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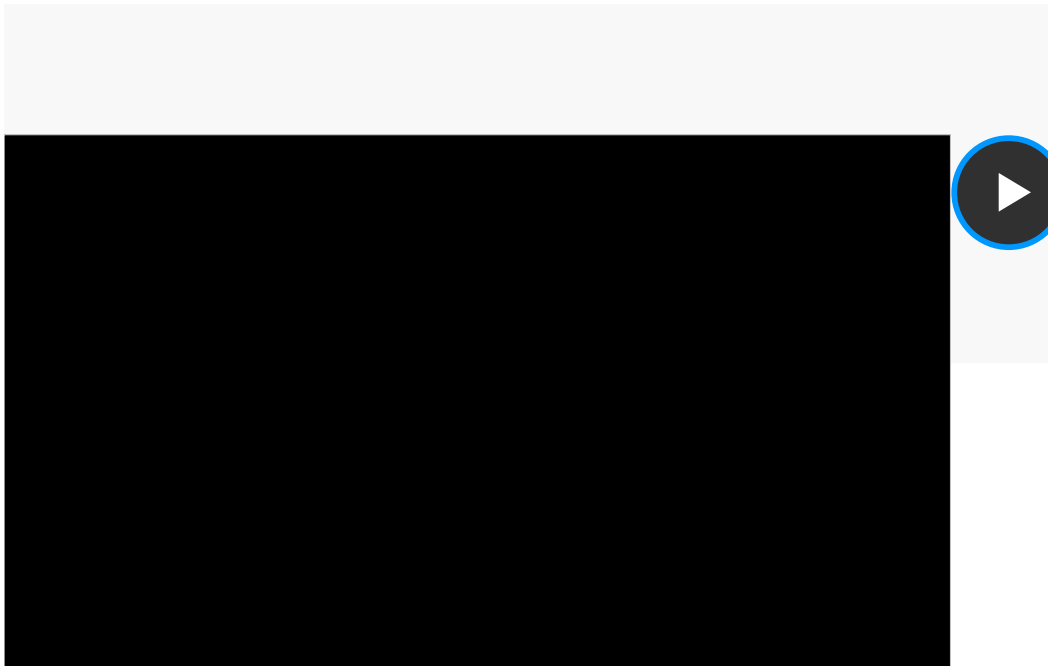
Students sue Education Department, allege DOGE is accessing private data

An Education Department official familiar with the matter confirmed to USA TODAY that Musk's team has gained access to vast databases with students' personal and financial information.

 **Zachary Schermele** USA TODAY

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Trump wants Education secretary to 'put herself out of a job' in push to close department
President Donald Trump told reporters that Linda McMahon, his nominee to lead the Education Dept., should eventually "put herself out of a job."

WASHINGTON – College students in California sued the U.S. Department of Education Friday, alleging Elon Musk’s government efficiency team illegally accessed the agency’s confidential student data.

The University of California Student Association's [lawsuit in D.C. federal court](#) accuses the tech billionaire’s Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, of violating privacy laws and federal regulations by infiltrating computer systems that house student financial aid information.

The allegations [stem from reporting](#) in The Washington Post that the Musk-assembled task force has been allowed to see datasets containing the personal information of droves of students who receive federal financial aid. An Education Department employee familiar with the matter who was not authorized to discuss the issue publicly confirmed to USA TODAY that Musk’s team has gained access to vast databases. Those records include the National Student Loan Database System and the Common Origination and Disbursement System, which both list millions of students’ personal and financial information.

[USA TODAY reported Wednesday](#) that a top Education Department official confirmed at a meeting this week that Musk’s DOGE team is reviewing the agency’s operations, according to two people in attendance.



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The transformation of Elon Musk from tech pioneer to Trump insider

Elon Musk, Tesla, SpaceX and X CEO, contributed over \$250 million dollars to supporting President Donald Trump's 2024 election campaign.

An Education Department spokesperson said the agency does not comment on pending litigation and did not respond to questions about DOGE’s involvement in its work.

Read more: [Confusion spreads at Education Department amid buyout deadline](#)

The lawsuit seeks to prevent the DOGE team from viewing sensitive Education Department data. Aditi Hariharan, the president of the University of California Student Association, said in a statement Friday that students across the country “did not consent to having our personal information shared with an unelected and non-Congressionally approved entity.”

“When students apply for financial aid, enter their social security number on an application, or agree to take out a federal loan, they are trusting that their information will be secure,” Hariharan said. “Releasing student loan borrowers’ personal data is an incredible betrayal by our government, and we hope the Courts will quickly hold the Department of Education accountable.”

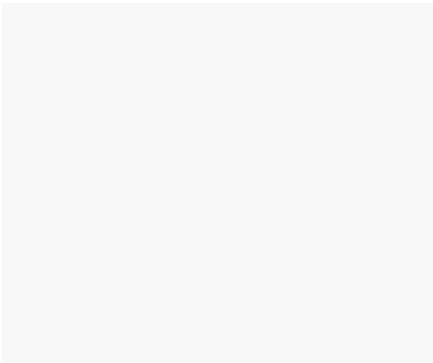
On Thursday, Rep. Bobby Scott, a Virginia Democrat, asked the Government Accountability Office, a nonpartisan government watchdog, to investigate DOGE’s actions at many federal agencies, including the Education Department. The congressman told the government watchdog to “immediately assess” the security of the agency’s IT systems. A [group of Democratic senators](#) also sent a letter to Denise Carter, the acting education secretary, on Thursday demanding more information about the situation.

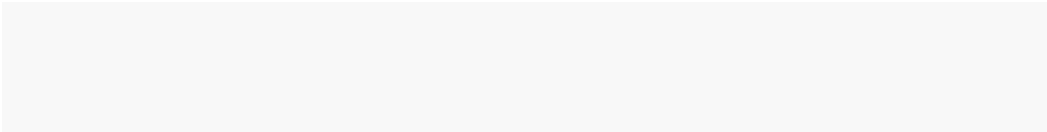
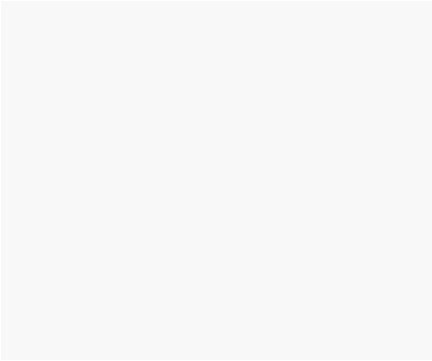
The Government Accountability Office confirmed on Friday it had received Scott’s request for an investigation.

Zachary Schermele is an education reporter for USA TODAY. You can reach him by email at zschermele@usatoday.com. Follow him on X at [@ZachSchermele](https://twitter.com/ZachSchermele) and Bluesky at [@zachschermele.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/zachschermele.bsky.social).



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