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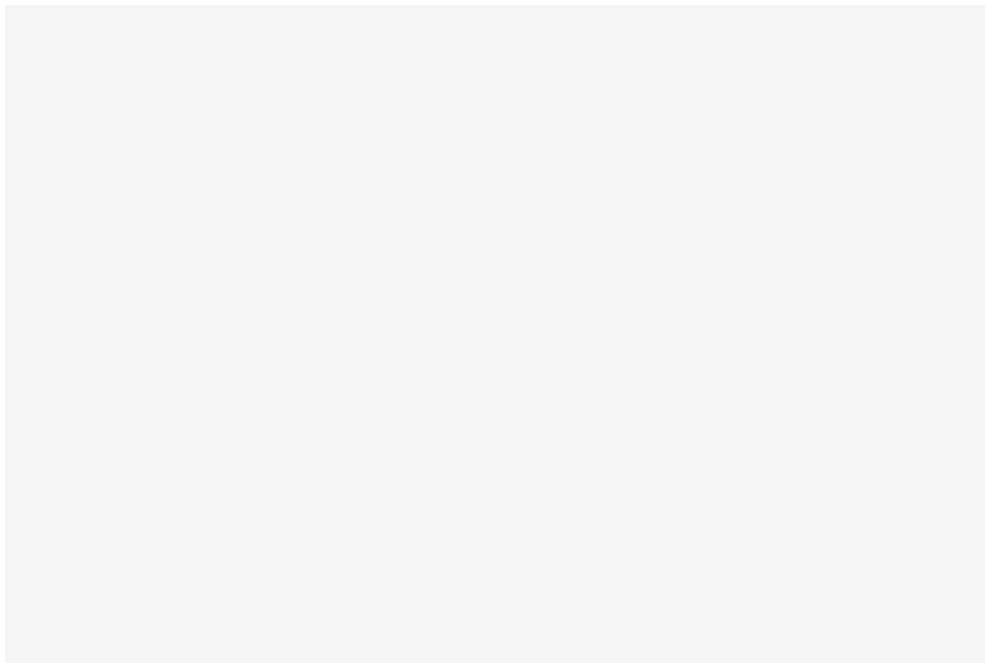
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[Hafiz Rashid/](#)
February 7, 2025/3:46 p.m. ET
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WTF Is DOGE Doing in Department in Charge of Nuclear Weapons?

The Department of Energy tried to clarify why DOGE staffers suddenly got some I.T. access to a department that oversees the U.S. nuclear stockpile.



KEVIN LAMARQUE/POOL/AFP/Getty Images

The Department of Energy on Friday tried to clarify why one of Elon Musk's DOGE underlings was granted access to the department's I.T. systems despite opposition from its general counsel and cybersecurity offices.

CNN [reports](#) that Luke Farrior, 23, whose previous work experience consists of an internship at Musk's company SpaceX was granted access by Energy Secretary Chris Wright Wednesday. The department's legal counsel and chief information offices, which govern I.T. and cybersecurity, "said this is a bad idea," according to a source who spoke with CNN, given that Farrior hadn't received a standard background check.

"He's not cleared to be in DOE, on our systems. None of those things have been done," said the unnamed source.

While Farrior was only granted access to basic I.T., including email and Microsoft 365, according to CNN's sources, the report still rang alarm bells as the agency is in charge of the country's nuclear arsenal, among other aspects of American energy policy and production.

In response to the uproar, Wright sought to discourage speculation that Farrior or anyone else associated with DOGE had access to U.S. nuclear secrets.

"I've heard these rumors. They're like seeing our nuclear secrets. None of that is true at all," the energy secretary [told](#) CNBC's Brian Sullivan Friday.

But Trump administration officials haven't been honest with the level of access given to Musk's DOGE cronies. One of his young software engineers, [Marko Elez](#), had administrator privileges with the country's most vital payment systems governing trillions of dollars in disbursements, allowing critical code to be [rewritten](#), despite Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent claiming Elez only had "[read-only](#)" access. Elez [resigned](#) this week over racist social media posts (but already may be [rehired](#)). Meanwhile, a U.S. district court on Thursday [limited](#) DOGE's privileges in government agencies.

Right now, DOGE's activities are stretching, if not outright breaking, federal law over government functions and positions that are supposed to be governed by Congress. But the only bulwark against Musk and Trump's overhauling of the federal government is the courts, as [federal law enforcement](#) is in the president's crosshairs.

