

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 5, 2025

Chairman Mike Crapo
U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Tim Scott
U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
534 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Crapo and Chairman Scott:

We write requesting that the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs immediately hold hearings to examine reports that officials associated with Elon Musk and the so-called U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”) have gained access to systems that control payments to millions of American citizens, including Social Security, Medicare, tax refunds, and payments to small businesses.¹ It is critical that the Senate understands this threat to the stability of a payment system that millions of Americans rely upon and that is critical to America’s global financial standing.

The Treasury Department’s Bureau of the Fiscal Service’s payment systems control the flow of more than \$6 trillion in annual payments to households, businesses and other entities nationwide. These payment systems cover 87% of all federal payments and process more than a billion payments annually and are responsible for the distribution of Social Security and Medicare benefits, tax refunds, payments to federal employees and contractors, including competitors of Musk-owned companies, and thousands of other functions.

Putting this system in the hands of unaccountable political actors raises significant economic and national security risks. Information in these systems is critical to the Department’s management of the national debt. The takeover by Mr. Musk and his associates was achieved by engineering the ouster of a key official responsible for managing the extraordinary measures the Department has been taking to avoid a default. A misstep with these payment systems could lead to a technical default with a wide range of devastating consequences, from seniors missing Social Security payments to a global financial meltdown that costs trillions of dollars and millions of jobs.

Furthermore, granting access to Mr. Musk and his team - who may not have appropriate security clearances - access to this system risks exposing the sensitive tax and financial information of nearly every American. The Treasury payment system “includes sensitive personal information about the millions of Americans who receive Social Security checks, tax refunds and other

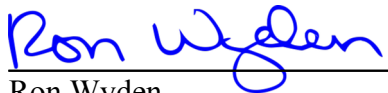
¹ *Senior U.S. Official to exit after rift with Musk allies over payment system*, The Washington Post, Jan. 31, 2025, online at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/01/31/elon-musk-treasury-department-payment-systems/>

payments from the federal government.”² It is not clear why these individuals were granted unfettered access to such data, what they could do with it once inside the system, and what protections are in place to ensure the Department has been complying with its legal obligations under the Privacy Act, 26 U.S.C. 6103, as well as other statutes and Treasury regulations and policies that protect such sensitive information about millions of Americans.

Finally, we are deeply concerned that following the federal grant and loan freeze earlier this week, as well as Musk’s own comments on social media, officials associated with Musk may have intended to access these payment systems to illegally withhold payments authorized by law, and to circumvent the court orders prohibiting that freeze from going into effect.

We ask that the Finance Committee and Banking Committee swiftly schedule hearings to allow Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent to answer critical questions about the risks posed by Musk and DOGE’s access to the Bureau of Fiscal Service’s payment systems.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance



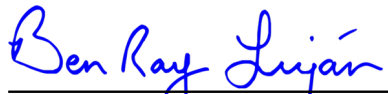
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Banking, Housing, and
Urban Affairs



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

² Senior U.S. Official to exit after rift with Musk allies over payment system, The Washington Post, Jan. 31, 2025, online at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/01/31/elon-musk-treasury-department-payment-systems/>



Tina Smith
United States Senator



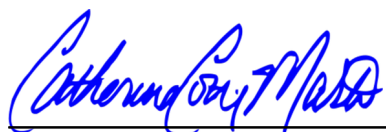
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator