



EXCLUSIVE

IMMIGRATION

Department of Homeland Security preparing to fire hundreds of senior leaders this week

The firings are a move not to reduce the size of the workforce but to get rid of people the administration sees as not on board with its goals.

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/ Updated

By Julia Ainsley

The Trump administration is preparing to fire hundreds of high-level Department of Homeland Security employees this week as part of a move to rid the country's third-largest agency of people deemed to be misaligned with the administration's goals, according to three sources familiar with the matter.

The sources said the Trump administration has a "centralized plan" and a list of people in high-level positions across every component of DHS who are to be targeted this week.

The firings will come on top of hundreds of more general cuts that began across DHS on Friday night, which targeted the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. Those firings were the latest in a governmentwide effort to reduce the federal workforce.

This week, the three sources told NBC News, career employees at high managerial levels, namely Senior Executive Service and General Schedule 15 employees, may be removed from agencies across DHS — not to reduce the size of the workforce but to remove employees whom the administration sees as potentially standing in the way of goals the Trump administration has for the agency.

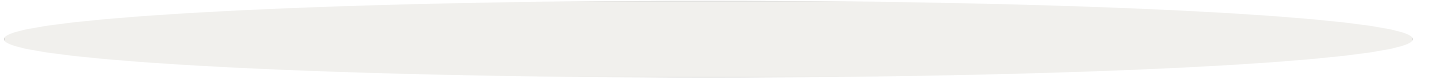
DHS, which includes Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, is the primary agency tasked with enforcing U.S. immigration law. Trump has relied heavily on CBP to secure the southwest border and on ICE to ramp up arrests and deportations of undocumented immigrants living in the United States.

The employees at those high levels "are career people who have an influence on policy and strategy in those positions," said a former senior Biden administration official, responding to news of the plan.

A Trump administration official defended the plan. Asked whether reducing the positions would make it harder for DHS to make good on Trump's immigration goals, the administration official said the administration is removing people who it believes "willfully grind things to a halt."

"These people put themselves in a terrible position, and they need to be removed," the Trump administration official said.

In a statement, a spokesperson for DHS said, "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."



Julia Ainsley

Julia Ainsley is the homeland security correspondent for NBC News and covers the Department of Homeland Security for the NBC News Investigative Unit.

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