

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Trump administration says DOGE may have misused Social Security data

The Justice Department told a judge that an unnamed political advocacy group contacted Department of Government Efficiency staffers in a bid to gain access to state voter rolls.



— Elon Musk led the Department of Government Efficiency in the early months of President Donald Trump's second term. *Brendan Smialowski / AFP via Getty Images*

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The [Justice Department](#) alerted a federal judge in Maryland that members of the [Department of Government Efficiency](#) working with the Social Security Administration may have misused data it obtained from that agency.



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In a court filing Friday, Justice Department officials said SSA representatives told them a recent review found that in March, after a temporary restraining order by the Maryland judge blocking DOGE's access to SSA went into effect, an unnamed political advocacy group contacted two members of the agency's DOGE team "with a request to analyze state voter rolls that the advocacy group had acquired."

The advocacy group's stated aim, the Justice Department writes, "was to find evidence of voter fraud and to overturn election results in certain States."

Politico [first reported](#) on the Justice Department court filing.

The Justice Department said one of the two DOGE team members signed a "Voter Data Agreement" with the advocacy group. That person sent an executed agreement to the advocacy group on March 24 – four days after the temporary restraining order was issued.

"At this time, there is no evidence that SSA employees outside of the involved members of the DOGE Team were aware of the communications with the advocacy group. Nor were they aware of the 'Voter Data Agreement.' This agreement was not reviewed or approved through the agency's data exchange procedures," [the filing said](#).

The Justice Department said it was unclear whether any personal information was given to the political group.

SSA representatives told the Justice Department they first learned about the situation during an unrelated review in November, the month DOGE [ended its operations](#), and the Trump administration made two Hatch Act referrals to the Office of Special Counsel in late December.

U.S. District Judge Ellen Hollander in Maryland signed a temporary restraining order in March

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"The DOGE Team is essentially engaged in a fishing expedition at SSA, in search of a fraud epidemic, based on little more than suspicion," Hollander wrote.


"It has launched a search for the proverbial needle in the haystack, without any concrete knowledge that the needle is actually in the haystack," while potentially putting millions of people's private information at risk, she added.

[The Supreme Court in June](#) reversed the restraining order and allowed members of DOGE to access Social Security data. The DOGE team argued last year that it had a need to access Social Security Administration records "to modernize technology" and "to maximize efficiency and productivity."

[A whistleblower report filed in August](#) accused DOGE staffers of mishandling Social Security data by putting millions of people's data "in a cloud environment that circumvents oversight."

In Friday's filing, the Justice Department acknowledged that some data was not handled properly.

"SSA has learned that, beginning March 7, 2025, and continuing until March 17 (approximately one week before the [temporary restraining order] was entered), members of SSA's DOGE Team were using links to share data through the third-party server 'Cloudflare.' Cloudflare is not approved for storing SSA data and when used in this manner is outside SSA's security protocols," the filing said.

"SSA did not know, until its recent review, that DOGE Team members were using Cloudflare during this period. Because Cloudflare is a third-party entity, SSA has not been able to determine exactly what data were shared to Cloudflare or whether the data still exist on the server," the Justice Department added. 



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