

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2025

Ms. Amy Gleason
Acting Administrator
U.S. DOGE Service
736 Jackson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear DOGE Administrator:

From day one of his administration, President Donald J. Trump entrusted Elon Musk, whose companies receive billions of dollars in government contracts and subsidies,¹ with the creation of the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Service, a super-agency cloaked in secrecy, which evidently has broad powers to shutter federal agencies, fire federal workers, and access the most sensitive government databases. We write today to demand that, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), you provide us, the U.S. Congress and the American people, with clear answers to basic questions about DOGE, including who is in charge, the scope of its authority over federal agencies and workers, what government data it has access to, and whether DOGE is serving the interests of the American people or the interests of Mr. Musk's companies and his foreign customers.

In public, President Trump has repeatedly touted the broad powers of Elon Musk and DOGE. As recently as the joint address to Congress, he reiterated once more: "I have created the brand-new Department of Government Efficiency, DOGE, perhaps you've heard of it, which is headed by Elon Musk."² Later that same week, President Trump warned his cabinet secretaries that "Elon and the group are gonna be watching them," and that if they failed to make the significant staffing cuts demanded by DOGE, "Elon will do the cutting."³

Yet, in court, the Trump Administration has been telling judges an entirely different story. In a recent lawsuit, Joshua Fisher, the head of the White House's Office of Administration, stated under penalties of perjury that Mr. Musk "is not an employee of the U.S. DOGE Service or U.S. DOGE Service Temporary Organization. Mr. Musk is not the U.S. DOGE Service Administrator."⁴ Mr. Musk also stated that he "has no actual or formal authority to make government decisions himself."⁵ Under pressure to clarify who—if not Elon Musk—ran DOGE, the White House finally identified someone: you, although you were apparently on a personal

¹ Desmond Butler, Trisha Thadani, Emmanuel Martinez, Aaron Gregg, Luis Melgar, Jonathan O'Connell & Dan Keating, *Elon Musk's business empire is built on \$38 billion in government funding*, WASH. POST (Feb. 26, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2025/elon-musk-business-government-contracts-funding/>.

² *Full Transcript of President Trump's Address to Congress*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 4, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/04/us/politics/transcript-trump-speech-congress.html>.

³ Marina Pitofsky, *Donald Trump warns his Cabinet that Elon Musk, DOGE "are gonna be watching them,"* USA TODAY (Mar. 6, 2025), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/03/06/trump-warns-cabinet-musk-doge-watching/81805660007/>.

⁴ Declaration of Joshua Fisher, *New Mexico v. Musk*, Case No. 1:25-cv-0429 (D.D.C. Feb. 12, 2025), <https://www.democracymatters.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-02-17-Declaration-of-Joshua-Fisher.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.*

vacation in Mexico at the time that your promotion was suddenly made public.⁶

These contradictory and confusing statements leave everything perfectly unclear except the inescapable conclusion that President Trump, Elon Musk, and the Administration have been consistently lying to the courts or to the American people, or both, about who is in charge of DOGE.

Report after report shows DOGE has been responsible for shuttering entire government agencies and getting rid of more than 100,000 federal workers.⁷ The Acting Director of the Social Security Administration (SSA) has reported that it is DOGE—and not he—who has been firing thousands of workers and slashing the agency’s budget.⁸ DOGE’s spending freeze targets more than 2,600 federal programs, including those that provide funding for school meals, veteran services, wildfire prevention, and cancer research.⁹ Among DOGE’s earliest targets was the Consumer Protection Financial Bureau, an entity that has returned \$21 billion back to more than 200 million American consumers who have been defrauded by banks, loan servicers, debt collectors, and payday lenders, just because Mr. Musk decided he wanted it “deleted.”¹⁰

DOGE employees, including teenage and twenty-something computer programmers from Mr. Musk’s own companies,¹¹ have been unleashed on the government’s most sensitive databases—from those containing national security and classified information to those containing the personal financial information of all Americans to those containing the trade secrets and sensitive commercial data of Mr. Musk’s competitors.¹² DOGE’s own technologists resigned en masse from the newly-christened agency, refusing to use their skills to “jeopardize Americans’ sensitive data.”¹³ Reports and court cases have revealed that DOGE has been stunningly careless with this data, including by feeding sensitive data into AI software, and using a private, unauthorized server to access government data.¹⁴ Even more incredibly, when asked

⁶ Nicholas Nehamas, *A Mystery Solved: Amy Gleason, a Former Health Care Executive, Is Running DOGE*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 25, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/25/us/politics/amy-gleason-doge-administrator.html>.

⁷ Nathan Layne & Aleksandra Michalska, *DOGE job cuts bring pain to Trump heartland*, REUTERS (Mar. 8, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/doge-job-cuts-shake-trump-voting-west-virginia-town-2025-03-07/>.