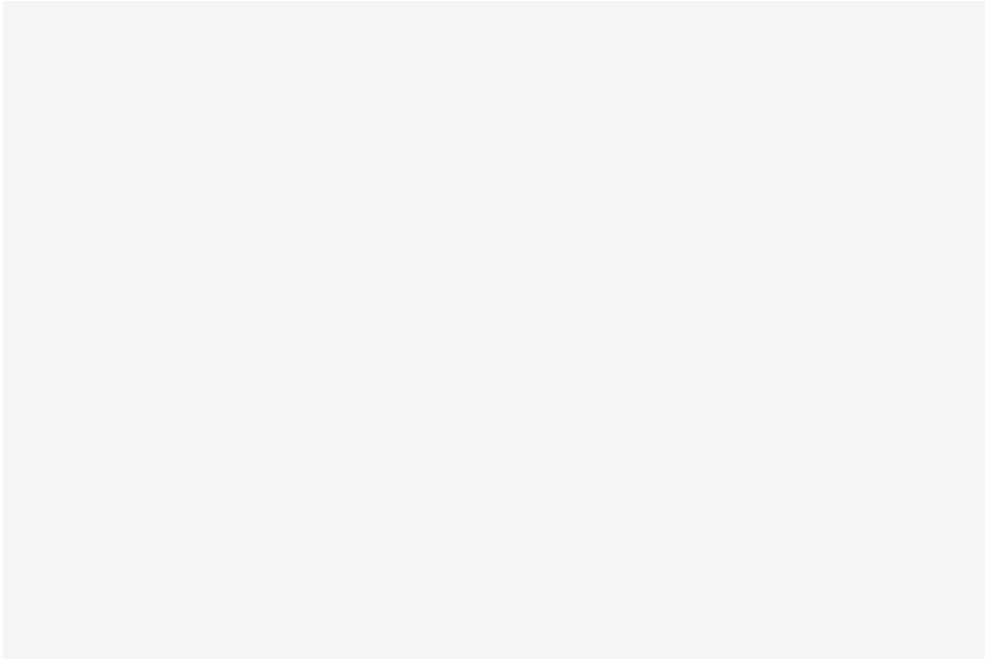
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Zelenskiy Puts the Ball Back in Trump’s Court on Standing Up to Russia

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has just offered a deal to Donald Trump.



Vitalii Nosach /Global Images Ukraine/Getty Images

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has decided to play ball with the Trump administration in efforts to stop the Russian invasion.

On Monday, Trump [announced](#) that if Zelenskiy wanted to keep getting U.S. military aid, Ukraine would have to fork over some precious rare minerals.

“We’re telling Ukraine they have very valuable rare earth; we want what we put up to go in terms of a guarantee. We want a guarantee, we’re handing them money hand over fist, we’re giving them equipment, [the European Union is] not keeping up with us,” Trump told reporters on Monday. “We have an ocean in between, they don’t. It’s more important for them than it is for us . . . so we’re looking to do a deal with Ukraine where they’re going to secure what we’re giving them with their rare earth and other things.”

On Friday, Zelenskiy agreed to Trump’s demands.

“If we are talking about a deal, then let’s do a deal, we are only for it,” he [said](#), according to Reuters. “The Americans helped the most, and therefore the Americans should earn the most. And they should have this priority, and they will. I would also like to talk about this with President Trump,” Zelenskiy continued, trying to explain that he actually wasn’t just giving Trump access to all the valuable rocks he wanted but instead was offering a joint agreement.

The majority of Ukraine’s mineral deposits—holding metals like titanium and uranium—are now in Russian-controlled territory, as Putin has gained more and more Ukrainian soil as the war has dragged on.

“We need to stop Putin and protect what we have: a very rich Dnipro region, central Ukraine,” Zelenskiy said.

Trump and Zelenskiy are expected to talk sometime next week.

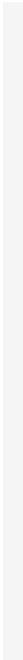
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Trump Has Cringiest Reaction to That *Time* Magazine Cover of Elon Musk

Donald Trump tried and failed to play it cool.



Anna Rose Layden/UPI/Bloomberg/Getty Images

Donald Trump wants you to believe that he’s totally nonplussed by *Time* magazine’s [February cover](#), which features Elon Musk—not the president—behind the Resolute Desk.

During a press conference Friday alongside Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, Trump tried to play it off as if he were totally unbothered by the [cover](#), insinuating that he wasn’t aware that the popular American news magazine (which named him “Person of the Year” in December) was still around.

“Is *Time* magazine still in business? I didn’t even know that,” Trump [said](#) when asked for a reaction to the provocative cover, sparking laughter from the room.

[Screenshot of a tweet](#)

Screenshot

But Trump’s cavalier attitude to the magazine’s focus belies the fact that he spent years pining for it to name him “[Person of the Year](#).” In fact, *Time*’s decision to feature Steve Bannon on the cover in the early days of Trump’s first term effectively ended his romance with his top strategist.

Bannon was, much like Musk, at the epicenter of Trump’s universe at one point, serving as the forty-fifth president’s chief White House strategist in the first year of his term. But the former host of *The Apprentice* abruptly [fired him](#) in 2017 following a series of controversies in which Bannon openly contradicted Trump and began to [encroach](#) on the MAGA limelight.

The pattern appears to be repeating with Musk. Reports emerged Friday that even Trump loyalists in and outside of the administration have found themselves [suffering](#) under the billionaire’s sudden seizure of the executive branch.

Last month, White House chief of staff Susie Wiles openly refuted Musk’s outsize influence on the administration, telling Axios that anyone who wants to be a “star” would have no place on her team.

