



POLITICS

Treasury tells Congress that DOGE has 'Read Only' access to payment systems



1 of 2 | Elon Musk listens as President Donald Trump speaks after taking the oath of office at the 60th Presidential Inauguration in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Monday, Jan. 20, 2025. (Kevin Lamarque/Pool Photo via AP)

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WASHINGTON (AP) — A [Treasury Department](#) official wrote a letter Tuesday to federal lawmakers saying that a tech executive working with Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency will have "read-only access" to the government's payment system.

The official sent the letter [out of concerns](#) from members of Congress that DOGE's involvement with the payment system for the federal government could lead to security risks or missed payments for programs such as Social Security and Medicare. Lawmakers are also concerned that Musk, an

unelected citizen, wields too much power within the U.S. government and states blatantly on his social media platform that DOGE will shut down payments to organizations.

DOGE, a Trump administration task force assigned to find ways to [fire federal workers](#), cut programs and slash federal regulations, has raised concerns about its intentions and overruling of career officials at multiple agencies. Democratic lawmakers have voiced frustration over the lack of transparency and public accountability, saying that Musk's people might illegally withhold payments to suit their political agenda.

The Treasury official said that the ongoing "review" has "not caused payments for obligations such as Social Security and Medicare to be delayed or re-routed."

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The letter said that Tom Krause, who is also listed online as the CEO of Cloud Software Group, was working at Treasury as a "special government employee," which subjects him to less stringent rules on ethics and financial disclosures than other workers. The letter also said that Krause is conducting the effort in coordination with career treasury officials.

Krause did not respond to an Associated Press phone call request for comment on his involvement with DOGE and the Treasury Department.

Treasury's payments are managed by the Fiscal Service, which conducts over 1.2 billion transactions annually and accounts for 90% of federal disbursements. The official said the review is about payment integrity.

However, some [Democrats are not convinced](#) about the notion that DOGE, Musk and Krause have read-only access.

"Some Republicans are trying to suggest that Musk only has 'viewing access' to Treasury's highly sensitive payment system as if that's acceptable either," said Sen. Patty Murray, (D-Wash.), vice chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, in a statement.

"But why on earth should we believe that — particularly when he is saying the exact opposite loudly and repeatedly for everyone to see?"

For instance, Musk has tweeted on his social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, that DOGE has shut down payments to a Lutheran charity. "The corruption and waste is being rooted out in real-

time," [Musk said on X](#), adding that DOGE is "rapidly shutting down" payments to the charity.

At least one lawsuit has been filed, by a group of labor unions and advocates, seeking to stop Treasury from giving DOGE and Musk access to the payment systems.

DOGE's access to the agency's payment systems came after Treasury's acting Deputy Secretary David Lebryk resigned from his position at Treasury after more than 30 years of service. The Washington Post on Friday reported that Lebryk resigned from his position after Musk and his DOGE organization requested access to sensitive Treasury data.

"The Fiscal Service performs some of the most vital functions in government," Lebryk said in a letter to Treasury employees. "Our work may be unknown to most of the public, but that doesn't mean it isn't exceptionally important. I am grateful for having been able to work alongside some of the nation's best and most talented operations staff."

The letter to lawmakers was sent Tuesday afternoon, while hundreds of demonstrators appeared in front of U.S. Treasury, held signs, pounded drums and chanted slogans protesting the Treasury Department's decision to hand over access to sensitive payment systems to DOGE.

People chanted "Deport Musk," "Down with Trump" and "Do your Job Congress!" More than a dozen Democratic lawmakers spoke to the crowd.

"Elon musk is seizing power from the American people," Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) said. "He's here to seize power for himself, we are here to fight back."

Maureen Jais-Mick, a Montgomery County resident showed up to the event to protest the "blatant power grab" by Musk and the DOGE committee. "This amounts to a coup," she said.

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