⁸ Tami Luhby & Jeremy Herb, *‘A disruptive effect’: How slashing staff at the Social Security Administration is sparking fears the system could collapse*, CNN (Mar. 8, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/08/politics/social-security-administration-staff-cuts/index.html> (“It’s DOGE—not the DOGE kids, it’s the DOGE management.”)

⁹ *Which Federal Programs Are Under Scrutiny? The Budget Office Named 2,600 of Them.*, N.Y. TIMES (Jan. 28, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/01/28/upshot/federal-programs-funding-trump-omb.html>.

¹⁰ Jason Powell, *Attacks on the CFPB highlight DOGE’s pretense*, CREW (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/news/analysis/attacks-on-the-cfpb-highlight-doges-pretense/>; Edward Helmore, *Elon Musk calls to ‘delete’ US consumer finance watchdog*, THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 28, 2024), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/nov/28/elon-musk-cfpb-trump>.

¹¹ Vittoria Elliott, *The Young, Inexperienced Engineers Aiding Elon Musk’s Government Takeover*, WIRED (Feb. 2, 2025) <https://www.wired.com/story/elon-musk-government-young-engineers/>.

¹² Charlie Warzel, et al., *DOGE Has “God Mode” Access to Government Data*, THE ATLANTIC (Feb. 19, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2025/02/doge-god-mode-access/681719/>.

¹³ Letter from twenty-one anonymous DOGE employees to Susan Wiles, Chief of Staff, Executive Office of the President (Feb. 25, 2025), <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25544180-usds-resignation-letter/>.

¹⁴ Zack Whittaker, *The biggest breach of US government data is under way*, TECH CRUNCH (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://techcrunch.com/2025/02/07/doge-biggest-breach-of-united-states-government-data-under-way/>; Lynn F.

why DOGE staffers need access to Treasury payment systems which store massive amounts of personal information about everyday Americans, President Trump admitted, “Well, it doesn’t...”¹⁵ Americans deserve a complete accounting of what government databases DOGE has access to; the extent of DOGE staffers’ ability not only to view but also override and rewrite these databases; what precautions, if any, they are taking to protect this highly sensitive data; and why DOGE is accessing vast amounts of data that President Trump admits it does not need.

This lack of transparency is all the more troubling in light of Mr. Musk’s flagrant conflicts of interest. In the last decade, Mr. Musk’s companies, including Tesla and SpaceX, have received more than \$18 billion in federal contracts.¹⁶ His companies have been “investigated or fined 32 times by 11 agencies.”¹⁷ Mr. Musk now exercises enormous control over the very agencies that oversee those contracts and investigate his companies and their rivals. Far from stepping away from his government contracts, Mr. Musk appears to be using his new-found powers to get even more, elbowing out competitors and re-assigning contracts to his own companies. Federal Aviation Administration officials have ordered staff—in a manner apparently meant to avoid a paper trail—to find “tens of millions” for a deal with Mr. Musk’s Starlink.¹⁸ Billions more are reportedly at stake if the Administration gives Starlink a contract that currently exists with Verizon.¹⁹ Mr. Musk’s AI company, xAI, could gain a huge advantage over its rivals if allowed to train on a treasure trove of government data. Mr. Musk’s electric car company, Tesla, has its second-largest market and one of its key factories in China,²⁰ and Mr. Musk has deep ties not just to the Chinese government,²¹ but also to Russia’s Vladimir Putin.²² Just last week, to help Tesla’s cratering stock price and slumping sales amidst a global backlash, including in China where more than a third of all Teslas are sold, Mr. Musk and President Trump “turned the South Lawn of the White House into a temporary Tesla showroom,” in flagrant

Freedman, *DOGE Has Access to Our Personal Information: What You Need to Know*, NAT’L L. REV. (Feb. 13, 2025), https://natlawreview.com/article/privacy-tip-431-doge-has-access-our-personal-information-what-you-need-know#google_vignette.

¹⁵ Tommy Christopher, *Trump Blurts Stunning Aside When Fox’s Doocy Presses Him on DOGE Access—“We Don’t Have Very Good Security,”* MEDIAITE (Feb. 8, 2025), <https://www.mediaite.com/news/trump-blurts-stunning-aside-when-fox-news-reporter-presses-him-on-doge-access-we-dont-have-very-good-security-in-us/>.

¹⁶ Peter Stone, *Elon Musk’s conflicts of interest ‘should scare every American’, experts say*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 27, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/27/elon-musk-conflicts-of-interest>.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Wes Davis, *FAA staff reportedly ordered to find funding for deal with Musk’s Starlink*, THE VERGE (Mar. 2, 2025), <https://www.theverge.com/news/622502/faa-orders-staff-find-funding-starlink-verizon-deal>; Andrew Perez & Asawin Suebsaeng, *FAA Officials Ordered Staff to Find Funding for Elon Musk’s Starlink*, ROLLING STONE (Mar. 2, 2025), <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/elon-musk-starlink-faa-officials-find-funding-1235285246/>.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Tesla’s China sales hit record high in 2024, bucking global decline*, REUTERS (Jan. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/teslas-china-sales-rise-record-high-83000-december-2025-01-03/>.