“I don’t welcome people who want to work solo or be a star,” Wiles said at the time. “My team and I will not tolerate backbiting, second-guessing inappropriately, or drama. These are counterproductive to the mission.”

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Read about the cover:

[Trump Is Going to Blow a Fuse Over This New *Time* Cover With Elon Musk](#)

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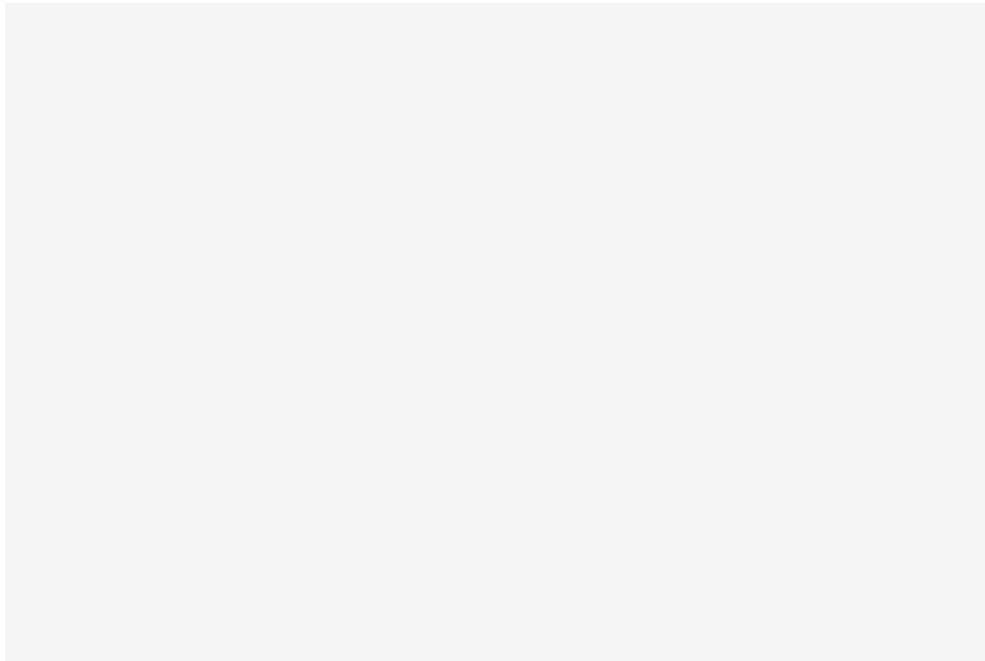
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Elon Musk to Install DOGE Crony Amid Treasury Department Takeover

Elon Musk's takeover of the Department of Treasury just got much more ominous.



Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post/Getty Images

One of Elon Musk's allies, Tom Krause, is going to be installed in a senior position in charge of America's critical payment systems.

Krause, a Silicon Valley executive with ties to Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, will [become](#) the financial assistant secretary of the Treasury after clashing with David Lebryk, the previous secretary, over illegally ceasing payments on foreign aid.

[Lebryk](#) had served in the Treasury Department since 1989, becoming its longest-serving career official. He was serving as acting head of the department until Scott Bessent's confirmation as treasury secretary last week, and refused to allow Musk's cronies to have [access to the federal payment systems](#) distributing trillions of dollars every year, operated by the Bureau of Fiscal Service.

Bessent has tried to downplay the level of access that Musk's DOGE henchman have in the Treasury Department, claiming that it was only at "read-only" levels. In reality, one of Musk's software engineers, 25-year-old [Marko Elez](#), had been given administrator privileges allowing the code governing those vital payment systems to be [rewritten](#). A federal court [halted that access](#) Thursday, and Elez has resigned after [racist social media posts](#), although Musk and JD Vance have [floated rehiring him](#).

The Treasury systems at stake distribute funds for thousands of vital functions that millions of Americans depend on, including Social Security and Medicare benefits, federal salaries, payments to government contractors, grants, and tax refunds. Now all of that will be overseen by Krause, who will certainly be acquiescing to Musk's demands to unilaterally stop payments that he and the MAGA right disagree with. Is any of this legal? In Trump's presidency, the law isn't likely to be enforced.

