



Trump trade official defends tariffs against Australia despite US trade surplus

02:08

THE HONORABLE
JAMIESON GREER

April 8, 2025 - Donald Trump presidency news

By [Antoinette Radford](#), [Maureen Chowdhury](#), [Elise Hammond](#) and [Tori B. Powell](#), CNN

Updated 11:56 PM EDT, Tue April 8, 2025

What we covered here

- **Midnight tariff deadline:** US tariffs on Chinese imports are set to rise to an astounding 104%, while dozens of other countries, as well as the European Union, face a midnight deadline for levies that will range from 11% to 50%. China said it would “fight to the end” of the trade war and continue to stand up to Trump.
- **Setback for administration:** In a blow to the administration, a federal judge ruled today that the White House’s decision to punish the Associated Press by eliminating its access to President Donald Trump’s events, the Oval Office and Air Force One is unconstitutional.
- **Legal win:** Earlier, the Supreme Court said that it will allow several thousand probationary federal employees off the payroll while lower courts weigh whether downsizing efforts are legal.

All

Catch Up

Tariffs

Immigration

61 Posts

16 hr 47 min ago

Our live coverage of Donald Trump's presidency has ended for the day. Follow the latest updates or read through the posts below.



16 hr 35 min ago

Trump triples tariffs set to be imposed on low value goods from China

From CNN's Elisabeth Buchwald

Along with increasing China's overall tariff rate, President Donald Trump signed an executive order tonight tripling tariffs on goods worth less than \$800 from the country.

As it stands, packages under \$800 have been exempt from tariffs through the so-called "de minimus" exemption.

Initially, those goods were set to face tariffs of 30% come May 2. But Trump's latest executive order hiked the rates to 90%.

The bottom line: This will impact Americans who order from sites like Shein, Temu and AliExpress, likely leading to higher prices of the goods.



16 hr 54 min ago

American Library Association sues Trump administration over cuts to Institute of Museum and Library Services

From CNN's Betul Tuncer





Cindy Hohl speaks on stage during a panel at a festival in Washington, DC. on September 20, 2024. Jemal Countess/Getty Images

The American Library Association filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration yesterday, prompted by President Donald Trump's executive order to reduce the staffing and functions of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The lawsuit says the administration and the new Department of Government Efficiency “gutted” the IMLS, placing all but 12 of its staff on administrative leave, canceling grants the agency provides to libraries and museums across the country and firing all 23 members of the National Museum and Library Services Board.

The lawsuit, filed by Democracy Forward on behalf of the ALA and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, describes the administration’s cuts as “unlawful” and a step to “dismantle” the IMLS.

“Libraries play an important role in our democracy, from preserving history to providing access to government information, advancing literacy and civic engagement, and offering access to a variety of perspectives,” said ALA President Cindy Hohl in a statement. “These values are worth defending. We will not allow extremists to threaten our democracy by eliminating programs at IMLS and harming the children and communities who rely on libraries and the services and opportunities they provide.”

The ALA is seeking a preliminary injunction that would require the administration to reverse its

actions and pause any further steps it may take “to dissolve the agency,” according to the lawsuit.

CNN has reached out to DOGE for comment.



17 hr 49 min ago

Social Security loosens new anti-fraud policy after complaints

From CNN's Tami Luhby

The Social Security Administration is making yet another change to an anti-fraud policy it announced last month that sparked widespread concerns about its impact on senior citizens and people with disabilities.

Starting on April 14, Social Security will conduct an anti-fraud check on all telephone applications for benefits and flag claims that could be fraudulent, the agency announced today. Those who are flagged must verify their identity in person.

What's changed? Last month, Social Security said that people would no longer be able to apply for benefits over the phone as the agency worked to minimize fraud. Instead, people would have to apply through the “my Social Security” website, where they could verify their identity, or at a field office. But advocates said eliminating the phone option would be difficult for older Americans and people with disabilities who are not computer-savvy and can't easily travel to offices.

The following week, the agency said it would limit the new policy to those applying for retirement, survivor or family benefits and delay its rollout until mid-April.

AARP has been advocating with Social Security to better accommodate senior citizens.

“SSA's announcement that they are considering alternative means of identity verification for phone services is a good step, but more clarity is needed about how this will work for older Americans,” Nancy LeaMond, AARP executive vice president, said.



17 hr 42 min ago

USAID restores some lifesaving World Food Programme contracts

From CNN's Jennifer Hansler



The logo of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seen inside its headquarters in Washington, D.C., on February 3. Pete Kiehart/The Washington Post/Getty Images

The US Agency for International Development reversed course Tuesday and restored several of the World Food Programme's lifesaving humanitarian aid contracts after canceling them over the weekend, a source told CNN.

The reversal comes after the WFP warned Monday that the cuts could "amount to a death sentence for millions of people facing extreme hunger and starvation." The United Nations agency said it had received notice from the Trump administration "indicating that funding for emergency food assistance in 14 countries has been terminated."

According to the source, USAID restored its funding for WFP programs in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Ecuador and Somalia.

Jeremy Lewin, a top USAID official affiliated with the Department of Government Efficiency, requested in an email Tuesday that the terminations be rescinded.

“Sorry for all the back and forth on awards,” he wrote in the email, which was seen by CNN. “There are a lot of stakeholders and we need to do better about balancing these competing interests – that’s my fault and I take responsibility.”

Four contracts supporting the work of the International Organization for Migration in the Pacific region were also restored, the source said.

Still, many of USAID’s humanitarian aid funding remains cut, including all of its remaining contracts for Afghanistan and Yemen aid.

[Read more about the USAID cuts.](#)

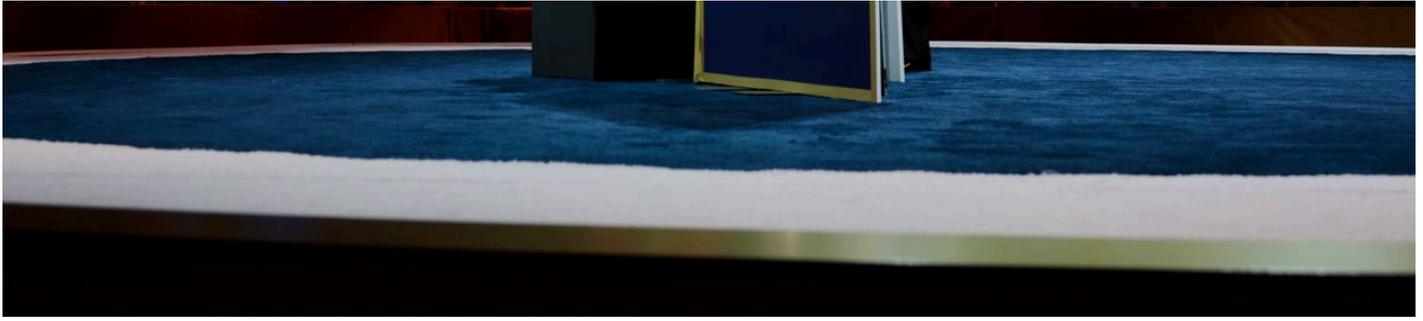


18 hr 25 min ago

Trump claims his tariffs are a "war with the world" before backpedaling and saying it "is not a war at all"

From CNN's Samantha Waldenberg and Kevin Liptak





US President Donald Trump speaks during the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) dinner at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC, on Tuesday. Anna MoneyMaker/Getty Images

President Donald Trump claimed his global tariff policy is a “war with the world” before backpedaling and saying that it “is not a war at all,” citing the countries that are sending world leaders to the US to negotiate.

“I do think that the war with the world, which is not a war at all because they’re all coming here. Japan is coming here as we speak. They’re in a plane flying, lots of them. All tough negotiators,” the president said tonight at the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) President’s Dinner in Washington, DC.

Trump added later that countries are calling him up and “kissing my a**” to try and make a trade deal.

“They are dying to make a deal,” Trump said, essentially saying that foreign leaders are groveling to avoid the tariffs: “Please, please sir, make a deal. I’ll do anything sir.”

US tariffs on Chinese imports are set to rise to an astounding 104% at midnight ET while dozens of other countries as well as the European Union face tariffs that will range from 11% to 50%.

This post was updated with more of Trump’s remarks at the NRCC dinner.



