

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 6, 2025

The Honorable Scott Bessent  
Secretary  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent:

We write to express our concern with your decision to grant Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and his team access to critically important federal payment systems. Reporting has indicated that your decision came after days of pushback from a career, nonpartisan civil servant, David Lebryk, who served under 11 Treasury Secretaries of both parties raised concerns about this move.<sup>1</sup> In fiscal year 2024, the Department of the Treasury processed nearly 88 percent of all federal payments, including the approximately 81 million payments every month for Medicare, Social Security and veterans' benefits.<sup>2</sup> These payments are essential for beneficiaries and any disruptions would cause lasting harm for everyday Americans.

Treasury's federal payment systems also contain highly sensitive personal information, which makes it all the more concerning that access is being given to Mr. Musk and his associates. Not only does DOGE now have access to the personal information of our constituents, many of whom have contacted our office with concerns, but he may also soon have the tools to unlawfully shut down specific payments that he disagrees with.<sup>3</sup> DOGE may also be able to use this sensitive information to gain an advantage over individuals and companies that pose competition to Mr. Musk's businesses. This could even include withholding payments to federal employees who are on administrative leave.

Initial reports indicated that you gave DOGE access to the payment systems on a "read-only" basis, and you have stated that is the case for Tom Krause, a long-time tech executive.<sup>4</sup> However, other reporting has stated that Marko Elez, a member of Mr. Musk's team, has or had administrator-level privileges and can in fact write code to Treasury payment systems, including the Payment Automation Manager and Secure Payment System.<sup>5</sup> Just hours ago, the Wall Street Journal reported that Mr. Elez has resigned after the Journal linked him to racist posts, but his activities while at Treasury are still critical to understanding what actions have been taken

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/01/us/politics/elon-musk-doge-federal-payments-system.html>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/elon-musks-doge-getting-access-to-payment-system-that-does-out-trillions-to-americans-5625adf0>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0009>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.wired.com/story/elon-musk-associate-bfs-federal-payment-system/>

regarding these payments systems.<sup>6</sup> Last night, it appears that an agreement was reached to prevent further expansion of access to payment records, but we continue to have concerns about the impact on people's privacy and the stability of financial architecture, as well as questions about what has transpired.

Today, CNN has reported that Mr. Krause attempted to use the Treasury Department to shut off payments to the U.S. Agency for International Development. He was rebuffed, but this reporting emphasizes that his activities are not only about gathering data on payments, but also have involved attempts to restrict the actual payments Treasury makes.

We are also concerned about the level of secrecy surrounding the role of the DOGE team at Treasury. We believe it is important that Treasury employees that may wish to share information with Congress, Inspectors General and others understand that their ability to disclose violations of laws, rules or regulations, or gross mismanagement or abuse of authority are protected under the Whistleblower Protection Act.

- In detail, what level of access has each member of the DOGE team, including Mr. Elez while he was at Treasury, been given to both Treasury's federal payment records and its payment systems, both currently and in the past?
- Have any changes to Treasury's federal payments or its payment systems been made either by a member of the DOGE team or at their direction as of the time of this letter?
- Has Treasury taken any actions to discourage discussion of the activities of the DOGE team at Treasury, especially within the Bureau of the Fiscal Service?
- What steps has Treasury taken to ensure that Treasury employees understand their protections should they wish to share information with Congress and others?

We urge you to reconsider this potentially dangerous decision and work to ensure that Americans can trust their sensitive personal information is protected from Mr. Musk and his associates. Thank you for your prompt attention to this issue and given the urgent nature of this issue, we respectfully request a response to this letter as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



Maggie Goodlander  
Member of Congress

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.wsj.com/tech/doge-staffer-resigns-over-racist-posts-d9f11a93?mod=Searchresults\\_pos1&page=1](https://www.wsj.com/tech/doge-staffer-resigns-over-racist-posts-d9f11a93?mod=Searchresults_pos1&page=1)