove from their posts.

The Trump administration has moved aggressively to fire federal employees, most of them recent hires, in different agencies, including at the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Education and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the U.S. Forest Service.

It has also overseen a sweeping employee purge at the U.S. Agency for International Development, which distributes the foreign aid the Trump administration has sought to pause.

Trump appointees have carried out the mass firings in concert with the so-called Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, the initiative led by billionaire Elon Musk that has installed officials across different agencies to cut the federal bureaucracy and freeze funding deemed to be wasteful.

From the Oval Office on Tuesday, Mr. Trump claimed that his administration had found "billions and billions of dollars in waste, fraud and abuse," though offered little evidence to reporters.

On Thursday, Musk called for the U.S. to "delete entire agencies" at home and "mind its own business" at times abroad.

Appearing via video-conference during the World Government Summit 2025, Musk told audiences gathered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, "I think we do need to delete entire agencies as opposed to leave a lot of them behind."

"If we don't remove the roots of the weed, then it's easy for the weed to grow back," Musk added.

Matthew Mosk contributed to this report.

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