19 hr 38 min ago

Japan’s Nikkei stock index declines ahead of Trump's imposition of tariffs

From CNN’s John Liu in Hong Kong

Japan’s benchmark Nikkei 225 index fell more than 3% shortly after opening on Wednesday.

Investors are on edge over the imminent imposition of US President Donald Trump's "reciprocal" tariffs on dozens of countries, along with his threat to impose an additional 50% tariff on China — a move that risks further escalating an already volatile trade war.

The Nikkei 225, which tracks more than 200 of Japan's biggest listed companies, closed 6% higher on Tuesday, following a nearly 8% plunge on Monday.



19 hr 37 min ago

Trump urges House GOP to "stop grandstanding" and unite to pass the budget resolution

From CNN's Samantha Waldenberg

President Donald Trump urged House Republican members to "stop grandstanding" and unite to pass the Senate-passed budget resolution this week.

"We had a great meeting today, I think we are there. But just in case there are a couple of Republicans out there, you just gotta get there. Close your eyes and get there, it's a phenomenal bill ... just stop grandstanding," the president said.

The president's remarks at the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) President's Dinner in Washington, DC, come after he met with House Speaker Mike Johnson and other House GOP members at the White House to encourage some holdouts to vote for the bill.

Johnson left the White House meeting still adamant on moving forward with holding a vote on the measure this week — despite not having enough support from his conference at present.

"Great meeting. The president was very helpful and engaged. And we had a lot of members whose questions were answered," Johnson told reporters upon returning from the nearly two-hour long meeting.

CNN previously reported that the House Rules Committee has been told it could meet as early as 7 a.m. ET tomorrow morning to tee up the budget resolution, according to two sources familiar with the plans.



19 hr 27 min ago

Acting IRS commissioner resigns after agency reaches data-sharing deal with immigration authorities

From CNN's Rene Marsh



A sign for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is seen in Washington, DC, on February 13. Kayla Bartkowski/Getty Images

Melanie Krause, acting Internal Revenue Service commissioner, informed her staff today she is leaving the agency amid internal chaos and the exodus of several senior IRS officials, according to two current IRS employees and one former IRS employee.

Krause's decision to accept the agency's deferred resignation offer comes on the heels of the IRS and Department of Homeland Security finalizing an agreement yesterday to provide sensitive taxpayer data to federal immigration authorities to help the Trump administration locate and deport undocumented immigrants.

Multiple senior career IRS officials refused to sign the agreement because of grave concerns about its legality, according to a source with direct knowledge of the matter. This is why Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent ultimately ended up being the person who signed the “memorandum of understanding” with DHS, the source said.

The agreement between the agencies was one factor that played a role in Krause’s decision to leave, according to one source with knowledge of the situation. The source said that the last draft of the agreement that Krause had been involved with, and had reviewed, was different than the final agreement.

Krause learned about the details of the final agreement from the news, the source said.

There were other reasons Krause wanted to leave, the source said, including the direction the agency was going in and the exodus of multiple senior executive career employees within the last few days.

“As we focus on IT modernization and re-organize the agency to better serve the taxpayer, we are also in the midst of breaking down data silos that for too long have stood in the way of identifying waste, fraud, and abuse and bringing criminals to justice. We believe these goals are critical to a more efficient government and safer country,” a Treasury spokesperson said in a statement. “We wish Melanie well on her next endeavor.”

CNN’s Marshall Cohen contributed reporting to this post which was updated with details on the data-sharing agreement as well as a Treasury statement.



21 hr 6 min ago

Trump’s tariffs are set to go into effect in a few hours with China facing a massive levy. Here’s the latest

From CNN staff

President Donald Trump will hit China with an additional 84% in levies across all imports, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said today. That will mean all goods from the country will be subject to a tariff of at least 104%.

Meantime, so-called reciprocal tariffs are also set to go into effect on about 60 other countries.

The president has instructed his trade team to make “tailor-made” deals with leaders who want

to negotiate, Leavitt said.

