

Trump grants Musk access to every American's data to spearhead social spending cuts

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In the two weeks since Donald Trump took office, the character of his administration as a government of, by and for the oligarchy has become undeniable. Extraordinary power has been handed to the world's richest man, Elon Musk, with complete disregard for legality and democratic process.

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), the entity Musk now controls, is spearheading a massive wrecking operation aimed at dismantling social programs, destroying jobs and consolidating corporate dictatorship over every aspect of American society.

Trump has granted Musk unprecedented control of the personal data of virtually every American citizen. Two of Musk's top aides, now designated as temporary Treasury employees, have been given full access to the Bureau of Fiscal Service, which processes over 1 billion federal transactions annually—including Social Security and other retirement payments, income tax payments and refunds, and the paychecks of all federal government employees.

A court order issued Thursday afternoon temporarily barred Musk's aides from sharing this information with him or other DOGE agents, pending a full hearing on Friday. However, the trajectory of Trump's policy and Musk's activities is unmistakable. While the White House and Treasury insist that DOGE's access is "read-only," Musk himself boasted that his aides were already intervening in the federal payments system to halt what he arbitrarily deemed illegal or fraudulent transactions.

Concerns have been raised that Musk's IT aides are creating a "back door" into the Treasury system, allowing Trump to bypass Congress in the next fiscal crisis, expected when federal spending hits the legal debt ceiling in mid-March. This would give the White House unilateral control over federal payments. This would allow Trump to proceed as he wanted to during shutdowns in his first term, but could not—ensuring obligations to bondholders, weapons manufacturers, and the military-intelligence apparatus are

met while defaulting on essential programs like education funding, Medicaid reimbursements and even Social Security checks.

Further escalating its reach, DOGE gained access Wednesday to select databases of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, which manages \$1.5 trillion in payments—one-quarter of the federal budget. Without providing any evidence, Musk claimed on X that Medicare was "where the big money fraud is happening." While DOGE aides have begun reviewing payment and contracting systems, they have yet to gain access to databases containing personal and health information on nearly 150 million Americans.

In another major front of the Musk-Trump social counterrevolution, a federal judge temporarily blocked the Thursday midnight deadline for a "deferred resignation" plan targeting 2.3 million federal workers. A memorandum from the Office of Personnel Management on Monday gave employees just three days to opt into a severance package, offering their regular salaries through September 30, 2025, in exchange for leaving their jobs.

Federal employee unions challenged the "offer" in court, arguing it was illegal since there is no guarantee of federal funding beyond mid-March, when the debt ceiling is expected to be breached. With Congress yet to pass a budget for the current fiscal year, which ends September 30, workers would effectively be forfeiting their jobs for a promise that could be rescinded within weeks.

The Trump administration claimed that 50,000 workers have signed up for the deferred resignation package, but this is less than a quarter of the 200,000 jobs the White House has targeted for elimination. The separation offer was apparently drafted by DOGE and modeled on a similar memo Musk issued to Twitter employees after his takeover, which resulted in mass layoffs and job buyouts.

The job destruction plan is aimed at gutting critical social programs. For example, the largest single group of federal employees—over 100,000 nurses caring for military veterans

through the Department of Veterans Affairs—are already severely overworked, like nurses across the broader US healthcare system. Cutting 10 percent of these positions under the Trump-Musk plan would be catastrophic for patients and could lead to the effective collapse of the VA.

DOGE agents have also arrived at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which plays a crucial role in monitoring hurricanes and other extreme weather events. Meanwhile, at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), newly confirmed chief Lee Zeldin has already targeted 1,000 jobs, ordering that all workers with less than a year’s seniority be placed on notice for potential termination.

Musk’s role in this social wrecking operation is of enormous significance. He is an open fascist sympathizer—evidenced by his embrace of Germany’s neo-Nazi AfD—and one of Trump’s most powerful financial backers. The obscene spectacle of the world’s richest man slashing aid to the poor, sick and elderly under the guise of eliminating “waste, fraud and abuse” is not lost on the working class. Musk has become the embodiment of the financial oligarchy’s stranglehold over American society.

The White House has classified Musk as a “special government employee,” exempting him from most conflict-of-interest and financial disclosure rules. He is “special” in another way, as House Republicans demonstrated by blocking a proposal to have Musk testify before the House Government Oversight Committee about his role in restructuring the federal government.

In this environment, which adjectives like “nightmarish” and “Orwellian” seem entirely inadequate to describe, the role of the Democratic Party combines collaboration with empty posturing.

Congressional Democratic leaders have claimed to oppose Trump’s attacks on federal workers and on social spending programs, although they have done little or nothing to stop them.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer condemned DOGE, in words, saying, “An unelected shadow government is conducting a hostile takeover of the federal government.” But Schumer and other top Democrats have attacked Musk not as a representative of the class of billionaire oligarchs, but as one whose extensive business interests in China call into question his loyalty to American imperialism.

MSNBC host Lawrence O’Donnell, a key media ally of the Democrats, raised the question, “What are the chances that Elon Musk would let his friends in the Chinese government know a little bit more or a lot more about the inner workings of the United States Treasury? Does anyone think there is a zero chance of that happening?”

Meanwhile, Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom of California met with Trump in the White House for an hour on Wednesday, discussing recovery operations after the disastrous wildfires in Los Angeles.

Newsom came out issuing a statement that said: “Thank you, President Trump, for coming to our communities to see this first hand and meeting with me today to continue our joint efforts to support people impacted.” The governor did not reveal if his discussion with Trump included the massive military effort to police the US-Mexico border, including in California, or the stepped up raids in immigrant communities.

The massive assault on social programs, of which the past week’s events are only an initial step, is not fundamentally a product of the personal characteristics of Trump or Musk. Rather, it reflects the social physiognomy of the capitalist oligarchy itself. The Trump administration’s efforts to establish the framework of dictatorial rule—spearheaded through the attack on immigrants—are, in their essence, an attack on the entire working class.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* has stressed, the Trump administration represents a violent realignment of the state to correspond to the social character of American capitalism.

There can be no struggle against Trump and his fascist policies within the framework of the Democratic Party, which, like the Republicans, is a political instrument of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus.

The alternative lies in the independent mobilization of the working class. The Socialist Equality Party is spearheading the fight for rank-and-file committees in workplaces, neighborhoods, universities and immigrant communities to wage a counteroffensive against this fascist administration. We say that the developing opposition to the Trump regime must be based on international working class unity and directed toward the fight for socialism, the only program that can defeat the dictatorship of the oligarchs and reorganize society to meet human needs, not private profit.



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