

The Musk of Elon Musk Hypocrisy: Benefiting from US Government Support While Pushing to Cut Foreign Aid to South Africa

Elon Musk's push to slash USAID and freeze PEPFAR funding isn't about saving money—it's about shifting government priorities from humanitarian aid to industries that benefit him. Cutting global health programs aligns with corporate interests, not public good.

Billionaire [Elon Musk](#) has long positioned himself as an anti-government, anti woke, self-made entrepreneur, decrying public spending while benefiting from billions in government support.

His companies—Tesla, [SpaceX](#), and SolarCity—owe much of their success to federal loans, subsidies, and contracts funny enough. Now, Musk has taken his anti-government stance a step further, [supporting cuts to USAID \(United States Agency for International Development\) and even endorsing the freezing of PEPFAR aid to South Africa](#), a move that threatens life-saving HIV/AIDS treatment in the region.

This raises an important question: Is Musk truly against government spending, or is he simply against it when it doesn't benefit him?

How Musk Built His Empire on Government Money

Tesla: Federal Loans and EV Incentives

- In 2010, Tesla received a \$465 million loan from the U.S. Department of Energy under the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) loan program, which helped Tesla expand at a critical time.
- Tesla's growth was heavily supported by federal EV tax credits of up to \$7,500 per vehicle, which encouraged consumer adoption.
- State and local governments provided billions in incentives for Tesla's factories. Nevada alone gave Tesla \$1.3 billion for its Gigafactory.

SpaceX: Billions in Federal Contracts

- In 2006, NASA awarded SpaceX a \$396 million contract to develop the Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon spacecraft under the Commercial Orbital Transportation Services (COTS) program.
- SpaceX continues to receive billions in contracts from NASA, the Pentagon, and the U.S. Space Force for satellite launches and space missions.
- Starlink, SpaceX's satellite internet division, has benefited from U.S. government support in conflict zones, such as Ukraine.

SolarCity: Renewable Energy Grants

- Before Tesla acquired SolarCity in 2016, the company relied heavily on federal and state solar incentives, including the 30% federal solar tax credit.
- SolarCity also received Department of Treasury grants under the 1603 program to fund renewable energy projects.
- The state of New York gave SolarCity \$750 million to build a solar panel factory in Buffalo, which later struggled to meet its goals.

Musk's Push to Cut Foreign Aid: A Convenient Shift in Priorities

Despite personally benefiting from massive government funding, Musk has become increasingly vocal about cutting US. foreign aid, particularly through USAID. His support for freezing PEPFAR aid to South Africa is particularly hypocritical, given that his businesses continue to rely on government support when it suits them.

The PEPFAR Freeze: Threatening Lives in South Africa

- PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) has provided life-saving HIV/AIDS treatment to millions in South Africa since its inception in 2003.
- The U.S. recently announced a pause in funding for South Africa's PEPFAR programs, citing concerns over corruption. However, this decision has serious humanitarian consequences, as it could disrupt medication supplies and treatment programs for vulnerable populations.
- Musk, who was born in South Africa, has defended the aid freeze, despite the fact that his companies have repeatedly received government-backed lifelines in times of financial difficulty.

Starlink and USAID: Selective Government Support

- As [Reuters](#) previously reported, Starlink has partnered with USAID to provide internet to Ukraine and other war-torn regions, benefiting from government funding while Musk simultaneously criticizes foreign aid.
- Musk has expressed frustration with US aid to Ukraine, despite SpaceX's direct role in supplying government-funded Starlink services to the country.
- His companies profit from government contracts and subsidies, yet he supports slashing aid that helps vulnerable populations worldwide.

Cutting Aid While Profiting from Government Money

Musk and [Donald Trump's call to cut USAID and freeze PEPFAR funding](#) is not about fiscal responsibility—it's about shifting government priorities away from humanitarian aid and toward industries that benefit him. If Musk were truly against government spending, he would have rejected the billions in loans, subsidies, and contracts that helped build Tesla, SpaceX, and SolarCity. Instead, he embraced public funding when he needed it and now seeks to deny aid to others.

His stance is not one of principle, but of self-interest—championing government support when it fuels his wealth, and opposing it when it doesn't.

If Musk believes the US should stop spending taxpayer money on foreign aid, perhaps he should also advocate for cutting the massive government contracts and subsidies that continue to enrich him. But that, of course, would be inconvenient.