

SUPREME COURT

Supreme Court allows DOGE to access Social Security data

The dispute concerns efforts by the Department of Government Efficiency, largely led by Elon Musk, to access sensitive data, including Social Security numbers.



— Elon Musk listens as President Donald Trump speaks in the Oval Office on Feb. 11.

Jim Watson / AFP - Getty Images file

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The conservative-majority court, with its three liberal justices objecting, granted an emergency application filed by the Trump administration asking the justices to lift an injunction issued by a federal judge in Maryland.

The [unsigned order](#) said that members of the DOGE team assigned to the Social Security Administration should have "access to the agency records in question in order for those members to do their work."

The lawsuit challenging DOGE's actions was filed by progressive group Democracy Forward on behalf of two unions – the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the American Federation of Teachers – as well as the Alliance for Retired Americans.

"This is a sad day for our democracy and a scary day for millions of people," the groups said in a statement. "This ruling will enable President Trump and DOGE's affiliates to steal Americans' private and personal data."

The White House praised the ruling.

"The Supreme Court allowing the Trump Administration to carry out commonsense efforts to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse and modernize government information systems is a huge victory for the rule of law," White House spokesperson Liz Huston said in a statement.

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Liberal Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson wrote a dissenting opinion questioning the need for the court to intervene on an emergency basis.

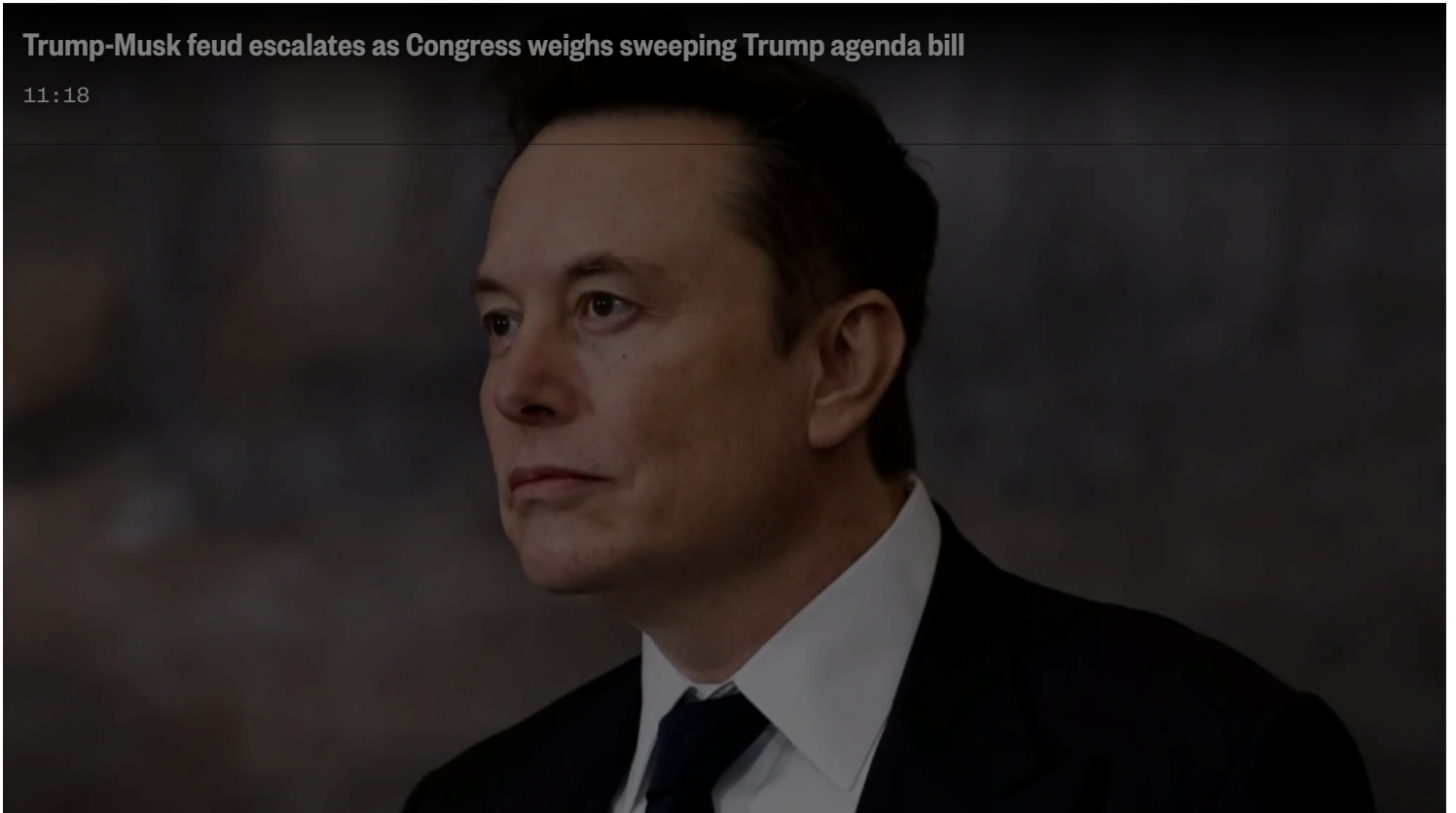
"In essence, the 'urgency' underlying the government's stay application is the mere fact that it cannot be bothered to wait for the litigation process to play out before proceeding as it wishes," she added.

DOGE's attempt to kill the... Elon Musk's... his fall... out with President Donald Trump... it

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“These teams have a business need to access the data at their assigned agency and subject the government’s records to much-needed scrutiny,” Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote in court papers.

The lawsuit alleged that allowing broader access to the personal information would violate a federal law called the Privacy Act as well as the Administrative Procedure Act.

"The agency is obligated by the Privacy Act and its own regulations, practices, and procedures to keep that information secure – and not to share it beyond the circle of those who truly need it," the challengers' lawyers wrote in court papers.

U.S. District Judge Ellen Hollander had ruled that DOGE had no need to access the specific data at issue. The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Richmond, Virginia, declined to block Hollander's decision, leading to the Trump administration to file its emergency request at the Supreme Court.

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systems, and ensuring improved service and outcomes for our beneficiaries,” Bisignano said in a statement.

In a [separate order](#) issued Friday in another case involving DOGE, the Supreme Court granted another request filed by the Trump administration.


That decision allows the Trump administration to, for now, shield DOGE from freedom of information requests seeking thousands of pages of material.

The move [formalizes a decision](#) issued by Chief Justice John Roberts on May 23 that temporarily put lower court decisions on hold while the Supreme Court considered what next steps to take. The court also told lower courts to limit the scope of what material could be disclosed.

It means the government will not have to respond to requests for documents and allow for the deposition of the DOGE administrator, Amy Gleason, as a lower court had ruled, while litigation continues.

The three liberal justices noted their disagreement with that decision, too.

A spokesman for Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, which filed the lawsuit, said the group was "obviously disappointed" with the decision but "pleased that the court allowed discovery to proceed."

A Justice Department spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the order. 



Lawrence Hurley

Lawrence Hurley is a senior Supreme Court reporter for NBC News.



Gary Grumbach

Gary Grumbach is an NBC News legal affairs reporter, based in Washington, D.C.

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