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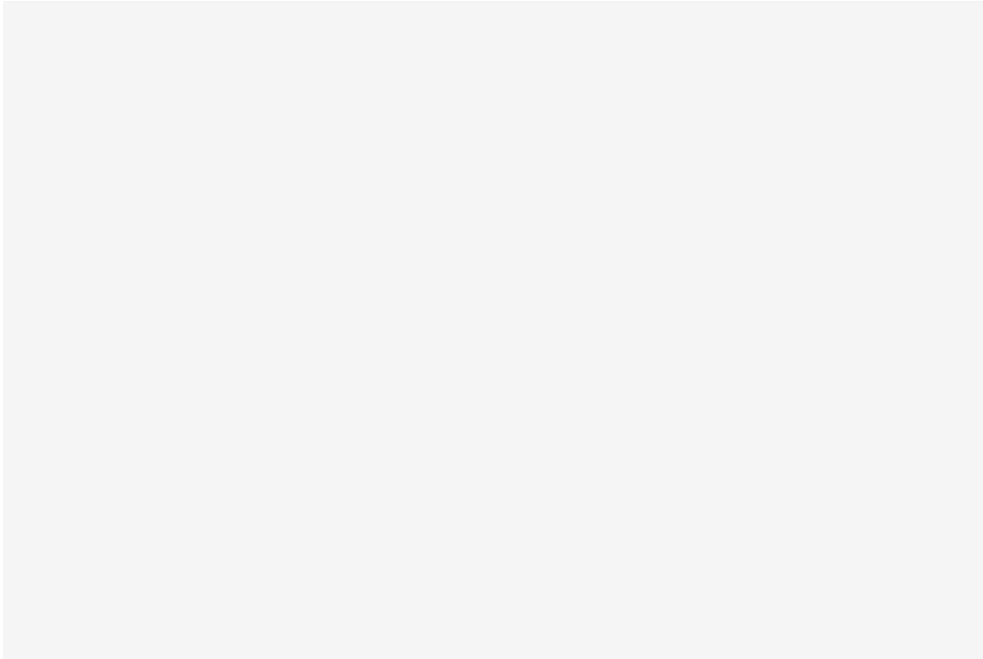
Meanwhile at another department:

[Chaos Erupts at Education Department as Members of Congress Locked Out](#)



Top Trump Donor Wants Supreme Court to Revoke Key Press Protection

Donald Trump ally Steve Wynn wants to make it more dangerous for journalists to do their job.



Patrick T. Fallon/Bloomberg/Getty Images
Businessman and Trump megadonor Steve Wynn

One of Donald Trump’s biggest donors is looking to the Supreme Court to limit tough press coverage of the MAGA leader’s administration.

Republican megadonor Steve Wynn filed a petition with the nation’s highest judiciary on Friday to overturn *New York Times v. Sullivan*, a landmark 1964 decision that raised the standards required for a plaintiff to win a defamation lawsuit against a media organization.

The bench unanimously found, at the time, that it wasn’t enough for reported information to be found false for a plaintiff to win a suit. Instead, Justice William Brennan Jr. argued that in order to win a defamation case, public figures must prove that journalists published details with “actual malice”—as in, a gross recklessness or disregard for the truth.

Wynn’s case against press protections comes with its own baggage. In 2018, the casino mogul sued the Associated Press for defamation after the newswire [reported](#) that two women had accused him of sexual assault in the 1970s.

Wynn resigned as chairman and CEO of Wynn Resorts that year, just two weeks after [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported that the billionaire had paid out a \$7.5 million settlement to a hired manicurist he allegedly raped.

“After she gave Mr. Wynn a manicure, she said, he pressured her to take her clothes off and told her to lie on the massage table he kept in his office suite, according to people she gave the account to,” the *Journal* reported at the time. “The manicurist said she told Mr. Wynn she didn’t want to have sex and was married, but he persisted in his demands that she do so, and ultimately she did disrobe and they had sex, the people remember her saying.”

The Nevada state Supreme Court ruled against Wynn in November, with Justice Ron Parraguirre writing that “one of the most recognized figures in Nevada” needed to show “clear and convincing evidence to reasonably infer that the publication was made with actual malice.” Wynn’s request Friday to the Supreme Court is an effort to overrule that decision.

“Sullivan is not equipped to handle the world as it is today—media is no longer controlled by companies that employ legions of factcheckers before publishing an article,” Wynn’s attorneys argued in their [petition](#). “Instead, everyone in the world has the ability to publish any statement with a few keystrokes. And in this age of clickbait journalism, even those members of the legacy media have resorted to libelous headlines and false reports to generate views.

“This Court need not further this golden era of lies,” they wrote.

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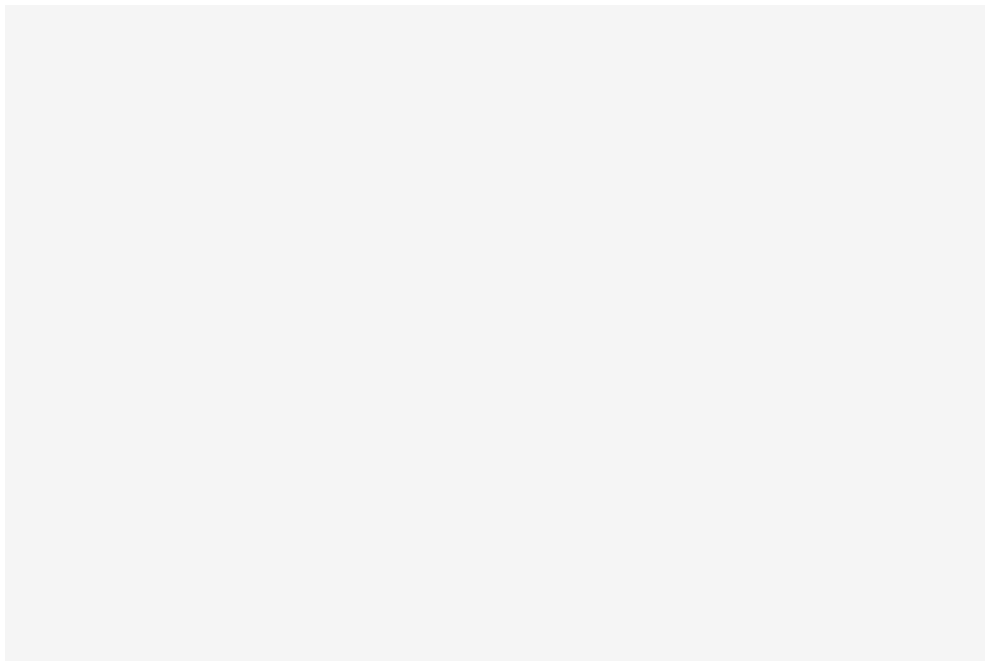
Read more about Trump's war on the press:
[The Coming War on Dissent](#)

