



**Trump administration**

## IRS reportedly preparing to give Musk's Doge agency access to taxpayer data

US tax agency has received request for access to classified system containing personal financial records of US taxpayers

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**Edward Helmore** *in New York*

Mon 17 Feb 2025 10.29 EST

The US federal tax collection agency is reportedly preparing to give a team member of Elon Musk's "department of government efficiency" (Doge), which has already gutted several federal agencies and sparked multiple lawsuits, access to personal taxpayer data.

[The New York Times](#) and [the Washington Post](#) both reported early on Monday that the Internal Revenue Service had received a request for access to a classified system that contains sensitive personal financial records.

The request, which is reportedly under review, would give Doge officials "broad access to tax-agency systems, property and datasets, including tax returns".

One of these, the integrated data retrieval system (IDRS), gives tax agency employees the ability to see IRS accounts and bank information, the Washington Post reported.

"Waste, fraud and abuse have been deeply entrenched in our broken system for far too long," said Harrison Fields, a White House spokesperson. "It takes direct access to the system to identify and fix it."

Fields added that Musk's controversial program "will continue to shine a light on the fraud they uncover as the American people deserve to know what their government has been spending their hard-earned tax dollars on".

The Doge team member is reported to be software engineer Gavin Kliger, who is a staff member at the office of personnel management, which manages the US civil service.

The New York Times reported that Kliger, 26, one six young programmers hand-selected by Musk, was working out of IRS headquarters on Thursday and would be assigned as a senior adviser to the acting IRS commissioner, Doug O'Donnell, giving him broad access to its systems.

Kliger's primary focus at the IRS is to provide engineering assistance and IT modernization consulting, the request to the agency said.

Prior efforts by Doge members to access treasury department data have been pushed back. Nineteen state attorneys general have sued to block the Trump administration's policy of allowing political appointees and "special government employees" to the access that department's payment systems.

Doge incursions into the US tax collection agency come as the agency is preparing to lay off thousands of workers hired by the previous Biden administration.

Last week, Scott Bessent, the US treasury secretary, said last week he hoped to

upgrade the technology at the IRS. Bessent told Fox Business he wanted to improve collections, privacy and customer service.

“I don’t think there’s anyone, anyone in the country, who thinks that they - that the IRS has achieved its potential in either of those three,” he said.

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The Doge-led sweep through federal agencies, including USAid and the Department of Education, faces time constraints. Musk and his team have 120 days before they are required to make federal employment declarations.

According to a draft of the IRS memorandum obtained by the Post, Kliger is set to work at the IRS for that period, though his employment can be renewed for the same duration.

The memo said the agreement is for Kliger to keep any tax return information confidential, to keep it safe from unauthorized access and to delete it from his records after he finishes his term at the IRS, the outlet said.

**According to a Government Accountability Office report**, the government spent around \$90bn in 2019 on information technology, with most of that spent on operating and maintaining legacy systems that are in some cases half a century old and vulnerable to hackers.

IRS systems are among the oldest - many were built using computer coding language from the 1960s - so overhauling the IT is broadly in line with the Doge team mandate to modernize and synchronize systems across departments.

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