

Trump picks sides in MAGA power struggle as DOGE is put on a leash and Musk is told to put down his chainsaw



It caps off a

brutal past couple of weeks for Musk, despite being feted and applauded at Trump's address to Congress and at CPAC, where he promised to take 'a chainsaw to bureaucracy.' Several department heads told their workers to ignore Musk's 'what did you do last week' email, Tesla shares are down 45% since December and on Thursday, his SpaceX Starship rocket spiraled out of control and exploded in space, sparking flight diversions and air traffic chaos. Now, it appears Musk has suffered another blow as Trump told his Cabinet members at an impromptu meeting that they are the ones with the power to fire their employees.

Donald Trump attempted to settle a MAGA power struggle Thursday by telling **Elon Musk** to drop the chainsaw and leave the drastic cuts across federal departments to his Cabinet secretaries.

The decision came in a meeting after a tumultuous few weeks of legal challenges and lawsuits from federal workers as Musk fired thousands and literally wielded a power tool at CPAC while **promising to take 'a chainsaw to bureaucracy.'**

'I don't want to see a big cut where a lot of good people are cut,' Trump said after the Cabinet meeting.

'Elon and the group are going to be watching them, and if they can cut, it's better. And if they don't cut, then Elon will do the cutting.'

The president also made billionaire Elon Musk's role very clear – he is not in charge of hiring and firing, but rather can make recommendations to agency heads.

Trump told his top leaders that they need to be more selective if they continue to conduct clear-outs of their workforce. Instead of taking a 'hatchet' approach to trimming the fat, Trump wants his secretaries to use a 'scalpel' for 'surgical' precision over who they dismiss.

Trump's first 100 days has been beset by a fierce standoff over a DOGE email asking federal workers **'what did you do last week.'**

Some department heads - including Defense Secretary **Pete Hegseth**, FBI Director Kash Patel and Director of National Intelligence **Tulsi Gabbard** - defied the DOGE head by telling **their workers** to ignore the directive.

Now, it appears Musk may have lost the power struggle as Trump made very clear during his impromptu Cabinet meeting that the department heads were in charge of which federal workers are fired - not Musk.

The news came as one of Musk's **SpaceX** Starship rockets **spiraled out of control and exploded** Thursday and his Tesla stock plummeted a staggering 5.6 percent.



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Donald Trump appears to have settled a power struggle and told his Cabinet they have power to make cuts to government waste ahead of 'First Buddy' Elon Musk and DOGE



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It caps off a brutal past couple of weeks for Musk, despite being feted and applauded at Trump's address to Congress and at CPAC, where he promised to take 'a chainsaw to bureaucracy'



Obama hit by yet another setback amid divorce rumors



I told the world I got my girlfriend and her MOTHER pregnant



Elon Musk's generous gesture towards cancer stricken 13-year-old

Democrats on the House Oversight Committee are **introducing a pair of resolutions demanding** the Trump administration turn over documents about the billionaire adviser's potential conflicts of interest and the firings of federal workers Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) was **created by Trump to examine government agencies for wasteful spending and abuse of taxpayer funds.** But DOGE was only intended to provide recommendations for Trump's Cabinet to carry out on their own accord.

'DOGE has been an incredible success, and now that we have my Cabinet in place, I have instructed the Secretaries and Leadership to **work with DOGE on Cost Cutting measures and Staffing,**' Trump wrote in a post to Truth Social.

When asked if Elon Musk had moved too fast with DOGE, Trump said he did not think so. Musk is teaching everybody how to cut costs, Trump told reporters in the Oval Office after the meeting.

'I want the numbers but I also want to keep the good people,' Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

The president abruptly assembled his Cabinet on Thursday amid rising scrutiny over how much power Musk wields over the U.S. government.

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Elon Musk arrives for US President Donald Trump's address to a joint session of Congress in the House Chamber

Instead of taking a 'hatchet' approach to trimming the fat, Trump wants his secretaries to use a 'scalpel' for 'surgical' precision over who they dismiss.

'As the Secretaries learn about, and understand, the people working for the various Departments, they can be very precise as to who will remain, and who will go,' Trump wrote on his social media platform.

