

From: [Diana Veilleux](#)
To: "Rechter, Peter (Commerce)"
Cc: [Elizabeth D. Horton](#); [Shelley K. Finlayson](#)
Subject: FW: Senate Commerce Committee Inquiry: Statements by Commerce Secretary Lutnick
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 10:17:27 AM

Good Morning

We have received your email.

Best regards,

Diana J. Veilleux

Diana J. Veilleux

Chief

Legal, External Affairs and Performance Branch

Program Counsel Division

Office of Government Ethics

(202) 482-9203

Diana.veilleux@oge.gov

Visit OGE's website at: www.oge.gov

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From: Rechter, Peter (Commerce) <(b)(6)>
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Shelley K. Finlayson <skfinlay@oge.gov>; Diana Veilleux <djveille@oge.gov>; Contact OGE <contactoge@oge.gov>
Cc: Helms, Lila (Commerce) <(b)(6)>; Porter, Melissa (Commerce) <(b)(6)>
Subject: RE: Senate Commerce Committee Inquiry: Statements by Commerce Secretary Lutnick

CAUTION: This email originated from outside OGE. Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding. If you believe this email is suspicious, please forward it to spam@oge.gov for additional analysis.

Hello,

Circling back here – please confirm receipt of the below email. We appreciate it.

Thanks,
Peter

(b)(6) phone number

(b)(6) email address

From: Rechter, Peter (Commerce) <(b)(6)>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 2:14 PM
To: shelley.finlayson@oge.gov; diana.veilleux@oge.gov
Cc: Helms, Lila (Commerce) <(b)(6)>; Porter, Melissa (Commerce) <(b)(6)>
Subject: Senate Commerce Committee Inquiry: Statements by Commerce Secretary Lutnick

Hello,

We are reaching out on behalf of the Democratic staff on the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. We are aware that Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick made the [following statements](#) regarding Elon Musk and Mr. Musk's companies on March 19, 2025, during an appearance on the national television program, "Jesse Watters Primetime":

"I think, if you want to learn something on this show tonight, buy Tesla. It's unbelievable that this guy's stock is this cheap. It will never be this cheap again when people understand the things he is building, the robots he's building, the technology he is building. People are going to be dreaming of today and Jesse Watters and thinking, 'Gosh, I should have bought Elon Musk's stock.' I mean, who wouldn't invest in Elon Musk? You got to be kidding me."

Secretary Lutnick went on to say about Mr. Musk:

"He's building the coolest robots you've ever seen. Go online and look up 'Optimus,' it is the coolest thing you've ever seen. We're all going to be buying robots, they're going to cost about \$30,000. You're going to be buying a Tesla robot, and anybody that doesn't buy a Tesla robot is going to be silly."

During this television appearance, Secretary Lutnick was introduced as "the United States Secretary of Commerce" and referred to as "Mr. Secretary" throughout the interview.

As you know, federal officers are generally prohibited from using their public office for the endorsement of any product, service, or enterprise. Federal officers are also generally prohibited from using their position to imply the government sanctions or endorses another individual's personal activities.

We are concerned that Secretary Lutnick's statements may have violated these and related ethics rules and wanted to bring these concerns to your attention. We request that the Office of Government Ethics review these statements and refer this matter as appropriate.

Please confirm receipt of this email.

Sincerely,
Peter

Peter Rechter

Senior Counsel

U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (Minority)

(b)(6) phone number

(b)(6) email

From: USOGE
To: (b)(6) private citizen's email address
Subject: RE: Urgent Call for Action to Investigate and Advocate for Elon Musk's Removal from Government Influence
Date: Wednesday, February 5, 2025 3:25:55 PM

Hello,

It is unclear what records you are seeking from the Office of Government Ethics (OGE). A FOIA request must specify agency records are being requested. The FOIA does not require agencies to create new records or answer questions when responding to requests.

Until agency OGE receives additional information from you that clarifies what records are being requested, your request will be deemed not received in accordance with the FOIA, at 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A). You may also confer with OGE's FOIA Public Liaison at 202-482-9216 in order to clarify the request. OGE's FOIA Public Liaison is available for assisting in reducing delays, increasing transparency and understanding of the status of requests, and assisting in the resolution of disputes.

From: (b)(6) private citizen's email address <(b)(6) private citizen's email address>
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2025 9:04 PM
To: USOGE <usoge@oge.gov>
Subject: Urgent Call for Action to Investigate and Advocate for Elon Musk's Removal from Government Influence

CAUTION: This email originated from outside OGE. Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding. If you believe this email is suspicious, please forward it to spam@oge.gov for additional analysis.