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February 7, 2025/1:33 p.m. ET
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Trump Has Pissed Off a Key Support Group by Cutting USAID

Evangelical leaders are not happy with Donald Trump's work on foreign aid and immigration.



Andrew Hamik/Getty Images

Evangelicals are finally getting fed up with Donald Trump's bad-neighbor behavior, according to an [NBC News](#) report published Friday.

Trump received sweeping support from evangelicals in the 2024 presidential election, securing the votes of about eight in 10 white evangelical Christian voters, according to AP VoteCast, which surveys more than 120,000 voters. Trump secured a similar margin in 2020.

His [appeal](#) to Latino evangelicals helped him to make inroads among Latino voters, who also supported him with surprising force in the most recent election. Trump's shockingly ineffectual sidekick Vice President JD Vance has his own [ties](#) to the Christian nationalist movement.

But since Trump entered office, some evangelicals are struggling with the incoherent inhumanity of the president's policies.

Reverend Gabriel Salguero, the president of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition, said he had been meeting with lawmakers about how Trump and Elon Musk's efforts to shutter USAID would undermine their work benefiting vulnerable children and families abroad.

Salguero pointed out the clear connection between gutting international aid and cracking down on immigration.

"If we're concerned with immigration, shouldn't we also be concerned about how foreign aid helps people stay in their country and flourish?" Salguero told NBC News.

Salguero said that Trump's actions sent an "inconsistent message," as they sought to limit both documented and undocumented immigration. He said pastors like him were "trying to seek clarity" on the president's immigration policy.

At the Gathering Place, the Orlando, Florida, church where Salguero serves as pastor, he said he has witnessed the strife of mixed-immigration-status families, fearful from Trump's orders ending birthright citizenship and allowing ICE agents to pursue those they suspect of being undocumented in schools and places of worship.

"We need to deal with criminals and violent criminals in ways that keep our community safe. We support that," Salguero said. "On the other hand, they're passing memos and executive orders that are way beyond that scope."

He also pointed out an inconsistency with Trump's claim that his immigration policies are meant to target violent criminals.

"If it's true that the administration is worried about violent criminals, why did they pardon over a thousand people who acted violently in the Capitol?" he asked, rhetorically. "Why then try to rescind the Fourteenth Amendment, depriving children of birthright citizenship? They're not violent criminals; they haven't been born. They have a right to be citizens." Salguero

noted that he is a registered independent and does not endorse candidates.

Walter Kim, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, also pushed back against Trump’s order allowing immigration enforcement to extend into churches.

“Should churches be law-abiding? Absolutely. Should they be cooperating with agencies to ensure that criminal influences are dealt with? Absolutely,” Kim told NBC News. “But by and large, those communities that are experiencing fear and not going to church is far beyond the very small portion of the immigrant, undocumented criminal segment.”

Despite the widespread support from evangelicals, this rift is hardly surprising given the Trump administration’s distinctly America First interpretation of the Good Book.

Last month, Vance fell into religious crosshairs after he [said](#) that it was Christian to “love your family and then you love your neighbor, and then you love your community, and then you love your fellow citizens in your own country, and then after that, prioritize the rest of the world.”

Podcaster Rory Stewart [called](#) Vance’s comment “a bizarre take on John 15:12-13—less Christian and more pagan tribal. We should start worrying when politicians become theologians, assume to speak for Jesus, and tell us in which order to love.”

John 15:12-13 says, “This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.”

