

Democrats and Republicans express support for unelected billionaires' plans to slash government and social spending

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"The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."

—Chapter 1 *The Communist Manifesto*

On Thursday, Republicans and some Democrats welcomed unelected billionaires Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy to Capitol Hill to meet with lawmakers behind closed doors and discuss massive spending cuts to the entire federal government. The round of meetings was the first of several that will be held with the aim of restructuring the government to better serve the interests of the financial oligarchy.

To this end, Musk and Ramaswamy held closed-door meetings with virtually the entire Republican Conference, including with Speaker of the House Mike Johnson and soon-to-be Senate Majority Leader John Thune, to discuss not only slashing the government workforce but eviscerating government programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security that overwhelmingly benefit low-income workers and serve workers and their families in retirement.

In a comment posted in the *Washington Post* headlined "The 'cut spending' conversation finally arrives at Medicare," columnist Philip Bump noted that spending on Medicare is "equivalent to 95 percent of the amount spent on national defense."

This means that those interested in cutting federal spending—like President-elect Donald Trump's allies (and fellow billionaires) Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy—were almost necessarily going to eventually arrive at the idea that the government should spend less on programs such as Medicare and [Medicaid] specifically.

Speaking to reporters following the meeting with Musk and Ramaswamy on Thursday, South Carolina Representative Ralph Norman declared, "Nothing is sacrosanct. Nothing. They're going to put everything on the table."

Commenting on Norman's remarks, a FOX Business television host repeated, "Everything is on the table and that includes Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid."

Speaking to reporters in Washington on Thursday, Speaker Johnson lent his support to "DOGE ... the Department of Government Efficiency." Johnson said, "We have long lamented the size and scope of the government that has grown too large. And let me be frank about

this, government is too big, it does too many things and it does almost nothing well."

He added that "Elon and Vivek ... both of these gentlemen have run very successful organizations, they are innovators and they are forward-thinkers, so that's what we need right now."

Johnson added,

You are going to see a bicameral cooperation and it will, by the way, be bipartisan, over the last 24-48 hours you've seen a number of our Democratic colleagues both in the Senate and the House who have said, "You know what, sign me up, I want to be a part of this as well." So we welcome that. It should be a bipartisan effort.

Republican House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (Louisiana) told reporters on Thursday that they "just started the DOGE caucus in Congress and there are some Democrats that joined it as well as Republicans." Scalise said the caucus has been talking with "Vivek and Elon to let them know ... we are talking about items that add up to hundreds of billions of dollars, or more."

Scalise noted that some of the cuts would be done via executive action under Trump, while others would be legislative. Asked about cuts to Social Security and Medicaid, he responded, "We talked about those as well. And you think about work requirements in Medicaid for example. Social Security verification on a lot of these welfare programs."

Georgia Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Trump sycophant and chair of the new DOGE subcommittee located within the House Oversight and Accountability Committee, told reporters Thursday that the meeting with Musk and Ramaswamy "went fantastic."

She said their "biggest concern is our debt as a country," adding, "It doesn't matter where you fall on the political divide, this debt is going to crush every single one of us."

Greene added:

All we talked about was cutting spending. Elon and Vivek talked about having a "naughty list" and a "nice list" for

members of Congress and senators and how we vote and how we are spending the American people's money.

Democrats and those that caucus with them in both chambers have already indicated their support for the billionaire-led DOGE initiative.

Pennsylvania Senator John Fetterman, an ardent supporter of Israel's genocide in Gaza, told reporters he "admired Mr. Musk," adding, "He has been involved in very important parts of American society, AI, SpaceX and other kinds of things."

Commenting on the class solidarity between the Republicans and Democrats on slashing programs for the working class and their families, Fetterman added:

Yes, he's on a different team, but that doesn't make me an enemy. I don't be, automatically, become a critic. It's like, hey, he has made, he has made our economy and our nation better, and our politics are different and I don't agree with some of the things he might say, but that doesn't make him, like I said, an enemy.

Former chair of Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign, California Representative Ro Khanna tweeted on December 5:

"I'm ready to work with @doge, @elonmusk + @VivekGRamaswamy to slash waste. I have a track record of doing so."

He called for a "Truman Committee" to "ensure Americans get their money's worth with DOD spending."

Later the same day, Khanna noted that his previous post, which was retweeted and boosted by Musk, had "23 million plus views" on X (formerly Twitter), the "most any post of mine has had in 9 years in Congress."

From this, Khanna concluded, "Millions of Americans want us to work with @DOGE to cut wasteful spending," adding that it was "common sense."

In an interview with *Business Insider* posted that same day, Khanna said any opposition to proposed spending cuts "will be much more effective and reasonable if we're willing to work with them on areas where there is government fraud and abuse."

Representative Jared Moskowitz (Democrat-Florida) likewise told *Insider* that some of the recommendations, "I'm sure, will be horrible," but that a "broken clock is right twice a day, so if there are things that they find that we can improve, shouldn't we give it a chance?"

In another interview with NPR on DOGE, Moskowitz declared, "When it comes to the budget, I think fiscal conservatism is a good thing."

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders has also stated in multiple interviews his willingness to work with Musk and Trump to accomplish their goals.

In an appearance on the *New York Times'* *The Daily* podcast last

month, Sanders offered praise for Musk, saying, "Look, Elon Musk is a very, very aggressive and capable business person, very impressive in what he's accomplished, and he says I can do more in a week than the government can do in, you know, five years, and in some ways he is right."

On December 1, Sanders tweeted, "Elon Musk is right. The Pentagon, with a budget of \$886 billion, just failed its 7th audit in a row. It's lost track of billions. Last year, only 13 senators voted against the Military Industrial Complex and a defense budget full of waste and fraud. That must change."

Musk replied to Sanders' tweet with two American flag emojis and wrote in a later tweet, referring to Sanders, "Maybe we can find some common ground."

The genuflection of politicians from both parties before the billionaires and their plans for social devastation marks another stage in the protracted crisis of American democracy, which is incompatible with endless war abroad and staggering levels of social inequality domestically.

Finance capital, as Lenin wrote in *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism* (1916), is "reaction all down the line," noting that in both foreign and domestic affairs, "finance capital strives for domination, not freedom."

The domination of finance capital is expressed in the elections themselves. Both Harris and Trump ran right-wing campaigns promising to attack immigrants while not infringing on the wealth of the billionaires.

In the case of Musk and Trump, multiple outlets, including the *New York Times* and *Sludge*, reported that Musk spent over a quarter of a billion dollars backing Trump's election.

The latest batch of Federal Election Commission reports shows that Musk spent some \$40.5 million in checks as part of his rigged lottery. Overall, the *Times* found that Musk and "entities he controls disclosed about \$277 million in donations to federal groups this cycle."

This, however, is not all the money Musk spent electing Trump and his Republican allies. The newspaper noted that Musk's "total spending on the election is not yet known—and may never be," adding that he spent at least \$12 million trying to elect Republican senators.

Musk and Trump's other billionaire backers expect a return on their investment. In addition to social spending cuts, Musk and other financial swindlers want further cuts to regulations that impede financial speculation and protect workers' health and safety.

The Democrats' willingness to work with Trump and his fascist conspirators underscores that the opposition to oligarchic rule will not come from above but from below—from the working class against both big business parties and their social and economic system.



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