I am reaching out to urge your organization to take immediate action in investigating and advocating against Elon Musk's growing and dangerous influence over the federal government. Recent developments indicate that Musk has been granted **unprecedented access to the U.S. Treasury's federal payment system** through his so-called **Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)**—raising alarming concerns about national security, government integrity, and public accountability.

Reports have revealed that Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent granted DOGE control over **sensitive financial data**, including Social Security and Medicare benefits, federal employee salaries, and tax refunds. Additionally, Musk's influence has contributed to the **dismantling of agencies such as USAID**, disrupting critical humanitarian aid worldwide. **Federal employee unions have already filed lawsuits against the Treasury, citing violations of federal law and privacy concerns.**

This situation demands **urgent intervention and advocacy** from organizations like yours, which are dedicated to **government transparency, corporate accountability, and the protection of democratic institutions**. Specifically, I urge you to:

1. **Investigate Musk's role in government operations and his unchecked access to federal payment systems.**
2. **Advocate for congressional action** to remove Musk from any position of influence over public funds, agencies, and national security-related matters.

3. **Support stricter regulations** preventing private individuals from gaining excessive control over government functions.

Musk's ability to wield power with little to no oversight is a **direct threat to democratic governance** and demands immediate action. The American public deserves a government that operates with integrity, transparency, and accountability—free from the influence of corporate billionaires who seek to undermine it.

I strongly urge your organization to **publicly address these issues, support legal action where applicable, and work alongside lawmakers to ensure Musk is removed from any governmental influence.** Please let me know how I can further support this effort and what steps your organization plans to take in response.

Thank you for your time and commitment to upholding democracy and accountability. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

(b)(6) private citizen

From: [Grant Anderson](#)
To: [Shelley K. Finlayson](#)
Subject: The Hill: Top Treasury official retires over DOGE request for access to payment systems
Date: Friday, January 31, 2025 7:03:55 PM

Top Treasury official retires over DOGE request for access to payment systems

1/31/25

By Alex Gangitano

[The Hill](#)

David Lebryk, a top Treasury Department nonpolitical career official, retired on Friday after clashing with Elon Musk allies over government payment systems, a source familiar with the matter told The Hill on condition of anonymity.

The Washington Post first reported on Lebryk's departure, citing people with knowledge of the matter. Upon his inauguration, President Trump had appointed Lebryk acting Treasury secretary while nominee Scott Bessent was waiting to be confirmed.

Lebryk's retirement follows a dispute over a request from the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), which Musk oversees, for access to the payment system that Treasury officials use to disburse funds.

The Post reported that a small number of career officials at Treasury have control over the systems, which are run by the Bureau of the Fiscal Service. Lebryk was previously first commissioner of the bureau.

The systems control \$6 trillion annually, distributed as Social Security, Medicare, salaries for federal workers, payments to government contractors, payments to grant recipients and tax refunds.

Lebryk served in the Treasury Department for three decades and was appointed the fiscal assistant secretary in 2014, which is the most senior career position at the agency.

The Treasury Department and DOGE did not respond to a request for comment Lebryk's retirement.

From: [Grant Anderson](#)
To: [LEGTEAM](#)
Subject: Transcript
Date: Friday, February 14, 2025 2:14:50 PM

[CNN transcript](#) of President Trump's comments yesterday:

([24 seconds](#)) UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: You mentioned Elon Musk and the efforts that he's undertaken with your authority. You granted him new authority this week. Will he secure any new government contracts while he's working on DOGE?

TRUMP: No, not -- not if there's a conflict. If there's no conflict, I guess, what difference does it make? But we won't let him do any of anything having to do with the conflict.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: Are you personally checking to make sure there's no conflicts of interest?

TRUMP: Yes, I am. I am.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: He answers to you?

TRUMP: Sure. He does. First of all, he wouldn't do it. And second of all, we're not going to let him do anything where there's a conflict of interest.

...

([1 minute](#)) UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: When Elon Musk met with Prime Minister Modi earlier today, did he do so as an American CEO or did he do so as a representative of the U.S. government?

TRUMP: Are you talking about me?

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: No. Elon Musk.

TRUMP: Elon? I don't know. He -- they met and I assume he wants to do business in India. But India is a very hard place to do business in because of the tariffs. They -- they have the highest tariffs just about in the world. And it's a hard place to do business.

No, I would imagine he met possibly because, you know, he's running a company. He's doing this as a -- as something that he's felt strongly about for a long time because he sees what's happening.