Here's the latest on tariffs:

- **More tariffs on China:** China was already set to see tariffs increase by 34% tomorrow, but the president tacked on another 50% after Beijing didn't back off its promise to impose 34% retaliatory tariffs on US goods by noon today. China's Commerce Ministry said the country would "fight to the end" of the trade war and would continue to stand up to Trump. The Chinese embassy in Washington also called on the US to withdraw the new tariffs.
- **Other negotiations:** The Trump administration is prioritizing negotiations with Japan and South Korea, according to White House National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett. Trump said he had a "great call" with South Korea's acting president, noting that they have the "confines" of a deal. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni will meet with Trump next week, according to a person familiar. Additionally, the European Union told the US it is prepared to negotiate over buying more natural gas, the bloc's executive arm said.
- **Counter tariffs:** Canadian officials said the country's counter-tariffs on some US vehicles would come into effect just after midnight ET tonight. The countermeasure applies a 25% tariff to vehicles not covered by the US-Mexico-Canada Free Trade agreement, known as USMCA.
- **Manufacturing won't happen overnight:** Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said he expects businesses will take a wait-and-see attitude to find out how trade negotiations between the United States and its trading partners play out before they make any decision on building new plants. "They're not going to snap their fingers, find a green field site and build a factory."
- **Disputes in Trump's orbit:** A dispute appears to have escalated between two of Trump's top advisers — Elon Musk and Peter Navarro — over the wisdom of the new tariffs. Musk called Navarro a "moron" after he dismissed the Tesla founder as a "car assembler." Now, the White House said it will let the "public sparring continue," with Leavitt saying, "boys will be boys."
- **Senate hearing:** Trump's US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, testifying before the Senate Finance Committee, said the administration's trade concerns will likely not be fixed anytime soon, but stood by the president's tariff actions as a step in the right direction. "I know everyone's concerned about Wall Street. I'm just concerned about Main Street," Greer said.
- **US stock slump:** Cheap stocks and hope for signs of trade negotiation sent markets surging this morning — but that relief rally evaporated as the White House said it would

levy enormous tariffs on China. The Dow ended down 320 points, or 0.84% while the broader S&P 500 fell 1.57% and the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite slid 2.15%.

From CNN's Elise Hammond, Alejandra Jaramillo, Chris Isidore, Nectar Gan, Kevin Liptak, Elisabeth Buchwald, Yong Xiong, John Towfighi, David Goldman, Matt Egan, Max Saltman, Bryan Mena and Paula Newton.

Tracking the Dow

Five-year trend, with the percentage change from the previous closing value



Last updated: April 9, 2025 at 4:20 p.m. ET

Sources: CNN Markets; Yahoo! Finance

Graphic: Matt Stiles, CNN



21 hr 10 min ago

Trump says he had “very good meeting” with Johnson and some House Republicans ahead of budget resolution vote

From CNN's Samantha Waldenberg

President Donald Trump said in a post on Truth Social today that he had a “very good meeting” with House Speaker Mike Johnson and “some of our more Conservative Members” ahead of the House vote on the Senate-passed budget resolution this week.

“I had a very good meeting today with the Speaker of the House and some of our more Conservative Members, all great people. I let them know that, I AM FOR MAJOR SPENDING CUTS! WE ARE GOING TO DO REDUCTIONS, hopefully in excess of \$1 Trillion Dollars, all of which will go into ‘The One, Big, Beautiful Bill.’ I, along with House Members and Senators, will be pushing very hard to get these large scale Spending Cuts done, but we must get the Bill approved NOW,” the president wrote.

Johnson left the White House meeting still adamant on moving forward with holding a vote on the measure this week — despite not having enough support from his conference at present.

“Great meeting. The president was very helpful and engaged. And we had a lot of members whose questions were answered,” Johnson told reporters upon returning from the nearly two-hour long meeting.

CNN had previously reported that the House Rules Committee has been told it could meet as early as 7 a.m. ET tomorrow to tee up the budget resolution, according to two sources familiar with the plans.

