

# EXHIBIT 17

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# Trump admits there's no 'legal path' for TikTok to pay the US government as part of a sale to an American company

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Sep 16, 2020, 3:52 PM



Jim Watson/AFP via Getty Images; Samantha Lee/Business Insider

**President Donald Trump acknowledged during a [press conference](#) Wednesday that TikTok couldn't legally pay the US government as part of a deal involving an American company.**

**"Amazingly, I find that you're not allowed to do that — you're not allowed to accept money," Trump told reporters.**

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**The president had previously claimed he could force TikTok and any US-based buyers to pay the Treasury Department a "very big" cut, though it was unclear that such an arrangement would be legal.**

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**Oracle has recently emerged as the favorite to acquire some of TikTok's US assets, but any deal is far from certain as a Sunday deadline looms.**

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President Donald Trump on Wednesday said the US government was not allowed to accept money as part of a proposed deal between TikTok and an American buyer.

"Amazingly, I find that you're not allowed to do that — you're not allowed to accept money," Trump told reporters during a press conference. "If they're willing to make big payments to the government, they're not allowed, because there's no way of doing that. There's no legal path to doing that."

Trump had previously claimed he would require the US Treasury Department to [receive a "very big" payment](#) as a condition of approving any deal involving the sale of TikTok or its assets to an American tech company, which Trump has attempted to force through [multiple executive orders](#).

Trump on Wednesday said that he had told government lawyers he wanted "a big chunk of that money to go to the United States government because we made it possible" but that lawyers indicated "there's no way of doing that."

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[Legal experts have cast doubt](#) on whether or how Trump could force such a payment, noting that there's no legal provision

explicitly allowing it and that the US bans other countries from  
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engaging in similar pay-to-play schemes.

The president appeared to not consider the matter fully settled, however, telling reporters: "We're looking into that right now."

Multiple reports have surfaced over the past few weeks as several hopeful buyers have raced to reach a deal with TikTok's Beijing-based parent company, ByteDance, ahead of a September 20 deadline. Microsoft was thought to have been leading the pack, but TikTok rejected its bid earlier this week, and [Oracle is now the apparent frontrunner](#) to form some type of partnership with TikTok.

Oracle submitted a proposal to the US government early this week, but it's [said to be facing roadblocks](#) as government officials weigh whether the proposed deal would do enough to address the national security concerns laid out by Trump in his executive order.

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Trump on Wednesday said he would be "briefed" on the deal Thursday morning, adding that any proposal needed to be "100% on national security" and that he's "not prepared to sign off on anything" at this point.



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