

# RUSS VOUGHT THREATENS TO DO WHAT HE ALREADY DID

As I mentioned in this post, one problem with both shutdown politics and Democrats complaining about Hakeem Jeffries and Chuck Schumer trying to win them, is that the chosen genre for Hill beat and politics reporters is hopelessly stuck in a both-sides frame.

Take this 1,200-word article from – IMO – the best team in the business, that describes how, even with what Politico claims is a built-in advantage, Republicans are still blowing it because no one is on the same page.

Senate Republicans, led by Majority Leader John Thune, are trying to keep the message simple: The GOP wants to keep agencies open for a few more weeks while negotiations continue while Democrats are asking for unreasonable concessions.

Speaker Mike Johnson and the House GOP are all in on a message focusing on how the Democratic wish list would undo Republican-passed provisions barring undocumented immigrants from accessing public services.

And then there's President Donald Trump, who delved even deeper into the culture wars Tuesday when he accused the other party of seeking to "force Taxpayers to fund Transgender surgery for minors" as part of the negotiations – an accusation that has puzzled even some fellow Republicans.


The diverging messages from GOP leaders comes after Trump reversed his decision to hold a White House meeting with top Democratic leaders – an about-face that

came after Johnson and Thune privately warned him that it would undercut the party's negotiating position.

Taken together, the visible cracks in the GOP front are raising internal concerns as party leaders face off against Democrats who are largely united behind a plan to focus on health care – particularly an extension of expiring insurance subsidies.


"There have been some unforced errors, clearly," said one senior House GOP aide granted anonymity to speak candidly about Republicans' strategy so far.


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**White House budget office threatens mass firings if government shuts down**

The White House budget office is telling federal agencies to prepare plans for mass



The White House further scrambled the GOP strategy late Wednesday when it

circulated a draft memo instructing agencies to create plans for mass firings of federal workers if Democrats don't relent and a shutdown occurs. That alarmed some Hill Republicans who saw it as an unnecessary provocation that, in the words of one, "would give Democrats an excuse to vote against" the GOP-led stopgap – and muddy their message that it was Democrats, not Republicans, who were unreasonable hostage-takers.

What Vought succeeded in doing by threatening to do what he has already done – mass unlawful firings – is get a lot of press coverage. A number of outlets took the bait, claiming without any apparent rational thought that this would increase the pressure on Dems.

Most, when quoting Chuck Schumer's response, are excising a key bit: Just yesterday, GSA had to order a bunch of workers back on the job.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (N.Y.) says a new memo from the White House budget office warning that mass firings could be on the table if there's a government shutdown is "an attempt at intimidation."

Schumer, who was scheduled to meet with Trump at the White House Thursday to discuss a funding deal before Trump cancelled the meeting, predicted that federal courts would overturn any attempt by the administration to use a shutdown as a justification to fire thousands of federal workers.

"Donald Trump has been firing federal workers since day one – not to govern, but to scare. This is nothing new and has nothing to do with funding the government. These unnecessary firings will either be overturned in court **or the administration will end up hiring the workers back, just like they did as**

**recently as today,”** Schumer said in a statement late Wednesday. [my emphasis]

GSA just admitted that you can’t simply fire masses of people without incurring more costs down the road.

Hundreds of federal employees who lost their jobs in Elon Musk’s cost-cutting blitz are being asked to return to work.

The General Services Administration has given the employees – who managed government workspaces – until the end of the week to accept or decline reinstatement, according to an internal memo obtained by The Associated Press. Those who accept must report for duty on Oct. 6 after what amounts to a seven-month paid vacation, during which time the GSA in some cases racked up high costs – passed along to taxpayers – to stay in dozens of properties whose leases it had slated for termination or were allowed to expire.

“Ultimately, the outcome was the agency was left broken and understaffed,” said Chad Becker, a former GSA real estate official. “They didn’t have the people they needed to carry out basic functions.”

Becker, who represents owners with government leases at Arco Real Estate Solutions, said GSA has been in a “triage mode” for months. He said the sudden reversal of the downsizing reflects how Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency had gone too far, too fast.

And as Schumer noted, Vought is doing this whether or not there’s a shutdown. It is, in fact, one of the core reasons why Dems can’t simply pass a continuing resolution, because Vought has already usurped Congress’ authority.

How did the both-sides media not see this? How did they not understand that this makes Vought threat look like a desperate attempt to regain some advantage that Trump pissed away by scheduling a meeting but then – at Mike Johnson and John Thune's request – canceling?

Mike Lawler appears to understand it. He just talked over CNN's John Berman for 45 seconds to dodge a question about mass firings.

I remain agnostic about whether Dems can win this shutdown. This report, about how the courts would have to shut down most business in a matter of days, not weeks, cause me grave concern, for reasons I laid out here.

But thus far, Republicans seem intent on using the shutdown to demonstrate in more visible fashion the need for it.

If that's what you want to do, bring it!