

News and Views 25

Date Feb 21, 2025

Issue # 6 - "It's a Wrecking Ball"

Topic - Is the government being destroyed?

On January 20, 2025 one of the first things Trump did was to establish a new government "department" identified as "The Department of Government Efficiency". He appointed Elon Musk to run the program. Musk stated that he would *"reduce government spending by one trillion dollars (\$1,000,000,000)."*

*Newsweek 2/19/25 - "DOGE morphed from its expected advisory role to that of an **actual wrecking ball**."*

When you are running a large company with multiple manufactured products or services and want to reduce costs there is more than one way to accomplish it.

First option:

- Carefully review each part of the company.
- Identify where the costs are too high.
- Determine what items or functions can be revised, reduced or replaced that will result in savings.
- Evaluate each step, determining how the change will affect your customers, suppliers and employees.
- If the changes will negatively affect others, alert them ahead of time so provision can be made to minimise problems.
- Make the changes, being careful not to disturb the general operation of other parts of your company.

Second option - This company owner could:

- Fire department leaders who the owner does not agree with.

- Slam the doors shut on the entire company, creating chaos for customers and suppliers.
- Send termination notices to anyone recently hired, stating that they are fired because of “performance” issues, even though many have already been given high performance reports.
- Fire multiple crucial leaders of the organization who are tasked with fighting waste and fraud without giving required 30 day notice and providing performance reasons to the board of directors.
- Close down or minimise functions that protect customers and suppliers against fraud, financial mismanagement and corruption.

The following items refer to various government departments, including mission statements and news comments about what Trump / Musk are doing.

In The News

Mission statement - Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)

Jan 20, 2025 · Our mission is to decentralize the narrative around government spending, giving power back to the people to hold government entities accountable for their financial decisions.

Wrecking ball

Newsweek 2/19/25

*“DOGE morphed from its expected advisory role to that of an **actual wrecking ball**. Musk stated at an impromptu press conference with President [Donald Trump](#) that “We have this fourth, unelected, unconstitutional branch which is the bureaucracy. If the bureaucracy is in charge, then what meaning does democracy actually have?”*

Perhaps the term “*if the bureaucracy is in charge*” could actually be better substituted with “*if DOGE / Musk is in charge*”, what meaning does democracy actually have?.

Let’s take a tour of some of the government departments subject to recent attacks by Trump / DOGE / Musk activities.

USAID

Mission Statement - [usaid.gov](https://www.usaid.gov)

We partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity.

Factcheck.org

On Feb 1 DOGE did this to USAID:

"The agency's website was taken down, and on Feb. 7, it showed a [notice](#) that said: "On Friday, February 7, 2025, at 11:59 pm (EST) all USAID direct hire personnel will be placed on administrative leave globally, with the exception of designated personnel responsible for mission-critical functions, core leadership and specially designated programs."

"USAID is a criminal organization," [Musk wrote](#) on his social media platform, X, on Feb. 2. "Time for it to die."

Saranac Hale Spencer - 2/8/25 *"...the White House and social media posts have highlighted four projects as examples of the agency's "waste and abuse." But only one was funded by USAID"* [Read more](#)

Yahoo News - 2/18/25 - *The USAID shutdown is upending livelihoods for nonprofit workers, farmers and other Americans.* [Read more](#)

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Editor Note - When I attempted to get the Mission Statement for this department I found the following message. It looks like Musk has succeeded in blocking this site already.

404: Page not found. *We can't find the page you're looking for. Visit our homepage for helpful tools and resources, or contact us and we'll point you in the right direction.*

Mission Statement - CFPB.gov (Got it from another source.)

We aim to make consumer financial markets work for consumers, responsible providers, and the economy as a whole. We protect consumers from unfair, deceptive, or abusive practices and take action against companies that break the law. We arm people with the information, steps, and tools that they need to make smart financial decisions.

Yahoo News 2/19/25

The CFPB has told staffers to "not perform any work tasks" while it [shuts down its DC headquarters](#) amid an uncertain future.

The agency followed up by sending termination notices to dozens of employees, some of whom had already accepted the buyout offer, sources familiar with the situation [told CNBC](#).

Office of ethics

Mission statement - oge.gov

The United States Office of Government Ethics (OGE) leads and oversees the executive branch ethics program which is at work every day in more than 140 agencies. The executive branch ethics program works to prevent financial conflicts of interest to help ensure government decisions are made free from personal financial bias.

OGE leads and oversees the executive branch ethics program by:

- Making and interpreting ethics laws and regulations.
- Supporting and training executive branch ethics officials.
- Administering the executive branch financial disclosure systems.
- Monitoring senior leaders' compliance with ethics commitments.
- Ensuring agencies comply with ethics program requirements.
- Making ethics information available to the public.

