

House Foreign Affairs passes State Dept reauthorization - still a long way to go. *Devex*, 22 Sep 2025

Back in Washington, D.C., lawmakers in the U.S. Congress have been engaged in their own pitched political battles. One notable debate that the development community kept a close eye on was the reauthorization of the [U.S. Department of State](#), which is managing the foreign assistance portfolio it inherited from the [U.S. Agency for International Development](#).

After a nearly 36-hour marathon session, the House Foreign Affairs Committee [passed a set of bills](#) that would not only reauthorize the State Department, **but also put in place a new organizational structure and set of policies**, including how it would focus foreign assistance — assuming the bills become law.

That's a long way away. Historically, State Department reauthorizations have been a bear, so getting this latest one out of committee is merely a first step. The full House still needs to approve it. Then the Senate will have its own proposal, which would have to be reconciled with the House version and then approved again by both houses of Congress. Then it heads to Trump's desk.

Still, the nascent bills **offer a useful window into what foreign assistance might look like** in its new home. Among other things, they would create an undersecretary for foreign assistance, a director, and an Office of Foreign Assistance Oversight.

Republicans cheered — and pushed through — the passage, while Democrats booed it.

On the overall restructuring of the State Department, Rep. Chris Smith, a Republican from New Jersey, said, “The administration has already showed **this model delivers faster, more effective assistance** while strengthening U.S. credibility abroad.”

But Rep. Gregory Meeks of New York, the top Democrat on the committee, criticized the bills for **“rubber-stamping the Trump administration’s illegal action to shutter USAID.”**

The partisan divide **mirrors the larger schism over federal spending**, which will consume both chambers over the next few weeks, so don’t expect the reauthorization to be a priority, especially as the U.S. government careens toward a shutdown if no budget deal is reached by Sept. 30.

Read: [House committee approves State Department restructure in marathon hearing](#)

ICYMI: [US lawmakers propose sweeping State Department reforms](#)