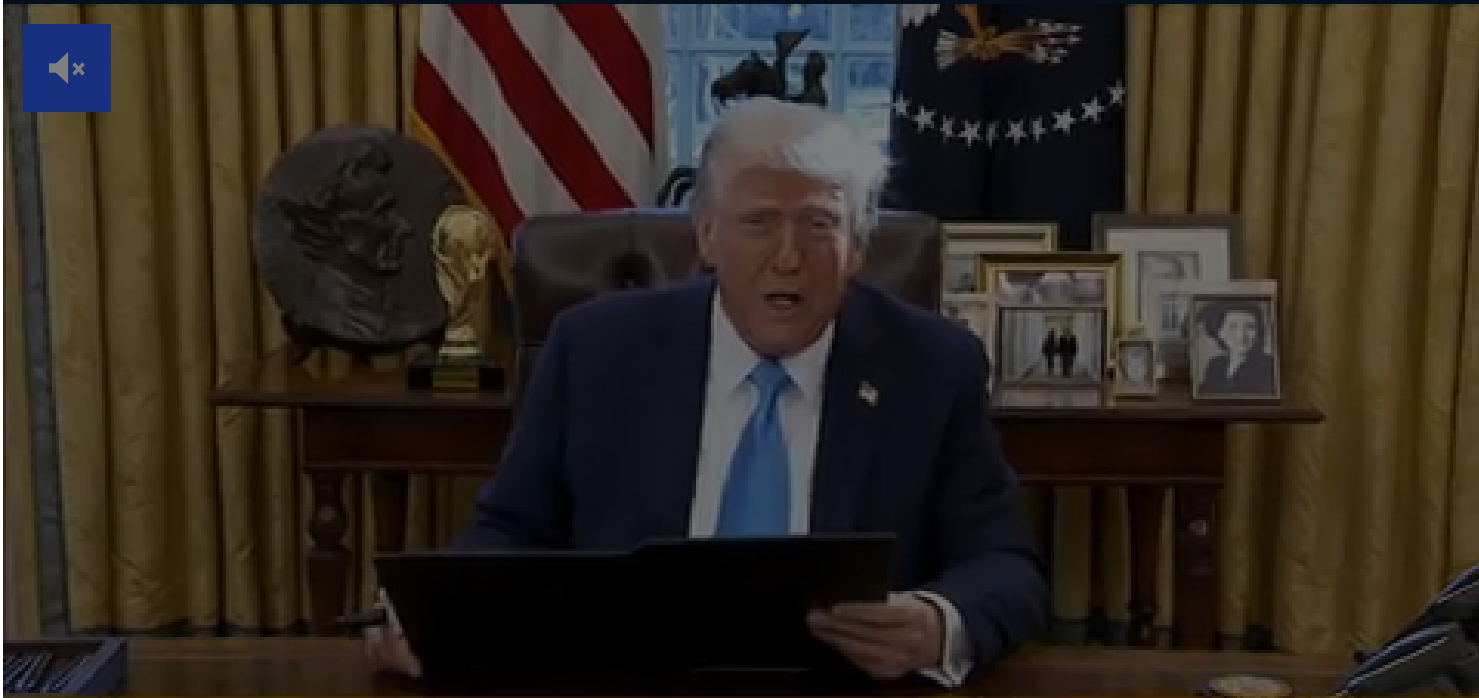


POLITICS NEWS

Trump administration agrees to restrict DOGE access to Treasury Department payment systems

The agreement came in response to a lawsuit accusing Treasury of committing an "unlawful action" by giving private info to Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency.



WHITE HOUSE AGREES TO LIMIT DOGE ACCESS



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Feb. 6, 2025, 3:55 AM UTC / Updated Feb. 6, 2025, 6:08 PM UTC

By Daniel Barnes, Dareh Gregorian and Zoë Richards

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The agreement comes after a group of union members and retirees sued the Treasury Department alleging that providing DOGE access to the federal government's massive payment and collections system – and the personal data housed in it – violated federal privacy laws.

