

Elon Musk Overseeing a Department for Transparency and Accountability Is the Ultimate Troll | Opinion

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Comer Looks Forward To Working With Elon Musk's 'Efficiency Task Force'

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By **Amber Scorah and Rebecca Petras**
Co-Founders of Psst.org

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The famously two-faced and litigious [Elon Musk](#) has brought his double standards on free speech and accountability to a new department in Washington created to increase "government efficiency." What could go wrong?

For billionaire Musk, whose businesses already appear to be [benefiting](#) since the announcement—not much. But for those who want to ensure actual government accountability, it could be quite grim.

Despite the words "government" and "efficiency" in its title, the new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) will operate outside of government, with Musk and businessman [Vivek Ramaswamy](#) at the helm. So, while [Donald Trump said](#) the commission's goal will be to "make the U.S. government accountable to 'WE THE PEOPLE,'" the men in charge won't actually be accountable to anyone, as they will not be subject to standard ethics guidelines requiring disclosure of potential conflicts of interest (of which there are many here).



Elon Musk listens as President-elect Donald Trump speaks during a meeting with the House GOP conference, Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2024, in Washington. **ALLISON ROBBERT/POOL VIA AP IMAGES**

The creation of DOGE is an object example of Trump's intention to select people to run agencies they have [publicly reviled](#), and are vocally eager to dismantle. "We expect certain agencies to be deleted outright," [Ramaswamy recently said](#). If the irony wasn't already thick enough, given Musk's own history of mocking and [suppressing whistleblowers](#) in his companies and [blocking](#) people who criticize him on X, the unseriousness of the newly formed agency is underlined by its acronym DOGE, which winks at Elon Musk's favorite meme, the Dogecoin (a cryptocurrency coin that was created as [a joke](#)).

In the Musk world view, transparency and accountability are entirely subjective. In March 2022, several weeks before launching his bid to buy [Twitter](#), Musk declared himself a "[free speech absolutist](#)." Nine months later, after completing the acquisition, Musk began [banning prominent journalists](#) from the platform. Companies that took their [advertising dollars elsewhere](#) were not seen as exercising their free will. Musk sued them, describing the companies' decision as a "conspiracy" and a "boycott," and asking a federal court in Texas to prosecute them to the fullest.

On a more personal and dangerous level, Musk has repeatedly gone after individuals who criticize him. In October, he called for [the prosecution of Victoria Nuland](#), the U.S. undersecretary of state for political affairs, insinuating that she (and not Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#)) was responsible for igniting the war in Ukraine. In a more chilling incident, Musk endorsed a tweet accusing ex-Twitter trust and safety exec, Yoel Roth, of being sympathetic to pedophilia, forcing Roth to [move out of his home](#).

And then there is Musk's treatment of [Tesla](#) whistleblowers, of which there are many. [Cristina Balan](#), the early Tesla employee who raised safety concerns directly with Musk in 2020, and the two [Tesla employees](#) who filed safety concerns with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in 2021, were

summarily terminated. More recently, there is the case of [Lukasz Krupski](#), a Polish-born service technician who was injured putting out a fire at a Tesla delivery site in Norway, then leaked thousands of pages of internal accident data revealing the company's awareness of autopilot safety issues. Krupski told the [BBC](#) that whistleblowing on Tesla had been "terrifying."

Musk's vast personal and business entanglements in the federal government also draw into question Musk's claims that the commission will deliver "maximum transparency." Tesla has benefited from government subsidies and some government contracts, but [SpaceX](#) is the real juggernaut. It has received over \$19 billion in government contracts since 2008, [according to FedScout](#). Via its Starlink satellite service, SpaceX has amply demonstrated its ability to [shut down the internet](#) at will. Given the taxpayer dollars at stake here, can we expect Musk to subject his own companies to the scrutiny promised by DOGE?

If government entities are to be run by people with such well-documented conflicts of interest, the task of ensuring their accountability will increasingly fall on ordinary citizens. Speaking up about violations of public trust takes enormous courage—even under the best of circumstances. To ensure that people of integrity can still sound the alarm about wrongdoing, we must increase protections for whistleblowers and create simple, transparent mechanisms for coming forward with public interest information.

Having worked with [whistleblowers](#) from Musk's own companies, we've learned that there is safety in numbers. By building systems that democratize whistleblowing—that make it possible for those who have observed wrongdoing to come forward with concerning information, even if they weren't in a position to observe the full picture—we can reduce individual risk, better protecting courageous fellow citizens while increasing the amount of public interest information that can make it to the world.

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Elon Musk



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That said, DOGE appears to be [hiring](#). Its newly created X account is inviting "super high-IQ small-government revolutionaries willing to work 80+ hours per week" to DM their resumes. If you're an intelligent person who believes the government should be transparent and accountable, perhaps you should apply. And if, during one of your 16-hour workdays, you observe something you believe the public should know, we'll be here to help.

Amber Scoriah and Rebecca Petras are co-founders of [Psst.org](#).

The views expressed in this article are the writers' own.