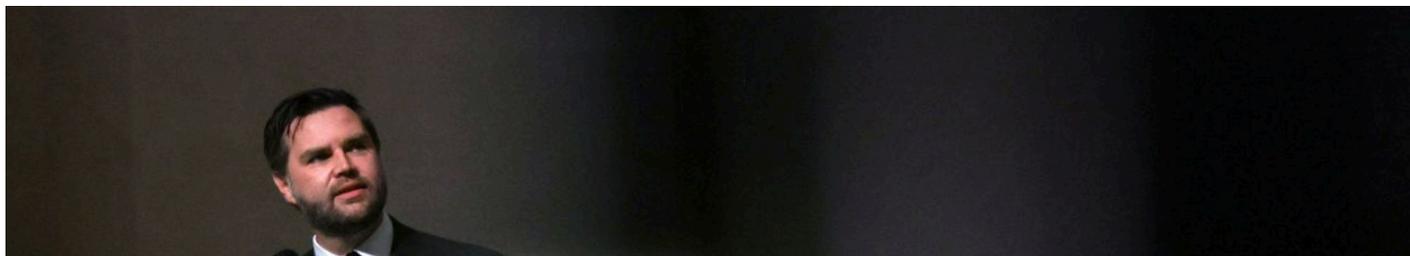
CNN's Morgan Rimmer, Veronica Stracqualursi and Haley Talbot contributed reporting.



21 hr 51 min ago

As the Republican National Committee's new finance chair, JD Vance fundraises in Texas

From CNN's Alayna Treene





Vice President-elect JD Vance delivers remarks as he attends a dinner in Washington, DC, on January 19. Kevin Mohatt/Reuters

Vice President JD Vance is participating today in two fundraisers for the Republican National Committee, according to invitations for the events obtained exclusively by CNN.

Vance, who was recently named the RNC's finance chair in an unprecedented move, attended a luncheon in Houston and will attend a dinner in Dallas that cost attendees anywhere from \$25,000 per couple to \$250,000 for co-chairs, per the invitations.

Correction: An earlier version of this post provided the wrong locations for today's luncheon and dinner.



21 hr 51 min ago

Maine's Department of Corrections says Justice Department terminated some federal grants

From CNN's Piper Hudspeth Blackburn and Michael Williams

The Justice Department terminated certain federal grants to its prison system as the Trump administration continues to feud with the state, according to Maine's Department of Corrections.

The department said in a news release today that the DOJ terminated federal grants for three

programs: one meant to address substance abuse disorder and recovery for those leaving the prison system, one meant to assist incarcerated parents with minor children and another meant to improve probation supervision outcomes.

The release comes hours after Attorney General Pamela Bondi told Fox News that the DOJ has “pulled all nonessential funding” from the Maine Department of Corrections over a dispute about a transgender inmate.

According to a copy of the “Notice of Termination” DOJ sent to the Maine’s Corrections Department, the awards were terminated because they “no longer effectuate Department priorities.”

“The Department has changed its priorities with respect to discretionary grant funding to focus on, among other things, more directly supporting certain law enforcement operations, combatting violent crime, protecting American children, and supporting American victims of trafficking and sexual assault, and better coordinating law enforcement efforts at all levels of government,” the notice said.

“The Department is evaluating the impacts to services from these funding terminations,” the Maine Department of Corrections said in the news release. “The Department is aware of related public statements by the United States Attorney General, the notice is the only communication that has been received by the Department.”



21 hr 49 min ago

Trump suggests he'll call on law firms to help with coal production and tariff deals

From CNN's Samantha Waldenberg





President Donald Trump gestures to members of the media before boarding Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House on April 3 in Washington, DC. Andrew Harnik/Getty Images

President Donald Trump suggested today that he will call on law firms that have made agreements with the White House to help with coal production and tariff deals.

“We’ll use some of those people, some of those great firms — they are great firms, too. They just had a bad moment, but we’re gonna use some of those firms to work with you on your leasing and your other things, and they’ll do a great job,” the president said surrounded by coal workers in the East Room of the White House, where he was signing executive orders related to energy.

Several law firms have made agreements with the Trump administration that they will provide pro bono legal services throughout the president’s second term, including Skadden Arps, Milbank and Willkie Farr.

Trump also suggested law firms could help secure the “tailored” deals on tariffs he’s seeking.

“We’re gonna have to use those great law firms, I think, to help us with that, but we’re gonna probably do that, actually. We’re gonna use them and we’re getting them for the right price. Because we have to — we need a lot of talent,” Trump said.



22 hr 35 min ago

Judge rejects lawsuit from nonprofits challenging suspension of citizenship training program grants

From CNN's Angelica Franganillo Diaz

A federal judge today rejected a lawsuit filed by nonprofit groups challenging the Trump administration's suspension of grants for citizenship training programs.