²¹ Mandy Taheri, *Elon Musk’s Business Ties to China—What to Know as MAGA Turns on Trump Ally*, NEWSWEEK (Dec. 27, 2024), <https://www.newsweek.com/elon-musk-business-ties-china-2006722>; Jianli Yang, *Elon Musk’s glaring conflicts of interest deserve more attention*, THE HILL (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://thehill.com/opinion/5122059-elons-musk-space-starlink-concerns/>.

²² Natalie Korach, *Russian Oligarch’s Investments in Elon Musk’s X Raise Questions About Potential Putin Connections*, THE WRAP (Aug. 26, 2024), <https://www.yahoo.com/news/russian-oligarchs-investments-elon-musk-194258467.html>.

disregard of ethics rules.²³ What assurances do the American people have that Mr. Musk is putting our nation's interests before those of his companies and foreign clients?

Transparency is also necessary given DOGE's demonstrated incompetence. After the Trump Administration fired 18 inspectors general—the government's actual anti-waste, fraud, and abuse watchdogs, who year-after-year return billions of dollars to federal taxpayers—DOGE has attempted to claim credit for non-existent savings. Its so-called "wall of receipts" has been revealed as a baseless publicity stunt. DOGE was forced to remove thousands of entries amounting to billions of dollars that had been erroneously claimed as savings.²⁴

The Administration and Mr. Musk have hidden behind a veil of secrecy as they systematically dismantle the federal government of the United States. The Administration has repeatedly refused to respond to basic congressional oversight requests regarding DOGE's activities. Democrats on the House Oversight Committee tried to subpoena Mr. Musk to appear before Congress and provide answers, but the subpoena was voted down by Committee Republicans.²⁵ Mr. Musk's willingness to meet with only Republicans behind closed doors makes a travesty of accountability to the people.²⁶

The American people deserve answers, and we are committed to using every tool at our disposal to expose the truth about DOGE's operations. The Trump Administration's own Office of Information Policy recognizes that FOIA is "a vital part of our democracy."²⁷ As the Supreme Court observed, "The basic purpose of FOIA is to ensure an informed citizenry, vital to the functioning of a democratic society, needed to check against corruption and to hold the governors accountable to the governed."²⁸ In fact, Elon Musk declared late last year that, "There should be no need for FOIA requests"²⁹ – presumably because the default for DOGE would be "maximum transparency."³⁰ He has utterly failed to follow through on that promise.

We are citizens of a strong democracy and not subjects of an oligarchical techno-state. Like Joe Biden before him, Donald Trump was elected President and not king. By filing these FOIA requests, which every American has the right to make in order to demand transparency from our government, we demand to know about DOGE's leadership structure, legal authority, and potential conflicts of interest; its involvement with the government-wide firing of personnel; and its treatment of sensitive data and AI. The President, Mr. Musk, and DOGE can and will be

²³ David Ingram, *Trump Turns The White House Lawn Into A Tesla Showroom*, NBC NEWS (Mar. 11, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/elon-musk/trump-musk-tesla-white-house-showroom-buys-car-rcna195905>.

²⁴ David Fahrenthold, et al., *Struggling With Errors, DOGE Deletes Billions More From List of Savings*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/03/us/politics/doge-musk-contracts-wall.html>.

²⁵ Daniella Diaz, *House Democrats try, and fail, to subpoena Musk*, POLITICO (Feb. 6, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/live-updates/2025/02/05/congress/dems-try-to-subpoena-musk-00202777>.

²⁶ See Lisa Mascaro, *Elon Musk comes to Capitol Hill to meet with Republicans who discuss turning DOGE cuts into law*, AP (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-musk-doge-cuts-congress-5f2101c129924c9d416437aca05e1e11>.

²⁷ FOIA.gov, *What is FOIA?*, <https://www.foia.gov/about.html> (last visited Mar. 8, 2025).

²⁸ *N.L.R.B. v. Robbins Tire & Rubber Co.*, 437 U.S. 214, 242 (1978).

²⁹ Elon Musk (@elonmusk), X (Nov. 3, 2024, 9:19 AM), <https://x.com/elonmusk/status/1853079605596340235?lang=en>.

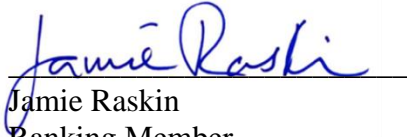
³⁰ *Id.*

Ms. Amy Gleason

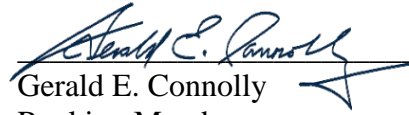
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held accountable to the American people, the original and ultimate source of all sovereign power in the United States of America.

Sincerely,



Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight
and Government Reform

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman
House Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable James Comer, Chairman
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform