**Government Cutbacks**

**Some 1,400 infants are being infected by HIV daily because of U.S. funding cuts to AIDS organizations, according to the Foundation for AIDS Research. A third of global organizations that provide essential HIV services shuttered days after the Trump administration halted most foreign aid in January; hundreds of thousands of people have lost access to treatments as a result. *(MIT Technology Review, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 4, 2025)***

**Air-Traffic Control: Just one day after 67 people died when an American Airlines passenger jet collided with a U.S. Army helicopter in Washington, D.C., said Isaac Stanley-Becker, FAA employees received an email advising they take a buyout. Hundreds, including about 100 air-traffic controllers, reportedly said “yes” to the offer from Elon Musk’s DOGE team. After a panicked Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy objected, the FAA later clarified that air-traffic controllers could not accept the buyout. But DOGE’s downsizing of the FAA has claimed hundreds of aviation-safety technicians, engineers, and aeronautical-information specialists. Insiders say morale at the agency is at “an all-time low” and “the workforce is completely distracted” by “chaos and uncertainty.” Personnel cuts aren’t the only cause for concern. The FAA’s $2.4 billion contract with Verizon to modernize its communications infrastructure is now in limbo, as Musk ignores a massive conflict of interest by pushing for his company, Starlink, to take over some aspects of the crucial air-traffic control system, which guides more than 45,000 flights and 2.9 million passengers every day. “This isn’t Twitter,” a former FAA senior executive says. “People die when FAA workers are distracted and processes are broken.” *(The Week magazine, March 21, 2025)***

**Ending the Education Department: Trump is “focused on fixing the wrong problem,” said Mary Ellen Klas in Bloomberg. The president blames the department for plummeting student achievement, but the pandemic is the real culprit. The gap between pre-Covid and post-Covid test scores widened across nearly all grades last year by an average of 36 percent for reading and 18 percent for math. “Trump has offered no plan to reverse this decline” and simply pumping money directly to the states – which already provide 90 percent of education funding – will make no difference. The Department of Education could be retooled to tackle this crisis, but the Trump administration would rather “wash its hands of that obligation.” (The Week magazine, April 4, 2025)**

**President Trump’s Environmental Protection Agency “is ready to make polluters great again.” said Hayes Brown in MSNBC.com. EPA director Lee Zeldin last week said he’ll cancel 31 environmental regulations, declaring it “the largest deregulatory announcement in U.S. history,” while Trump vowed to promote the opening of “hundreds” of coal-fired power plants. Coal produces far more pollutants than other energy sources and was being rapidly phased out, but in a social media post, Trump called coal “BEAUTIFUL” and “CLEAN.” Instead of curbing pollution and combating climate change, Zeldin said, the agency’s mission is to “lower the cost of buying a car, heating a home, and running a business.” Policies being scaled back or repealed include rules on greenhouse gas emissions. More than 1,100 staff scientists are being fired; environmental justice offices, which enforce laws helping poor and minority communities, are being shuttered; and the agency will no longer consider the costs of climate disasters in its policies. These “deeply misguided actions” will grant businesses “a new license to pollute” and “speed up the clock on the planet becoming unlivable.” *(The Week magazine, March 28, 2025)***

**Cuts to U.S. foreign aid have “slammed humanitarian projects worldwide,” said Gerald Imray in the Associated Press, and will inflict suffering on untold millions. Having ordered a 90-day freeze and review of all foreign assistance in January, the Trump administration announced last week that it was terminating 90 percent of USAID’s contracts and cutting $60 billion in U.S. assistance. The assault has “stunned” nonprofits whose efforts to fight hunger, disease, and instability are now shuttering. Among the 10,000 contracts canceled was funding for a nutrition program run by U.S. based NGO Alight, which fed 1,700 malnourished children daily in Somalia. Some “absolutely” will die, said Alight head Jocelyn Wyatt. Food assistance for more than 1 million Ethiopians has been halted, as have maternal health-care programs in Syria, refugee assistance in Thailand, and HIV prevention efforts that have saved millions of lives in Africa. “We are being pushed off a cliff,” said an HIV doctor in South Africa. (The Week magazine, March 14, 2025)**

**“Make America Healthy Again” actually means the opposite,” said Jonathan Cohn in The Bulwark. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. this week began laying off 10,000 HHS employees, in addition to 10,000 who’ve left voluntarily – a combined 25 percent workforce reduction that will make Americans more vulnerable. Kennedy is gutting the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institute if Health. Other divisions, handling everything from job safety to toxic substances, are merging into a new unit, the Administration for Healthy America, that will give Kennedy even more control. We’re losing programs that are working, like federal substance abuse aid that has cut overdose deaths by 24 percent in 12 months, saving 27,000 lives. Instead of curbing overdoses and infectious diseases, Kennedy is “going after vaccines.”**

**(The Week magazine, April 11, 2025)**

**Officials in the IRS and the Treasury Department expect a 10 percent drop in tax receipts by the April 15 filing deadline compared with last year, costing the government potentially more than $500 billion in revenue. The Trump administration has moved to fire nearly 20,000 IRS employees, and the agency has dropped tax investigations of high-value corporations and individuals. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 4, 2025)***

**Elon Musk thinks it’s wonderful to take a chain saw to the federal government and workforce – like playing Doom or Grand Theft Auto, with his fanboys cheering every fatal dismemberment. But in the real world, his DOGE gang’s reckless butchery, enabled and cheered on by President Trump, is going to not only cost tens of thousands of public servants their livelihoods but also cost many people their lives. In coming years, the Trump administration’s indifference, ignorance, and sadistic cruelty will quite literally kill hundreds of thousands here and abroad, and cause enormous suffering. The misery has already begun. Nicholas Enrich, a senior administrator at USAID, estimated in a memo leaked this week that the gutting of the agency’s staff and programs – which constitute less than 1 percent of federal spending – would cause 166,000 additional malaria deaths, 200,000 children to be paralyzed by polio, and 1 million children to suffer severe malnutrition. The freeze on $6.5 billion in funding for HIV treatment in Africa has cut off life-saving medication to at least 5.5 million people, and may cause a resurgence in the virus’ spread. So what? Says Musk. It’s time for USAID “to die.” Americans, too, will die, as funding is stripped for cancer research, infectious-disease prevention, hurricane forecasting, climate change response, Medicaid, and veterans’ care. (William Falk, in The Week magazine, March 14, 2025)**

**More than 130 workers from the National Nuclear Security Administration have taken DOGE buyouts, including scientists, safety experts, and engineers who build nuclear reactors and warheads. Before the departures, the agency had been struggling with chronic understaffing amid a massive project to modernize the nation’s nuclear arsenal. (The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 28, 2025)**

**Just days before announcing his immediate resignation this week, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy announced plans to reduce costs by eliminating 10,000 jobs through a voluntary retirement program and inviting Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency to help the agency identify “further efficiences.” (The Weerk magazine, April 4, 2025)**

**For decades, RFE/RL has been a beacon to those fighting oppression. Radio Free Europe first broadcast in shortwave to European countries suffering under communism, while Radio Liberty covered the Soviet Union; later the scope was broadened to other unfree lands, such as Iran and Afghanistan. These U.S.-funded stations don’t spout pro-American propaganda. They provide a forum for brave dissidents to report in their local languages on what is happening in their home countries. That our country is no longer willing to promote truth telling abroad is bad enough. Worse would be a U.S. administration spreading disinformation at home. The New York Times this week listed numerous lies disseminated already by this administration, from the White House to DOGE to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who flatly denied texting war plans to an unsecured group chat despite a transcript of the messages showing he did exactly that. That beacon of truth? It’s winking out. *(Susan Caskie, in The Week magazine, April 4, 2025)***

**Social Security workers are sounding warnings as the Trump administration gets closer to “the ‘third rail’ of politics,” said Tara Siegel Bernard in The New York Times. Elon Musk and his “crew of cost cutters” have entered the Social Security Administration “with a chain saw,” announcing plans to cut 12 percent of the workforce there, including some of the only employees who “can operate the agency’s old systems.” Last week, the agency said that new beneficiaries or those seeking to make changes can no longer do so over the phone – even as it shutters roughly 50 field offices*. (The Week magazine, April 4, 2025)***

**Cuts to USAID programs have resulted in more than 11,000 additional tuberculosis deaths over the past two months, according to the U.N.-affiliated Stop TB Partnership. TB infections are expected to climb 30 percent globally this year because of the cuts, raising the odds that a highly drug-resistant form of the disease could spread. *(CNN.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 11, 2025)***

**U.S. strands employees: The Trump administration’s freeze on USAID funding last month put the lives of American workers and their families in Congo in danger, USAID workers charged this week in multiple lawsuits. The workers were ordered to return to the U.S. on their own, with no government assistance, while Kinshasa had erupted in riots and looters were overrunning their homes. Some say they had to flee with just a backpack, leaving all their possessions behind, even the family dog. One worker said he had to pay thousands of dollars to get his family out in a harrowing journey by boat and plane. Another worker whose pregnant wife began hemorrhaging was told USAID had no money for medical evacuations; she remains in a local hospital. Because of the funding freeze, none of the workers have been reimbursed. The government has “completely failed,” said Randall Chester of the foreign service workers’ union. (The Week magazine, March 14, 2025)**

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