At the end of a nearly two-hour hearing in Maryland, District Judge Lydia Griggsby — a President Joe Biden nominee — said she did not have the authority to intervene in the dispute over the freezing of funds and believed that the Trump administration was likely to prevail on the merits of its argument that it had the discretion to pause those grants.

Bradley Girard, an attorney with the Democracy Forward Foundation representing the plaintiffs, argued that the court had the power to weigh in now because the lawsuit contested the “wholesale termination” of the grant program.

Justice Department attorney Jessica Dillon countered that the logic of a Supreme Court's ruling last week siding with the administration over the termination of Department of Education grants also applied in this case.

According to court filings, Congress has appropriated tens of millions of dollars annually for citizenship training programs, with a total of \$155 million allocated since 2009. The programs help immigrants complete naturalization applications, offer English language instruction and provide civics education.



22 hr 31 min ago

House GOP blowback mounts over Senate's budget blueprint

From CNN's Alison Main and Manu Raju

Several House Republicans blasted the Senate's budget blueprint that President Donald Trump is pressing them to adopt this week. Speaker Mike Johnson is trying to corral the votes to push it through his chamber and begin to advance the president's sweeping agenda.

House hardliners have raised major alarms at changes made by the Senate GOP, pointing to how senators watered down provisions seeking deeper spending cuts. Johnson can only afford to lose three House GOP votes this week and far more are warning they plan to oppose the

to pass since House GOP votes this week and far more are warning they plan to oppose the plan.

Here's what some Republicans are saying:

- **Rep. Chip Roy**, despite attending a White House meeting with Trump today, warned Johnson not to put the budget blueprint on the floor. “I’ve got a bill in front of me, and it’s a budget. And in my opinion and in my view, it will increase the deficit. And I didn’t come here to do that,” Roy said.
- **Rep. Eli Crane** told CNN he’s “leaning” no on the Senate plan, calling the cuts laid out by the Senate GOP “pathetic” and “a joke.” Crane said only “serious cuts” could get him to back the plan.
- **Rep. Ralph Norman** said he also is opposed to the plan, telling CNN he thinks there’s an “arithmetic problem,” as the proposed cuts amount to far less than the House version. Senators argue that the \$4 billion in cuts proposed in their blueprint are simply the minimum level — and that ultimately, they can go as high as the \$1.5 trillion sought by the House GOP.
- **Rep. Rich McCormick** said he hasn’t decided yet on whether he’ll vote for the blueprint. He said Republicans want to use it as a “tool and lever” to advance Trump’s broader agenda, but there’s “a lot of mistrust in that process right now so we’re trying to work through that right now with a bunch of members.”
- **Rep. Ryan Zinke** also expressed hesitations, but said he could support it “as long as I have assurances at the end of the day we’re not going to go in debt doing it.” He noted that there is a “cost on campaign promises” made by Trump, including extending 2017 tax cuts as well as other tax provisions.
- **Rep. Keith Self** told reporters he’s a no on the blueprint “as it stands.” The only thing that would get him to a yes, he said, is “a reasonable number of spending cuts” in the resolution, shooting down the idea of assurances on cuts in the future reconciliation legislation



19 hr 44 min ago

White House official says no military parade has been scheduled for June

From CNN's Samantha Waldenberg



The White House is seen under a cloudy sky in Washington, DC, on March 9. J. David Ake/Getty Images

No military parade has been scheduled for June of this year, a White House official told CNN today, despite defense and local officials saying that the early stages of planning have begun.

As [CNN has previously reported](#), two defense officials said the Trump administration is in the early stages of planning for a military parade to take place in Washington, DC, in June to commemorate the Army's 250th anniversary.

Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser on Monday also confirmed that the city is having discussions with the administration about it, a day after the Washington City Paper reported on the plans for a military parade to be held on June 14.

That date is both the 250th anniversary of the establishment of the US Army and President Donald Trump's 79th birthday.



22 hr 59 min ago

Troops who rejoined military before Trump policy on Covid vaccine will not receive backpay

From CNN's Haley Britzky

Dozens of US service members who rejoined the military after being discharged over their refusal to get vaccinated against Covid-19, but before a new Pentagon policy took effect earlier this year, will not receive backpay like their counterparts who are rejoining now.