The Trump administration filed a motion Wednesday night seeking to enter a [proposed order](#) that detailed the agreed-upon terms.

"The Defendants will not provide access to any payment record or payment system of records maintained by or within the Bureau of the Fiscal Service," the proposed order says.

The order would allow exceptions for two special government employees at the Treasury – Tom Krause and Marko Elez – saying they are permitted access "as needed" to perform their duties, "provided that such access to payment records will be 'read only.'"

U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly signed off on the agreement Thursday morning. The agreement will stay in place until she rules on the plaintiffs' request for a preliminary injunction, which will be the subject of a Feb. 24 hearing.

Nandan Joshi, an attorney for the plaintiffs, said, "We're pleased that the court acted quickly to put in safeguards to protect people's personal information until the facts are sorted out. Americans who rely on Social Security and similar programs should be able to trust their government to handle their sensitive information with the utmost care. No one should ever face having their personal information used for improper purposes without their consent, which is why we've brought this case."

Reached for comment on the order, a White House official said in a statement, "Those leading this mission with Elon Musk are doing so in full compliance with federal law, appropriate security clearances, and as employees of the relevant agencies, not as outside advisors or entities."

The Justice Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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Trump praises Elon Musk's work dismantling government agencies

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The suit contends newly minted Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent should not have given DOGE access to the secure system. Bessent "decided behind closed doors to allow individuals not involved in the processing of the government's financial transactions to root around in the Bureau's records. Giving access to those records is unlawful," their filing said.

"And the longer that the private information of Plaintiffs' members remains accessible to unauthorized third parties, the greater the irreparable injury is. After all, as long as the sensitive data of Plaintiffs' members remains accessible to Mr. Musk and other members of DOGE, the more opportunity there is for that data to be disclosed to still more unauthorized third parties, either accidentally or deliberately," they added.

The suit seeks an order barring Treasury from "disclosing information about individuals" to DOGE and directing the agency "to retrieve and safeguard any such information that has already been obtained by DOGE or individuals associated with it."

At a hearing Wednesday before Kollar-Kotelly, a Justice Department lawyer denied that Treasury

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systems but that there is no plan for those two employees or any other DOGE employee working at the Treasury Department to share the information with Musk or anyone outside of Treasury.

The Service Employees International Union, one of the groups that filed the lawsuit, called the judge's order a "very important ruling that restricts DOGE's access to Americans' private information – but it's too early to celebrate."

"We must do everything we can to stop the President from turning over our private information to his handpicked oligarchs, which threatens the security of working people and our democracy," SEIU President April Verrett said in a statement.

DOGE's actions under Musk – a tech billionaire and key ally of President Donald Trump – have prompted [fierce criticism](#) from Democrats, who have painted Musk as an unelected bureaucrat who is amassing outsized power and reshaping the federal government without the necessary checks and balances.

"Let's not mince words here: An unelected, unaccountable billionaire with expansive conflicts of interest, deep ties to China and an indiscreet ax to grind against perceived enemies is hijacking our nation's most sensitive financial data system and its checkbook," Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., said in a floor speech Wednesday.

'We are here to fight back': Lawmakers join protest outside U.S. Treasury

02:26



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Musk, who spearheads DOGE, has [defended it](#) as "something that is sorely needed," framing his efforts as cutting down on wasteful spending.

"DOGE is the wood chipper for bureaucracy," he [said Monday on X](#).

Musk [is working](#) in the Trump administration as a "special government employee," according to a White House official, meaning he is not a full-time federal worker. That categorization also suggests Musk's employment period in the White House is limited to about a third of a year.

On the first day of his second term, Trump renamed the U.S. Digital Service as the Department of Government Efficiency. He had previously announced that Musk would [help lead](#) the advisory group.

Musk has targeted the U.S. Agency for International Development for elimination, prompting the administration to grind humanitarian assistance to a near halt. He has also turned his attention toward the other wings of the federal government, including the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Earlier Wednesday, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced that DOGE would have a role in his department, as well, [saying on X](#) that the entity is "going to plug in to help upgrade our aviation system." 

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