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[Trump’s Angry Rant at USAID Instantly Undercut by Surprise Rubio Video](#)

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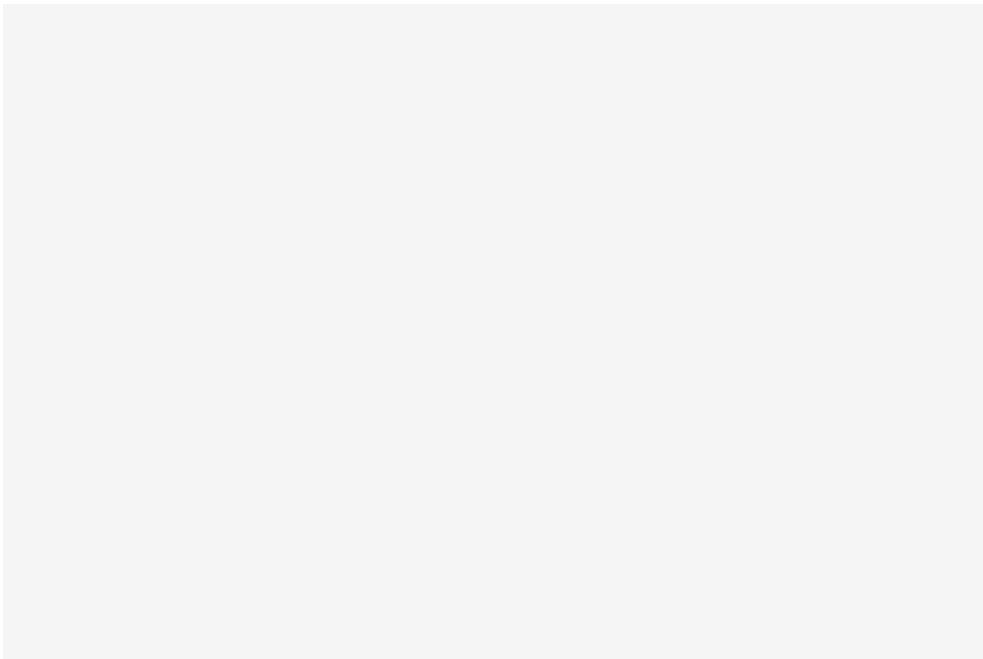
February 7, 2025/1:06 p.m. ET

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JD Vance Petitions to Bring Back That Super-Racist Member of DOGE

The vice president of the United States has nothing better to do than suck up to Elon Musk as he posts on X.



Jeff Swensen/Getty Images

Elon Musk and JD Vance think that a deeply racist 25-year old-deserves to have a second chance in a significant position in DOGE.

Former SpaceX software engineer Marko Elez was working for DOGE to supposedly expose fraud in the Treasury Department. He resigned this week after his hateful tweets from 2024 were brought to light by [The Wall Street Journal](#).

“You could not pay me to marry outside of my ethnicity,” an account obviously connected to Elez wrote in September. “Normalize Indian hate,” one post read. In July, he said, “Just for the record, I was racist before it was cool.” And in December, the account pushed for repealing the Civil Rights Act and shared: “I just want a eugenic immigration policy, is that too much to ask.”

But Musk and Vance think that Elez should have another shot at taking a wrecking ball to the federal government.

“Here’s my view: I obviously disagree with some of Elez’s posts, but I don’t think stupid social media activity should ruin a kid’s life,” Vance [wrote](#) on X, quoting a Musk poll asking his followers if Elez should return.

“We shouldn’t reward journalists who try to destroy people. Ever,” Vance continued. “So I say bring him back. If he’s a bad dude or a terrible member of the team, fire him for that.

But a journalist did not ruin a “kid’s” life; his own vile views did. Elez isn’t some silly little kid; the tweets were from just a few months ago, meaning the youngest he could have been is 24 years old.

And racist tweets are racist regardless of how “ironic” they appear to be or how young the person who wrote them is—especially when they have a job that impacts millions of people.

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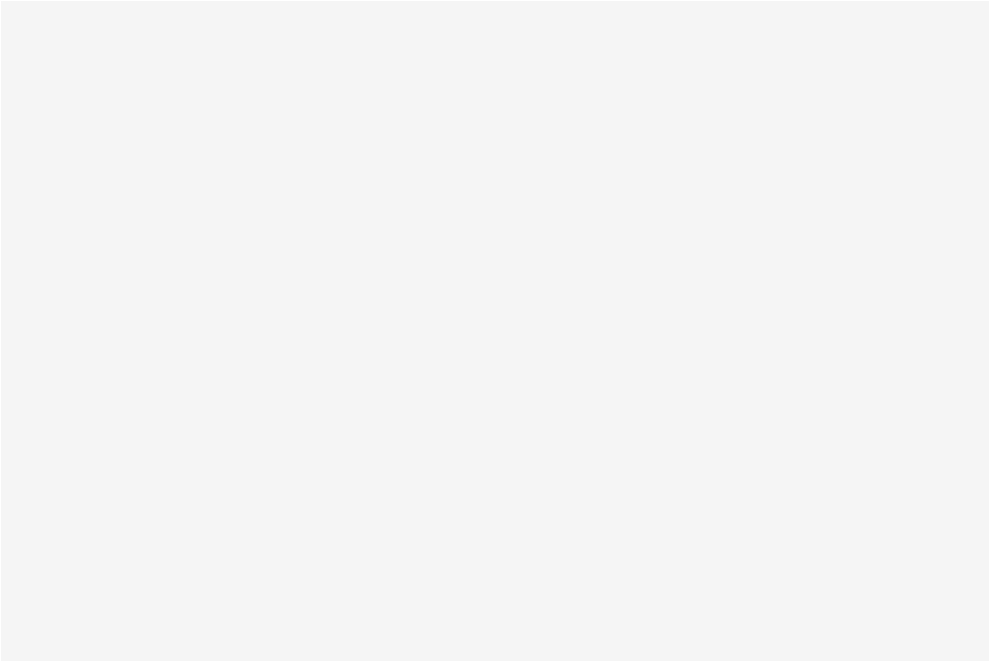


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Trump Is Going to Blow a Fuse Over This New *Time* Cover With Elon Musk

There is zero chance Donald Trump doesn’t rage about this obvious blow to his ego.



Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

The new cover of *Time* is sure to infuriate President Trump.

The February 24 issue of the magazine [depicts](#) Elon Musk as president of the United States, sitting on the Resolute Desk, which is used by U.S. presidents in the Oval Office of the White House.

Trump has long coveted being named “Man of the Year” by the magazine, [complaining](#) when he didn’t receive the honor in 2015 and [rejoicing](#) when he did in [2016](#) and [2024](#). Trump reportedly had a fake cover of himself on the magazine hanging in five of his golf clubs, *The Washington Post* [reported](#) in 2017.

Seeing Musk stealing the limelight on the next cover will surely get under Trump’s skin, especially since a similar feud [contributed](#) to the undoing of the president’s former adviser Steve Bannon during his first term. In February 2017, exactly eight years ago, Bannon was also on the [cover of Time](#) and referred to as “The Great Manipulator,” adding to Trump’s [reported annoyance](#) with his chief strategist at the time.

By the summer of that year, Bannon had [left the White House](#), and Trump publicly disowned him in January 2018 after the book *Fire and Fury* revealed that Bannon had criticized Trump’s children. Is *Time* hoping that something similar will happen to Musk? The tech mogul was already [irritating](#) White House aides in the first week of Trump’s presidency, and now is reportedly driving Trump’s [inner circle](#) and [Republicans in Congress](#) crazy with his [takeover](#) of the federal government.

The tech mogul and [fascism enthusiast](#) is rapidly [losing popularity](#) with Americans, even Republicans. Trump also hates to share the spotlight with anyone. A Trump-Musk split isn’t out of the realm of possibility.

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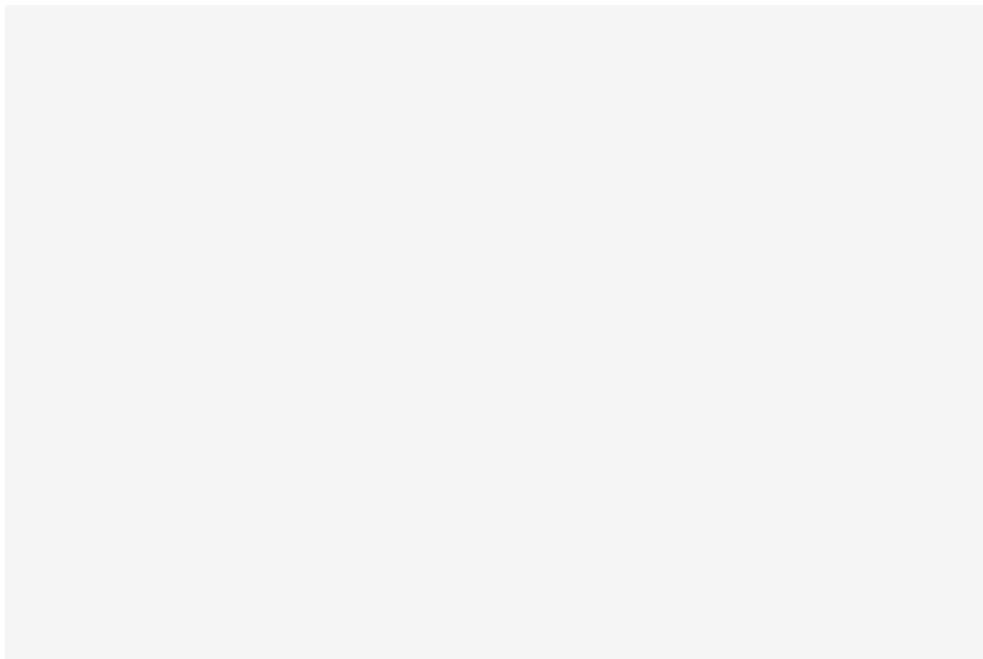
February 7, 2025/11:51 a.m. ET

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Chaos Erupts at Education Department as Members of Congress Locked Out

Donald Trump and Elon Musk’s war on the Department of Education just escalated a notch.



Pete Kiehart/The Washington Post/Getty Images

In a wild scene, federal officers are blocking Democratic members of Congress from entering the Department of Education.

Members of Congress gathered at the department headquarters on Friday but were denied entry. A man can be seen on video asking the crowd, “What business do you have here?” He was swiftly met by a chorus of “Who are you?” and “We are members of Congress!”

