

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 6, 2025

The Honorable Doug Collins  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins,

Among many tasks, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is entrusted with safeguarding the private and sensitive information of millions of veterans. Today, we call on you to immediately secure any personal and related information regarding veterans provided by VA or other agencies to Elon Musk and associates under the auspices of the “Department of Government Efficiency” established under Executive Order 14158. Further, we call on you to deny and sever their access to any VA or other government system that includes information about veterans, and to require them to immediately and permanently delete any information in their possession. Veterans risked their lives to defend our country, and they deserve better than to have an unelected billionaire reviewing their medical records, targeting the benefits they have earned, or using their private information for personal gain.

Our nation’s veterans have entrusted their health records, including genetic samples, disability data, bank information, and other private information, to VA. The Department also stores sensitive veteran casework, files of whistleblowers who have come forward with concerns about waste, fraud, and abuse, and sensitive investigative files with veteran and federal employee information. Veterans and VA employees entrusted the Department with this information with the understanding that it would be kept private and only used to help deliver the highest quality of services to veterans, their families, and survivors.


Meanwhile, the President has given unfettered access to federal databases and systems to Mr. Musk, an unelected citizen, and a team of colleagues with no formal documented employment agreement with the U.S. government. It is a group of private citizens with no experience in the federal government, who lack proper approval from legal and agency authorities, lack the appropriate security clearances, and lack the requisite background investigations or ethical conflict requirements. We are outraged these unelected, unvetted, and unaccountable individuals now have access to sensitive information that has been heavily secured for decades and by Administrations of both parties.


These actions are in direct violation of federal laws meant to protect our national security and the privacy of our citizens’ personal information. This includes information on Social Security payments, Medicare, Medicaid, student loans, veterans’ disability compensation payments, GI Bill payments, federal civil servants’ personnel records, and much more. With


every hour, we see DOGE further expand its efforts to create a massive private database of previously guarded data outside the federal government's cyber and legal protections. It is an abhorrent and illegal overreach of executive powers, which conflicts with various federal statutes, including the Federal Information Security Modernization Act, the Privacy Act, the E-Government Act of 2002, and likely several other cyber and national security laws.


During your confirmation process, you claimed you would be focused on rooting out corruption and ensuring accountability at VA, and committed to following the laws passed by Congress. We now call on you to respond quickly and comprehensively to these privacy violations by revoking DOGE's access to VA systems and insisting they permanently remove all VA data collected from their files.


Sincerely,

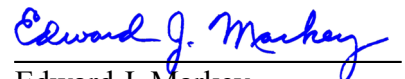
  
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senator

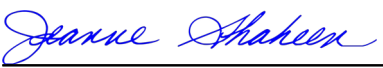
  
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

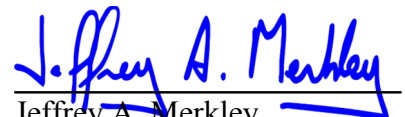
  
Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator

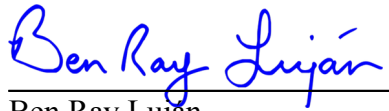
  
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

  
Chris Van Hollen  
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Edward J. Markey  
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Jeanne Shaheen  
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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
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Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



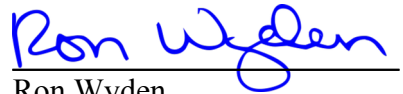
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



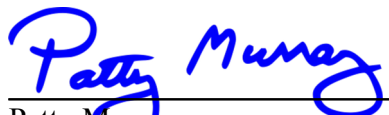
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator