

# ‘Our Democracy Is Under Siege’ Former Treasury Secretaries Write Scathing NY Times Op-Ed Warning Against DOGE’s ‘Threat to America’

David Gilmour

Five former Treasury Secretaries issued a stark warning calling out President **Donald Trump’s** latest moves at the Treasury as a direct threat to American democracy’s financial backbone in a show of rising alarm. The letter, published in *The New York Times*, unites **Robert E.**

**Rubin, Lawrence H. Summers, Timothy F. Geithner, Jacob J. Lew,** and **Janet L. Yellen**—all veterans of Democratic administrations—in condemning what they describe as “arbitrary and capricious political control of federal payments.”

“While significant data privacy, cybersecurity and national security threats are gravely concerning, the constitutional issues are perhaps even more alarming,” they wrote.

At the heart of their concern is billionaire **Elon Musk**, who, according to recent reports, has gained access to the Treasury’s federal payments system. That system, responsible for distributing over \$6 trillion annually on behalf of federal agencies, contains sensitive personal data for millions of Americans.

Musk, leading Trump’s drive to “shrink the federal government,” is now entangled in what the former secretaries say could “unlawfully undermine the nation’s financial commitments.”

Historically, the Treasury's payment operations have been overseen by a "small group of nonpartisan career civil servants," but the letter claims this norm has been shattered by "political actors" working for Trump's so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), pointing to one unnamed employee who they argued held "financial conflicts of interest."

"They lack training and experience to handle private, personal data," the former secretaries wrote, attacking the general qualification of DOGE's workers. "Their power subjects America's payments system and the highly sensitive data within it to the risk of exposure, potentially to our adversaries."

Though a federal judge has temporarily blocked Musk's access, citing congressional control over the purse strings, the former secretaries warn the threat is far from neutralized.

"People often rely on these funds for survival, making any risk of their cutoff or delay existential," they concluded. "Any hint of the selective suspension of congressionally authorized payments will be a breach of trust and ultimately, a form of default. And our credibility, once lost, will prove difficult to regain."