“This guidance that we’ve published is specifically focused on service members that return to service under these policies,” Tim Dill, the official performing the duties of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, told reporters on Tuesday.

Dill said about 80 people across the department returned before the new policy was put into place. “That is also something, of course, that we can take a look at, that we have not addressed in this guidance,” he said.

Dill added that there is not currently a way for service members who rejoined after the policy was rescinded in 2023 “to put in for the same calculations that we’re doing for those who would return today.”

Some background: The Defense Department rescinded the requirement to get vaccinated in 2023, and troops have been able to rejoin the military since. Very few of the more than 8,000 troops who were discharged rejoined. It’s unclear how many people have shown interest thus far in rejoining the military, since President Donald Trump directed the Pentagon to begin forming policy around their return in an executive order in January.

On April 1, however the Pentagon established policy for providing backpay to individuals who rejoin the military under new policies from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.



23 hr 1 min ago

Canada’s counter tariffs on some US vehicles will go into effect at 12:01 a.m. ET, officials say

From CNN’s Max Saltman and Paula Newton

Canadian officials said today that their country’s counter-tariffs on some US vehicles would

come into effect just after midnight ET tonight.

“President Trump caused this trade crisis — and Canada is responding with purpose and with force,” Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a [statement posted on X](#) announcing the tariff’s date.

Mark Carney 
@MarkJCarney · [Follow](#) 

At 12:01 EDT tonight, Canada’s counter-tariffs will come into force.

There will be 25% tariffs on all non-CUSMA-compliant vehicles from the U.S., and 25% tariffs on the contents of CUSMA-compliant vehicles that are not from Canada or Mexico.

President Trump caused this trade [Show more](#)

2:45 PM · Apr 8, 2025 

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Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne added in separate post on X that “Canada will continue to respond with purpose and force to President Trump’s unjustified tariffs.”

Carney first [announced](#) the retaliatory plan last week.

The countermeasure applies a 25% tariff to vehicles not covered by the US-Mexico-Canada Free Trade agreement, known as USMCA.



22 hr 41 min ago

Federal judge says White House's punishment of the Associated Press is unconstitutional

From CNN's Devan Cole



AP attorney Charles Tobin, center left, talks with AP White House correspondent Zeke Miller, center with back to camera, and AP chief Washington photographer Evan Vucci, center right, outside the E. Barrett Prettyman Federal Courthouse on March 27 in Washington, DC. Kevin Wolf/AP

The White House's decision to punish the Associated Press by eliminating its access to President Donald Trump's events, the Oval Office and Air Force One is unconstitutional, a federal judge said today.

The preliminary injunction issued this afternoon against the White House by US District Judge Trevor McFadden, a Trump appointee, is a major blow to the administration's efforts to curtail the AP's access to the president based on news coverage it dislikes.



“The Government offers no other plausible explanation for its treatment of the AP. The Constitution forbids viewpoint discrimination, even in a nonpublic forum like the Oval Office,”
McFadden wrote in the 41-page ruling.

Lauren Easton, AP spokesperson, issued the following statement.

“We are gratified by the court’s decision. Today’s ruling affirms the fundamental right of the press and public to speak freely without government retaliation. This is a freedom guaranteed for all Americans in the U.S. Constitution. We look forward to continuing to provide factual, nonpartisan and independent coverage of the White House for billions of people around the world,” the statement read.

Earlier this year, Trump imposed a ban on the AP to punish the news organization over its decision to continue using the phrase “Gulf of Mexico” even though Trump renamed the body of water “Gulf of America.”

“The AP seeks restored eligibility for admission to the press pool and limited-access press events, untainted by an impermissible viewpoint-based exclusion. That is all the Court orders today: For the Government to put the AP on an equal playing field as similarly situated outlets, despite the AP’s use of disfavored terminology,” McFadden added later.

“The Court merely declares that the AP’s exclusion has been contrary to the First Amendment, and it enjoins the Government from continuing down that unlawful path.”

McFadden, however, did not immediately restore AP’s access. He delayed his order for one week for the White House to appeal.

This post was updated with a statement from the Associated Press.



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