“We are members of Congress!”

Lawmakers attempting to enter the U.S. Department of Education but ED has locked its doors. pic.twitter.com/0QXwfN1c9L

— Arthur Jones II (@arthurjonesii) [February 7, 2025](#)

Democrats had met to protest Donald Trump and Elon Musk's [plans to abolish](#) the entire Education Department and were looking to demand a meeting with the department's senior leadership. This also comes as Musk's DOGE lackeys have [begun to use AI](#) to audit the department.

"I'm here with multiple members of Congress. We're here to go to the Department of Education to fight for education, and they have locked the doors," said Congressman Maxwell Frost in a [video](#) he posted on X. "They're not letting us in; it says 'All Access Entrance'; there's a random guy out here who's refusing to let us in—"

"His name is Jim Hairfield!" said Congresswoman Maxine Waters as Frost panned the camera to her, arms clutched to her chest as she braved the chilly D.C. morning.

ELON IS ALLOWED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. NOT YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OR STUDENTS & PARENTS. I WILL BE BACK. pic.twitter.com/UikHHSUZXS

— Maxwell Alejandro Frost (@MaxwellFrostFL) [February 7, 2025](#)

"And right here they have armed officers, as well, acting like we're dangerous," Frost continued. "A year ago I'd be able to walk into this building and not be locked out... Elon is allowed in, but not you, not your elected representatives, not parents, not students. Elon can go in, his goons can go in, but not the representatives of the people."

Democratic Members of Congress, trying to force a meeting with senior leaders at Department of Education, can't get into the building. The doors are locked. pic.twitter.com/aWIQWOudW

— Jay O'Brien (@jayobtv) [February 7, 2025](#)

While they may have been denied entry, this is a promising sign of life from a party that just a week ago was getting its phones blown up by distressed voters [begging](#) the party to [do something](#) other than shake their heads while MAGA runs rampant.

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More on the Trump's plans for the Education Department:

[Trump's Plan to Gut Education Department Will Hit Red States Hardest](#)

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[Ellie Quinlan Houghtaling/](#)

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Guess Which Top Trump Adviser Took USAID Money?

Donald Trump and Elon Musk have been rushing to completely shut down the U.S. development agency.



Al Drago/Bloomberg/Getty Images

Donald Trump has slammed USAID as a corrupt agency whose “fraudulently” distributed funds are “totally unexplainable.” But it wasn’t clear on Friday if that statement included Starlink—the international internet project founded by one of Trump’s closest advisers, Elon Musk—which pocketed \$1 million from USAID.

“USAID IS DRIVING THE RADICAL LEFT CRAZY, AND THERE IS NOTHING THEY CAN DO ABOUT IT BECAUSE THE WAY IN WHICH THE MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT, SO MUCH OF IT FRAUDULENTLY, IS TOTALLY UNEXPLAINABLE,” Trump [posted](#) on Truth Social Friday morning. “THE CORRUPTION IS AT LEVELS RARELY SEEN BEFORE. CLOSE IT DOWN!”

Over the last four years, USAID has spent \$1 million in SpaceX’s Starlink terminals, according to federal contract records obtained by [Forbes](#). That money helped bring Starlink to Zimbabwe and South Africa, where Musk is from.

Musk also took sole credit for another USAID-Starlink partnership, which saw the company send about 5,000 Starlink terminals, “worth some \$3 million” per *Forbes*, to aid Ukraine’s military in its war against Russia.

“A major factor for why Ukraine was NOT overrun by Russia is the Starlink support I provided, at great risk to SpaceX cyber & physical attack by Russian military forces,” Musk [posted](#) on X in November. “Starlink is the BACKBONE of Ukrainian military communications at the front lines, because everything else has been blown up or jammed by Russia.”

Earlier in 2024, USAID announced an “[inspection](#)” of Ukraine’s use of the terminals.

Meanwhile, Musk has made it a personal [mission](#) to dismantle USAID, which provides humanitarian assistance and funding for infrastructure and developmental tech in developing nations. In a string of recent tweets, Musk has slammed USAID—which distributed more than [\\$40 billion](#) in congressionally appropriated foreign aid in 2023 and has closed [\\$86 billion](#) in private-sector deals—as a “[criminal organization](#)” that is an “[arm of the radical-left globalists](#).”

Andrew Natsios, the former head of USAID under President George W. Bush and a lifelong conservative, told [Politico](#) Tuesday that Musk’s snubs of the agency were a “bold-faced lie” and that the Trump administration’s idea to fold USAID’s priorities into the State Department was the “worst idea [he] could possibly imagine.”

USAID’s mission is, per Natsios, in the “national interest.” Data aggregated from aid missions around the world inform U.S. policy, on issues ranging from public health to diplomacy. News on Monday that there was an [Ebola outbreak](#) in Kampala, Uganda, was reported via a USAID mission, for example. Choosing to nix the agency would force the U.S. into an information dark age that could see the country caught off guard in future health crises.

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[Is Elon Musk Serving Two Masters?](#)

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