Federal News Network - 2/10/25

President Donald Trump has fired the federal government's top ethics official just months into his five-year term, while also drawing a legal challenge for seeking to remove the head of the independent Office of Special Counsel. [Read more](#)

Washington Technology - 2/4/25

With Elon Musk now named a "special government employee," even more questions about ethics and conflicts of interest in the Trump administration are being raised. [Read more](#)

Inspectors General

Mission Statement - Oversight.gov

Under the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, the role of federal IGs is to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse relating to their agency's programs and operations, and to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the agency's operations and programs.

Steve Benen 1/27/25

"President Donald Trump fired multiple inspectors general late on Friday, removing the independent watchdogs tasked with investigating abuse and impropriety in federal agencies in a move that potentially violates federal law."

Right off the bat, the obvious problem with such a move is the apparent motivation: Inspectors general are responsible for investigating internal wrongdoing, possible ethical lapses, alleged corruption and fraud, and mismanagement."

IRS

IRS mission Statement - irs.gov

Provide America's taxpayers top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and enforce the law with integrity and fairness to all.

This mission statement describes our role and the public's expectation about how we should perform that role.

- In the United States, the Congress passes tax laws and requires taxpayers to comply.
- The taxpayer's role is to understand and meet his or her tax obligations.
- The IRS role is to help the large majority of compliant taxpayers with the tax law, while ensuring that the minority who are unwilling to comply pay their fair share.

Yahoo News - 2/19/25

Two sources familiar with the IRS's plans [told The Associated Press](#) that the agency is expected to lay off thousands of probationary workers in the middle of tax season.

Some accountants [say that a personnel shortage](#) could mean long wait times for taxpayers seeking help with their returns and significant delays for tax refund checks.

But there's one set of people who would benefit from a shrunken IRS workforce: people who want to commit tax fraud. [Read more](#)

Politico 2/14/25 -

Democrats and tax experts are sounding alarms about a plan by Elon Musk's DOGE team to gain access to an IRS system that contains detailed financial information about millions of taxpayers, including their tax returns. [Read more](#)

Daily Caller - 2/20/25

Between 120 and 150 Denver IRS workers, most of whom were probationary, were laid off across multiple divisions, including collections and tax compliance. Over 6,000 IRS employees face termination in the agency's initial round of cuts, The New York Times first **reported**. [Read more](#)

Treasury

Mission Statement

The U.S. Department of the Treasury's mission is to maintain a strong economy and create economic and job opportunities by promoting the conditions that enable economic growth and stability at home and abroad, strengthen national security by combating threats and protecting the integrity of the financial system, and manage the U.S. Government's finances and resources effectively.

ABC News 2/3/25

The Treasury Department has given Elon Musk and representatives of his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) team access to the vast federal payment system responsible for handling trillions of dollars in government expenditures, multiple sources familiar with the matter told ABC News.

"An unelected unaccountable billionaire with expansive conflicts of interest, deep ties to China and an industry ax to grind against perceived enemies is hijacking our nation's most sensitive financial systems and its checkbook," Murray said. [Read more](#)

National Institutes of Health

Mission Statement

NIH's mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

Reuters 2/16/25

Trump administration's NIH layoffs total 1,165 people, internal email shows
The NIH has also been targeted by Trump and Musk's widespread staffing cuts across the federal workforce, with the agency losing over 1,100 staffers, according to an internal email obtained by [Reuters](#).

Firing workers

Yahoo News 2/19/25

As part of Trump and Musk's promise to significantly reduce the federal budget, the Trump administration has [laid off thousands of probationary workers](#) — typically, employees who have been in their roles for less than two years — from a wide swath of federal agencies. [Read more](#)

988 Hotline - Suicide and Crisis lifeline

SAMHSA.gov

Providing 24/7, free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress works. The Lifeline helps thousands of people overcome crisis situations every day.

CBS News - 2/21/25 - More than 10% of the staff working for the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration were fired this month as part of the [government-wide cuts](#) to recently hired federal workers ordered by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, or [DOGE](#), task force. [Read more](#)

Note from the Editor:

- Do the firings detailed above in the various news reports appear to be based on “Waste, fraud or abuse?”. Or do they appear to be more motivated to rid the system of anyone who does not agree with the leader's political position?
- Will termination or gutting of departments like Inspectors General, CFPB (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau) and Office of Ethics result in cost savings, or just make it easier for someone to act illegally or unethically and avoid being caught?
- Will reducing IRS staff (which is already at its lowest employee number per population) help it to be more efficient? Or will it simply make it more difficult to audit rich citizens and uncover their cheating efforts to underpay taxes?
- When termination notices are sent (in bulk email) to thousands of employees, stating that the termination is because of “Performance” concerns - Is it likely that the terminations are actually based on an evaluation of performance of each employee or simply chopping off bodies to claim cost savings?.

Stay Safe and be Happy