

Politics

NDP MP Angus calls for investigation into Elon Musk over potential election interference

MP says Musk has the power to 'easily impact our electoral integrity'

[Elizabeth Thompson](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jan 25, 2025 4:00 AM EST | Last Updated: January 25



Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk gestures as he speaks during the U.S. President Donald Trump's inaugural parade event earlier this month. A Canadian lawmaker is concerned about potential election interference by Musk and is asking Elections Canada to investigate. (Angela Weiss/AFP/Getty Images)

New Democrat MP Charlie Angus is calling on Elections Canada to launch an investigation into Elon Musk and his social media platform X, saying he is concerned about potential interference by the tech billionaire in the next federal election.

In a two-page letter to Chief Electoral Officer Stéphane Perrault, Angus said Musk has been playing a role in recent elections in a variety of countries, donating millions of dollars to conservative candidates and using X, formerly known as Twitter, to amplify the political messages of candidates he favours.

"He has formed alliances with right-wing populist leaders, amplified extremist influencers and spread hate disinformation towards marginal groups," Angus wrote.

Concerns over 'X's huge power'

Now, Angus wrote, Musk is [getting involved in Canadian politics](#), "praising the current leader of the Conservative Party, aligning himself with far-right influencers and their platforms and criticizing the current prime minister."

Musk, the world's richest man, was born in South Africa but lives in the United States and holds citizenship there. His mother is from Saskatchewan, and Musk moved to Canada in 1989, attending Queen's University for two years. CBC News was unable to

confirm whether Musk currently holds Canadian citizenship.

Angus wrote that X "serves as a pathway for Russian misinformation and the rise of hate and threats in Canada. Given X's huge power, any overt efforts by Mr. Musk to support a particular party or leader could easily impact our electoral integrity."

Questions from CBC News to Musk and to two of his companies have not yet received a response.

Angus called on Perrault to launch an investigation into X "and possible avenues for manipulation by Mr. Musk or right-wing influencers," which he did not name, as well as to insist during the upcoming federal election campaign that Musk commit to transparency of the algorithms used on his platform to allow election observers to see whether X is interfering by promoting or suppressing political posts.

Angus's letter comes two weeks after Meta owner Mark Zuckerberg announced that his social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram would [move away from fact-checking in the U.S. and would ease content restrictions worldwide](#) — something experts say could make it easier for online misinformation and foreign interference to influence the next Canadian election.

In an interview, Angus said what he sees on other platforms is concerning but his letter targeted X because he believes Musk's apparent willingness to [use X's algorithm](#) to intervene in other countries' affairs makes him the biggest threat.

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Donald Trump is building the wealthiest cabinet in American history with 13 billionaires set to be part of his administration. They include Elon Musk, his vocal backer and the CEO of X. Historian Quinn Slobodian says what's unusual is having people from Silicon Valley openly involved in government, and he explains the potential dangers that may come as a result.

Angus said if Parliament weren't prorogued, he would call for committee hearings into the issue.

Matthew McKenna, spokesman for Elections Canada, said it is up to the Commissioner of Canada Elections office to conduct investigations and enforce the Canada Elections Act, rather than Elections Canada.

However, he said Elections Canada does take questions about foreign interference seriously.

"We understand that in the current context, people might have questions about what may or may not constitute foreign interference," McKenna wrote in an emailed response. "We should note that other than a few specific exceptions, under the Canada Elections Act, all individuals, Canadian or non-Canadian, are free to express their views on any topic."

Angus said he sent the letter to Elections Canada because he decided it was the more suitable office.



Timmins-James Bay New Democrat MP Charlie Angus says he is concerned that Elon Musk and his social media platform X could try to interfere in the next Canadian election. (Parliament of Canada)

The letter to Elections Canada is both "appropriate" and "well timed," said Aengus Bridgman, director of the Media Ecosystem Observatory in Montreal.

"There is this issue with the primary way that political elites and politicians continue to use X as the main platform and that is controlled and distorted by one individual who is not necessarily acting with Canada's best interests at heart," Bridgman said in an interview.

"I think this is something that every Canadian should be worried about going into the next election."

Bridgman said Musk has described X as a platform for free speech, but in reality his control of X is considerable.

"He does have enormous influence over what Canadians are seeing on that platform and that's concerning. Any additional transparency and communication about that is

very valuable and will help inform the way Canadians treat that platform in the next election."

Bridgman said one example of Musk using X to try to influence a political outcome is [the current German election](#). Musk has posted his support for the far-right AfD party.

"These are posts that get tens of millions of views and there have been alarms raised in the European context," said Bridgman. "There's the perception that there's an outside influence, really a foreign interference, in that election."

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Minister of Democratic Institutions Ruby Sahota didn't comment on Angus's concerns but said protecting Canada's democracy and its electoral systems is a priority.

"Individuals have the right to free speech within the bounds of the law, and a strong democracy thrives on open dialogue and diverse perspectives," said Sahota, listing several steps the federal government has taken to detect and deter election interference.

"While maintaining the freedom of debate, protecting Canada's democracy and elections from threats is an issue we take extremely seriously."

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