

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 3, 2025

The Honorable Scott Bessent, Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent:

On Friday, January 31, you provided full access to the federal government's payment systems to surrogates of Elon Musk and representatives of the so-called "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE), which operates under the de-facto control of Mr. Musk, a private citizen. To protect our national security and public confidence in our fiscal and economic system, you should immediately reverse this action.

The Treasury Department through the Bureau of the Fiscal Service executes payments on behalf of agencies across the federal government. Last year, Treasury distributed \$5.4 trillion in payments for the American public, including Social Security benefits, defense spending and servicemember pay, interest on government bonds, tax refunds, federal grants, and nearly all other obligations owed by the government. Your actions have placed our national security at risk because unvetted individuals, potentially including foreign nationals, now have full access to these systems. According to press reports, these individuals include corporate executives of multinational companies with extensive international operations. Access to this system includes the ability to view American's most sensitive personally identifiable information, such as social security numbers, bank account numbers, home addresses, and more. It also gives Mr. Musk and his allies outside the federal government the ability to unilaterally and illegally cut off federal payments.

It is longstanding Treasury Department procedure to restrict access to this system to a handful of individuals who have undergone a full background investigation evaluating criminal history, foreign ties, trustworthiness, and finances, among other issues. This process is essential to protect Americans' personal information and benefits from being compromised by hostile nations, to protect taxpayer funds from being pilfered by untrustworthy individuals, and to ensure that payments owed to the American people are made reliably and on time.

This deviation from Treasury practice follows an emerging pattern of DOGE impeding fundamental government functions, placing taxpayer funds at risk, and intruding on Americans' privacy—actions that have placed the special interests of a small group of well-connected individuals above American families. Indeed, the individuals who have just received access to government payment systems have not sworn an oath to the Constitution and have no obligation to act in the general interest.

You should immediately reverse the actions that you took on January 31:

- Revoke access to U.S. government payment systems that you provided to surrogates of Mr. Musk, who have not been undergone full background investigations and have not been properly vetted;
- Appoint a new Fiscal Assistant Secretary who is a nonpartisan expert with experience working in the Bureau of the Fiscal Service across Administrations of both parties;
- Refuse to honor any requests by Mr. Musk's surrogates or the DOGE to block disbursements of any funds; and
- Protect Americans' personal information from being exploited for commercial purposes by individuals to whom you have granted access to U.S. government payment systems.

In addition, because you have already have given individuals operating at the behest of Mr. Musk access to U.S. government payment systems, please provide written answers to the following questions no later than February 10, 2025:

- Which individuals have you allowed to access to the federal payment systems and why?
- Do all those who have access to the systems hold security clearances? If not, why not?
- Have you provided any non-federal employees or any individuals working at the behest of Mr. Musk, as part of DOGE or any other entity, with source code information related to the federal payment systems?
- Do any non-federal employees have access to the systems or authority to direct or withhold payments? If so, on what authority?
- How many foreign nationals have been granted access to the federal payment systems or been given authority over payments?
- What are you doing to prevent unauthorized access to the systems?
- What assurances are there that Mr. Musk will not be able to use access to the Federal government's payment system to advance his own business interests or penalize his competitors or critics?
- What are you doing to ensure that political interference will not affect Americans' access to their Social Security benefits and other critical payments the Bureau of Fiscal Service makes?
- Are you planning to allow the same DOGE cohort access to the Internal Revenue Service's information technology?

Finally, please keep in mind that all executive branch agencies must proactively alert the Appropriations and other appropriate House and Senate Committees when apportionments are not made in required time periods, are approved only with conditions, or may hinder the prudent obligation of apportionments or the execution of a program, project, or activity. Agencies are also required to report all violations of the Impoundment Control Act to Congress. Finally, agencies may not prohibit or prevent any federal employee from having direct communication with any Member, committee, or subcommittee of Congress. All federal employees must be free to communicate directly with Congress, whether Congress has requested that communication or not.

Thank your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jack Reed", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Jack Reed  
United States Senator