'We say the "scalpel" rather than the "hatchet." The combination of them, Elon, DOGE, and other great people will be able to do things at a historic level.'

Trump's message to his department chiefs was his first notable effort in public to restrain Musk.

Is Trump right to let his cabinet handle cuts?

Yes

No

The billionaire **Tesla** founder has wielded unprecedented authority in implementing mass firings, canceling billions of dollars in contracts and programs and gaining access to sensitive computer systems.

The move had liberal pundits wondering if this was the end for America's most high-profile bromance.

On **CNN**, anchor John King said that Trump was being told by department heads that Musk was cutting them out.

'[Trump]'s hearing it from some of his own cabinet secretaries – that 'he's coming into my department and messing with my business – and it's causing me problems'...so the president is hearing it,' **King claimed**.

Thursday's meeting was a sharp departure in tone from Trump's first full cabinet meeting last week, when he allowed Musk to **deliver a monologue about DOGE at the start of the meeting**.

'Is anybody unhappy with Elon?' Trump asked, to scattered laughter.

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Musk has had a rough past couple of weeks, culminating in today's news and his SpaceX Starship rocket spiraled out of control and exploded in space , sparking flight diversions and air traffic chaos

Some department head took exception with Musk's intrusion into their workforces after the 'what did you do last week' email, and reached out to their employees directly.

"The FBI, through the office of the director, is in charge of all our review processes," said FBI Director Kash Patel, a Trump appointee, in an email to staff.

Workers at the departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Education and Commerce, as well as at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the National Institutes of Health and the Internal Revenue Service also were told not to respond pending further guidance.

Defense Secretary **Pete Hegseth later backtracked** and told workers to respond. During Trump's joint session to Congress on Tuesday evening, he **referred to Musk as the 'head of DOGE,' despite the White House insisting that the Tesla and SpaceX boss is not the official leader of the group.**

The Trump administration said in a court filing in February that Musk **has no authority over DOGE, despite the president repeatedly claiming** the billionaire 'first buddy' is in charge of the massive cost-cutting program.

After that filing, the White House was peppered with questions over who is really running the initiative that has cut billions in contracts, thousands of jobs and even gutted almost entire government agencies like USAID.

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Elon Musk arrives for meetings with Republican members of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington

'I think we do need to delete entire agencies as opposed to leave a lot of them behind,' Musk said via a videocall to the World Governments Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. 'If we don't remove the roots of the weed, then it's easy for the weed to grow back.'

Two weeks ago, the White House and DOGE has ordered the feds to **lay off nearly all probationary workers who had not yet gained civil service protection**.

In addition, workers at some agencies were warned that large workplace cuts would be coming, in moves that could effect 200,000 employees.

Judge William Alsup, 79, ordered the Office of Personnel Management to inform certain federal agencies that it had no authority to order the firings of probationary employees, including at the Department of Defense.

Trump has also been sharply critical of federal workers, especially those who **want to keep working remotely**, though his administration is simultaneously working to cut federal office space and ordering the termination of worksite leases throughout the government.

The 'First Buddy' suggested privatization for both Amtrak and the United States Postal Service, confirming that America's mail service was next on the Trump administration's chopping block.

Musk has previously told lawmakers he envisions DOGE can **save some \$1 trillion in the federal government this year alone.**

DOGE's effort, which has cut more than 100,000 employees from the 2.3 million-strong federal workforce, has created uncertainty and anxiety among workers.

In some cases, the government has scrambled to rehire critical staffers in areas such as nuclear weapons security and bird flu research.

More than 30 lawsuits have been filed by unions and other advocacy groups challenging DOGE's actions.

There have been isolated signs of tension between Musk and Trump's cabinet secretaries, most notably when the SpaceX CEO unexpectedly **sent an email to all federal workers** demanding that they provide a list of their accomplishments for the week.

Failure to reply, Musk said on X, would be taken as a resignation.

Reuters reported last week that top White House aides were struggling to contain disputes across the administration following Musk's ultimatum.

The email caused mass confusion, with some departments instructing workers to respond and others telling staff members that the demand was optional.