

# Elon Musk Manipulation Of Government Has Washington Calling Him HITLER 2.0

*Musk encouraged his nearly 205 million followers on X to weigh in, too.*

Elon Musk, the Tesla and SpaceX billionaire who has become President-elect Donald Trump's "first buddy," appeared to publicly pressure Trump on economic policy and a key Cabinet appointment Saturday.

In a Saturday post on X, the social network he owns and runs, Musk praised a foreign leader's decision to cut tariffs - the same import taxes that Trump wants to raise to the highest level in a century. Several hours later, Musk posted that Howard Lutnick, Trump's co-transition chair, would be a better choice than hedge fund executive Scott Bessent for treasury secretary.



“My view fwiw is that Bessent is a business-as-usual choice, whereas @howardlutnick will actually enact change,” Musk posted. “Business-as-usual is driving America bankrupt, so we need change one way or another.”

Musk encouraged his nearly 205 million followers to weigh in, too.

Musk’s endorsement of Lutnick is likely to exacerbate the substantial confusion and even fear in Trump’s orbit about the central role Musk appears to be playing in personnel and policy decisions for the new administration.

The president’s allies were grateful to have had Musk’s financial and political backing during the campaign, but his growing influence has irritated some of Trump’s backers. Several people in Trump’s circle expressed astonishment Saturday that Musk would publicly push for his choice for a crucial economic role while the president-elect was still weighing his decision.

“People are not happy,” said one person in contact with campaign officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity to reflect private conversations. This person said the statements suggested Musk was acting as a “co-president” and potentially overstepping his new role in Trump’s orbit.

Musk, who spent more than \$100 million in support of Trump’s campaign, has been by Trump’s side since he was elected the 47th president of the United States, appearing on calls with foreign leaders, sitting in on transition meetings and appearing on the golf course with the president-elect’s grandchildren at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Florida. Musk has also spent substantial time with Lutnick at Mar-a-Lago in the days since the election.

Musk and Trump still appear to be close: Musk, Lutnick and several top Trump aides were expected to travel with the president-elect from Florida to New York to attend a UFC fight at Madison Square Garden on Saturday evening. But Musk’s constant presence and increasingly public input have started to grate on transition officials who feel he is radically unfamiliar with the ways of Washington, according to people familiar with the dynamics.

Musk has publicly praised many of Trump’s choices. But his support of Lutnick before any public announcement - and his call to crowdsource opinions on the matter - marked a less deferential approach to Trump’s staffing decisions.

Bessent and Lutnick have been jockeying for the role of treasury secretary over the past week, with allies of each candidate potshotting the other to transition officials. Lutnick has asked Trump to pick him for the role, while Bessent met with Trump to interview for the Cabinet post at Mar-a-Lago on Friday, though no final decision on the appointment has yet to be announced. Bessent has reaffirmed his commitment to Trump’s agenda several times in the last week, publishing a Fox News opinion piece about the importance of tariffs and a Wall Street Journal op-ed bashing economists who doubted Trump’s record.

That behind-the-scenes maneuvering spilled fully into public view Saturday with Musk's tweet and a follow-up X post from Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Trump's pick for health secretary, supporting Lutnick. Presidential picks for Cabinet positions do not generally publicly weigh in on the choices for other posts before those decisions are made.

The backroom jostling between Bessent's and Lutnick's allies also continued Saturday, when Trump was presented with information that Lutnick was a major donor to Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, according to people familiar with the conversations who spoke on the condition of anonymity to disclose internal discussions.

A person familiar with Lutnick and Trump's relationship dismissed any attempt to cast doubt on the financier's loyalty to Trump, noting that Lutnick's political donations have long been scrutinized and that his relationship with Clinton arose out of their work rebuilding New York City post-9/11, when Clinton was serving in the Senate.

"It's a friendly joke between them," said the person. "Howard's friends with the Clintons and friends with Trump. I mean Tulsi [Gabbard, Trump's pick for director of national intelligence] was a Democrat until yesterday. This isn't a big deal."

Still, the impasse over the senior economic position has led some Trump officials to speculate whether he may turn to a third candidate. Trump trade adviser Robert E. Lighthizer, Sen. Bill Hagerty (R-Tennessee) and Apollo Global Management chief executive Marc Rowan have been floated as potential alternatives to the squabbling Bessent and Lutnick, according to two people familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Although he didn't expressly indicate that he was contradicting Trump, Musk on Saturday also publicly praised Argentine President Javier Milei's decision to slash tariffs.

"Good move," Musk wrote on X in reaction to a post about Milei "SLASHING IMPORT TAXES."

Milei, a libertarian who has been embraced by other far-right world leaders, has also been embraced by Trump's conservative circles. At a recent America First Policy Institute gala at Mar-a-Lago - where Musk and Trump were photographed with Milei - the Argentine president praised Musk, saying X is helping to "save humanity."

Musk endorsed Trump shortly after the former president was wounded in an attempted assassination at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, in July, and used the remainder of the campaign season investing heavily into helping him win the election.

After the election, Trump announced plans to create a "Department of Government Efficiency," an outside body to advise the White House, led by Musk and entrepreneur turned conservative firebrand Vivek Ramaswamy.