

## Fear grips DC as Elon Musk forcibly gains access to sensitive Treasury Department payment system that controls \$5TRILLION



The Department of Government Efficiency, run by President Donald Trump's billionaire adviser and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, has gained access to sensitive Treasury data including Social Security and Medicare customer payment systems, according to two people familiar with the situation. The move by DOGE, a Trump administration task force assigned to find ways to fire federal workers, cut programs and slash federal regulations, means it could have wide leeway to access important taxpayer data, among other things. The highest-ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, Ron Wyden of Oregon, on Friday sent a letter to Trump's Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent expressing concern that 'officials associated with Musk may have intended to access these payment systems to illegally withhold payments to any number of programs.' PICTURED: Trump and Musk attending a UFC bout on the campaign trail last year, left; Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, right; and the Eisenhower Executive Building where DOGE is headquartered, inset.

Fear gripped Washington this morning as it emerged **Elon Musk** had gained access to the Treasury Department's payment system.

The system is run by non-political career civil servants and controls trillions of dollars of government funds that go to programs like Social Security and Medicare. Any interruption in its operation would spark widespread economic failure.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent gave Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) the green light to have full access to the payments system late on Friday.

It was not immediately clear why Musk wants access to the system, which handles around \$5trillion annually, but it could provide the Trump administration another means to target wasteful spending.

It comes after a standoff this week with top Treasury official David Lebryk, who was in charge of the system through **Donald Trump**'s first term and during Biden's tenure. Lebryk had resisted Musk's attempts to access the system. He was abruptly placed on leave before announcing his retirement on Friday.

Democrats and the liberal press erupted over Musk's move - with the likes of Sen. **Elizabeth Warren** calling for **Congress** to investigate Musk's new power, and Rep. Pramila Jayapal saying the ordeal 'reeks of corruption.'

The allies of Musk who were granted access were reportedly made employees of the Treasury Department and were greenlit through government background checks.

They've also obtained the necessary security clearances, according to the **NYT**.

So far, these people haven't gotten to work and no government payments have been shut off, according to sources that spoke with the outlet.



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**Elon Musk has reportedly won his battle to gain control over the Treasury Department's payment system, which contains a massive repository of Americans' tax data**



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**Ivanka Trump is a vision in white on date night with husband Jared**



**I was robbed, beaten up by Thai police, and left to lie in my urine**

Musk has previously said he wants to cut at least \$2 trillion in federal spending, a promise he has backpedaled on in recent weeks, saying this month that **\$1 trillion in cuts is more realistic.**

The Treasury's acting Deputy Secretary Lebryk was the last person to go against Musk, with the Washington Post reporting he resisted efforts from DOGE and the Trump transition team last month to get access to the payment system.

'The Fiscal Service performs some of the most vital functions in government,' Lebryk said in a letter to Treasury employees sent out Friday.

'Our work may be unknown to most of the public, but that doesn't mean it isn't exceptionally important. I am grateful for having been able to work alongside some of the nation's best and most talented operations staff.'

Musk on Saturday responded to a post on his social media platform X about the departure of Lebryk.

'The @DOGE team discovered, among other things, that payment approval officers at Treasury were instructed always to approve payments, even to known fraudulent or terrorist groups. They literally never denied a payment in their entire career. Not even once,' he wrote.

DOGE's responsibilities with the payments system remain murky. The task force's role is to modernize 'Federal technology and software to maximize governmental efficiency and productivity,' according to the **executive order** that established the unofficial government agency.

Mark Mazur, who was in senior-level roles at the Treasury Department under Obama and Biden, told the Washington Post that the payment system is not political and that any other use would be unprecedented.



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**Senator Ron Wyden, the highest ranking member on the Senate Finance Committee, sent a letter Friday to Bessent expressing concern about Musk's intentions with the federal payments system**

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'This is a mechanical job—they pay Social Security benefits, they pay vendors, whatever. It's not one where there's a role for nonmechanical things, at least from the career standpoint. Your whole job is to pay the bills as they're due,' Mazur said.

'It's never been used in a way to execute a partisan agenda... You have to really put bad intentions in place for that to be the case.'

If payments are somehow disrupted in the coming days, it would represent another avenue through which the Trump White House is attempting to bypass Congress

Trump recently **froze trillions of dollars in grants** to make sure the spending aligned with his political priorities. A judge quickly blocked the order, which ultimately led to the **White House** rescinding the freeze altogether.

Senator Ron Wyden, the highest ranking member on the Senate Finance Committee, sent a letter Friday to Bessent expressing concern about Musk's intentions.

He wrote that 'officials associated with Musk may have intended to access these payment systems to illegally withhold payments to any number of programs.'

'To put it bluntly, these payment systems simply cannot fail, and any politically motivated meddling in them risks severe damage to our country and the economy,' Wyden said.

Wyden also made a post on social media suggesting that Musk, who has received billions in government contracts for his companies over the years, should not have access to the Treasury.



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**DOGE is headquartered in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington DC**

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'Social Security and Medicare benefits, grants, payments to government contractors, including those that compete directly with Musk's own companies. All of it,' Wyden wrote.

This comes as two top officials at the US Agency for International Development (USAID) were put on administrative leave on Saturday after they refused to provide DOGE access to their systems.

CNN reported that these two officials refused even when DOGE employees threatened to call US Marshals to the grant them access to their offices in Washington DC.

USAID is a government agency that receives its funding from Congress to primarily help developing nations that have problems with natural disasters, disease or political instability.

For much of Sunday, Musk has been posting about USAID, calling the agency 'evil' and 'a viper's nest of radical-left marxists who hate America.'

## **Elon Musk spent more than \$290 million on the 2024 election, year-end FEC filings show**

Elon Musk spent a total of more than \$290 million on the 2024 election, new federal filings show, boosting President Donald Trump and Republicans in a staggering effort that has helped to secure unprecedented access for the world's richest person in the new administration.

The year-end filings, covering the final five weeks of the year, also revealed jockeying for influence as the new administration prepared to take power. Trump's old campaign committee — converted into a new account he can use to flex his political muscle, despite being term-limited — hauled in nearly \$21 million in the period. Meanwhile, a top allied super PAC received several million-dollar contributions, including \$1 million from the administration's nominee for ambassador to the UK, on [the day](#) he was tapped to serve.

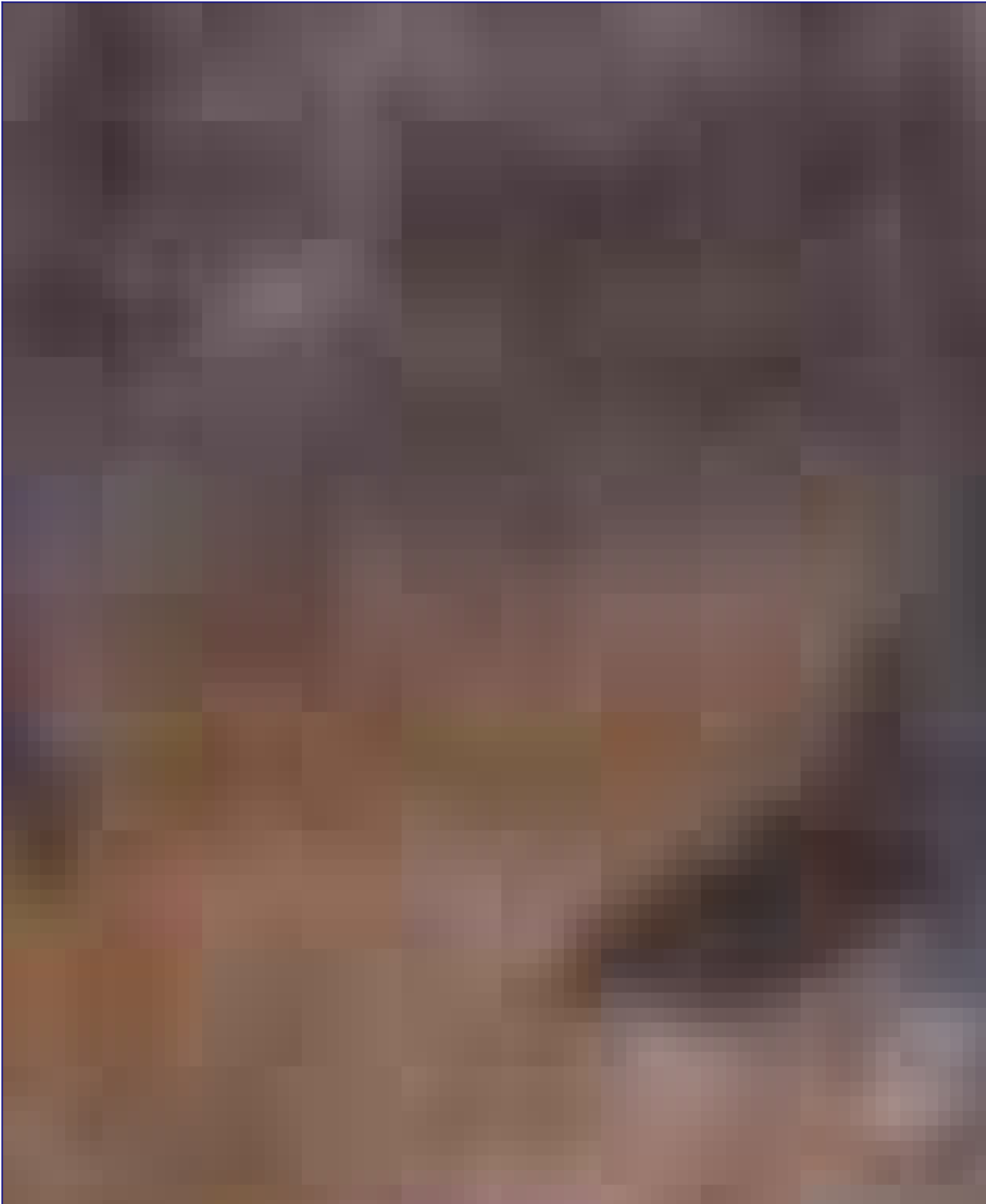
In addition, the filings showed how the parties and some of their key members are getting set for the 2026 midterm election cycle, with potentially vulnerable incumbents in battleground states like Georgia, North Carolina, and New Hampshire stockpiling cash. And the Democratic National Committee spent heavily in the weeks following the party's losses in 2024, dropping more than \$56 million settling headquarters expenses, paying legal fees, and soliciting its voters feedback and funds.



## **Musk money**

The new filings with the Federal Election Commission on Friday showed that Musk put about \$11.2 million into his main super PAC, America PAC, on the final day of the year — which brought his total political giving for the cycle to more than \$290 million, a massive sum rivaled by only a handful of competing mega donors.

Musk's end-of-the-year contributions were earmarked for “petition incentives,” related to the million-dollar giveaways that he organized through the super PAC in the home stretch of the race. Those giveaways — aimed at encouraging voter registration — drew legal challenges, though they were ultimately [allowed to continue](#).



[Related article We do not know what exactly Elon Musk is doing to the federal government](#)

The latest filing from Musk's super PAC shows that the giveaways cost him a total of more than \$50 million, out of the more than \$290 million that he spent on the 2024 election.

Musk's donations in 2024 were mostly aimed at supporting Trump; about a quarter of a billion dollars that he gave went to America PAC, the main super PAC that Musk [formed](#) for the election. But Musk also gave millions to several other super PACs and outside groups that supported a range of GOP candidates, and he cut \$10,000 checks to dozens of state Republican Party committees.

[Now ensconced](#) in the Trump administration's "Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)," a new agency that he helped form, Musk is poised to reap a return on his unprecedented political investment and is already at work reshaping the federal government. Furthermore, he's [indicated plans](#) for his super PAC to "keep grinding" in the 2026 midterms.

## Trump continues stacking cash

Political committees affiliated with President Trump raked in millions in the final weeks of 2024 — funds that the term-limited president can use to flex his political muscle, even if not for his own campaigns.

After the election, Trump converted his 2024 campaign account into a leadership PAC, a type of committee with which he can continue to raise and spend funds for political purposes. The committee, now called Never Surrender, reported nearly \$21 million in total receipts during the final five weeks of the year.

Never Surrender had about \$27.4 million in cash on hand entering 2025, but with a complicated set of books — the committee reported that it had debts of more than \$11 million, nearly all to a telemarketing firm, and also that it was owed nearly \$4.7 million, including \$4.67 million from the US Secret Service and several thousand dollars from the New York Times and ABC, for air travel.

Meanwhile, MAGA Inc., a leading pro-Trump PAC, raised \$18.3 million in the year-end period, receiving seven-figure contributions from a series of prominent donors, including the financier Warren Stephens, who gave \$1 million to the group on December 2, the same day he was tapped to be the next ambassador to the UK; Anthony Pratt, an Australian billionaire, who gave \$4 million; and Alexander Karp, CEO of Palantir — a company with several ties to Musk — who also gave \$1 million.

In sum, the filings show that millions continued to flow to Trump and his allies in the wake of his electoral victory, positioning his political operation to continue shaping Republican politics into the new administration.

## Eyes on 2026

Georgia, North Carolina and New Hampshire are host to a trio of Senate incumbents seeking reelection in 2026, and year-end FEC reports showed how those members were set up entering the critical cycle.

In Georgia, Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff had a strong fundraising period to close the year, raising \$2.2 million and reporting nearly \$5 million in the bank at the end of 2024. Ossoff is among the most endangered incumbents on the ballot in 2026, seeking a second term in a state that has swung between the parties through a series of fiercely contested statewide elections over the last decade.

In another top battleground, North Carolina, Republican Sen. Thom Tillis raised just over \$900,000 during the reporting period and had about \$2.2 million in cash on hand entering 2025. Funds will be crucial for Tillis, who is hoping to ward off a conservative primary challenge as he faces pressure to support the Trump agenda, while still positioning himself for crossover appeal in the highly competitive state.

Finally, in New Hampshire, Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen reported raising about \$170,000 and had about \$1.5 million banked at the end of the year, as she too preps for what could be a tough race in a state that just elected GOP Gov. Kelly Ayotte by nearly 10 points in 2024, even as Trump fell short there by less than 3 points.

In addition, the round of year-end filings showed the party committees rebuilding for the next election cycle. The Republican National Committee reported raising about \$14.6 million, spending about \$19.3 million, and entering 2025 with about \$38 million in the bank.

On the other hand, the Democratic National Committee raised a brisk \$31.5 million, but spent heavily, about \$56.6 million, with millions going to accounts related to headquarters expenses — including a \$5.7 million reimbursement to the Harris campaign for headquarters expenses — and millions more going to legal fees, payroll, and voter outreach. The DNC reported that it had about \$22.1 million in cash on hand at the end of the year.