

**Congressional Opposition to Close Out Use of \$19.2 Billion USAID Funds.** By Elissa Miolene, *Devex*, 19 May 2026

### **Attempted overrule**

Earlier this month, I got my hands on a mind-boggling congressional notification from the now-gutted [U.S. Agency for International Development](#).

The agency told the U.S. Congress [it had up to \\$19.2 billion to spend](#) on closing out foreign assistance awards — a sum that included \$2 billion in global health assistance and \$1.2 billion in development aid that was tagged for 2025.

“A lot of us were like: What are they going to do with this money, since it’s still good until September of this year?” one former senior USAID official tells me. “This is the answer to that question.”

The blowback was swift, but one-sided. The day our story broke, 17 Democratic senators told Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** that spending that cash on closeout costs **constituted an illegal impoundment of funds**, referring to the practice of withholding cash already appropriated by Congress. Two weeks later, a similar letter was sent by members of the House of Representatives, including the top Democrats on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs.

“We strongly **opposed the indiscriminate termination of foreign assistance awards** in 2025, which occurred without consultation with — or consent from — Congress,” the representatives wrote. “These funds remain subject to congressional direction, and their **diversion will only compound the devastating consequences** already caused by mass program cancellations and the reckless dismantling of USAID.”