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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

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February 7, 2025

The Honorable Scott Bessent  
Secretary  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent:

I write in response to the February 4, 2025 letter I received regarding payment systems operated by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Unfortunately, the letter did not address questions about whether and under what circumstances Elon Musk or officials from the so-called U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (“DOGE”) have been granted access to the Treasury Department’s highly sensitive payment systems. Additionally, new reports suggest that that Treasury’s claim in its February 4<sup>th</sup> letter that access to the data of the payment systems by Tom Krause and other officials affiliated with DOGE was “currently” on a “read-only” basis was misleading and evasive.<sup>1</sup>

In the letter, Treasury claimed that staff members working with Tom Krause, a software executive installed at the Treasury Department by DOGE, “currently...will have read-only access to the coded data of the of the Fiscal Service’s payment systems” as part of what the letter labeled an “operational efficiency assessment.”<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Treasury stated that this effort would not result “in the suspension or rejection of any payment instructions submitted to Treasury by other federal agencies across the government.”<sup>3</sup> Treasury’s letter claimed that Krause and others from Musk’s DOGE team did not have the ability to control the payment systems, manipulate the coded data, or stop payments from going through the system. The

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<sup>1</sup> *The US Treasury Claimed DOGE Technologist Didn’t Have ‘Write Access’ When He Actually Did*, Wired, Feb. 6, 2025, online at <https://www.wired.com/story/treasury-department-doge-marko-elez-access/>.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Jonathan Blum, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of the Treasury to Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, Feb. 4, 2025, “Currently, Treasury staff members working with Tom Krause, a Treasury Employee, will have read-only access to the coded data of the Fiscal Service’s payment systems in order to continue this operational efficiency assessment.”

<sup>3</sup> Id. “Importantly, the ongoing review of Treasury’s systems is not resulting in the suspension or rejection of any payment instructions submitted by Treasury by other federal agencies across the government.”

letter's assertions follow reporting in Politico which stated you had personally told Republican lawmakers that the DOGE team did not have control over the payment system, as well as a statement from the White House that DOGE access to the payment system was "read-only."<sup>4</sup>

However, new press reports contradict the statements made by you and the Treasury Department that Musk's DOGE access to Treasury's payment systems was "read-only." According to new reporting by WIRED, it appears that as early as February 1<sup>st</sup>, former Musk employee and DOGE technologist Marko Elez was granted "read-write" access to two of the Treasury Department's most sensitive systems: the Payment Automation Manager (PAM) and Secure Payment System (SPS).<sup>5</sup> This gave Elez the ability to rewrite the code on these systems, and some reports claim he did, in fact, make "extensive changes" to the code.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, reporting states that Velez access was changed from "read-write" to "read-only" on February 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>7</sup>

If Wired's reporting is accurate, the Treasury Department deliberately misled or outright lied to Congress to cover up of DOGE's handling of the nation's most sensitive financial system. The February 4<sup>th</sup> Treasury letter stated that individuals associated with DOGE "currently" had read-only access to the Treasury Department's payment systems when it now appears that at least Mr. Elez had "read-write" access to the system for several days, reportedly executing changes to the code. Treasury's refusal to provide straight answers about DOGE's actions, as well as its refusal to provide a briefing requested by several Senate committees only heightens my suspicions. It now appears Mr. Elez has resigned his position, not due to the flimsy and transparent cover-up of his ability to alter Treasury Department payment system code, but due to his links to a social-media account that advocated racism and eugenics.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, it now appears that my fears regarding DOGE's intent in seeking access to the payment system were well founded. According to press reports, Treasury Department Chief of Staff Dan Katz ordered career officials to give DOGE personnel access to the payments system so that they could freeze legally authorized payments to the U.S. Agency for International Development.<sup>9</sup> According to a January 24<sup>th</sup> email reviewed by the New York Times, Katz stated that Krause and the DOGE team needed access to the system in order to halt foreign aid payments, stating that "we would like to implement the pause as soon as possible."<sup>10</sup> In response, a Treasury career official rebuffed the request, making clear that he did not believe that the Department had "the legal authority to stop an authorized payment certified by an agency."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Bessent tells lawmakers Musk's DOGE does not control Treasury payments system*, Politico, Feb. 3, 2025, online at <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/03/bessent-musk-doge-treasury-payments-00202278>; *Inside Musk's Aggressive Incursion Into the Federal Government*, New York Times, Feb. 3, 2025, online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/03/us/politics/musk-federal-government.html>.

<sup>5</sup> *The US Treasury Claimed DOGE Technologist Didn't Have 'Write Access' When He Actually Did*, Wired, Feb. 6, 2025, online at <https://www.wired.com/story/treasury-department-doge-marko-elez-access/>.

<sup>6</sup> *Musk Cronies Dive Into Treasury Dept Payments Code Base*, Talking Points Memo, Feb. 4, 2025, online at <https://talkingpointsmemo.com/edb/musk-cronies-dive-into-treasury-dept-payments-code-base>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *DOGE Staffer Resigns Over Racist Posts*, The Wall Street Journal, Feb. 6, 2025, online at <https://www.wsj.com/tech/doge-staffer-resigns-over-racist-posts-d9f11a93>.

<sup>9</sup> *Treasury Sought to Freeze Foreign Aid Payments, Emails Show*, The New York Times, Feb. 6, 2025, online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/06/us/politics/trump-musk-usaid.html>.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

Instead of standing down, it appears that Krause continued to push to stop payments through the system, stating that he would “feel more comfortable that we hold payment.” The Treasury career official who objected to DOGE having this access was forced out of his job less than a week later.<sup>12</sup>

These reports make clear that Musk and his DOGE functionaries have sought access to the payments system not for an audit, but instead to manipulate the system in order to enact a political agenda. The Treasury Department’s payment systems facilitate nearly 90 percent of all federal payments and more than \$6 trillion annually. These mission-critical systems are not to be manipulated or subject to the whims of unelected billionaires or software engineers with fantasies of destroying the federal government from within.

I demand that you immediately clarify the terms under which Musk, Krause and other individuals currently or previously affiliated with DOGE can or did access Treasury Department payment systems and clarify whether they seek this access to unlawfully freeze payment instructions given by Congress. Accordingly, please answer the following questions no later than February 12, 2025:

1. Are reports that Elez had “read-write” access to the Treasury payment system accurate? Please answer yes or no. If yes, giving specific dates and times, for how long did he have that access? Please provide a list of all changes Elez made to the payment system during the time he had “read-write” access.
2. Did any other DOGE related officials have “read-write” access to the Treasury payment system? If so, please identify them. Giving specific dates and times, for how long did each additional official have “read-write” access?
3. Please provide all logs or other appropriate documentation that accurately reflects the “read-only” or “read-write” access of Elez, Krause, or any other DOGE-affiliated personnel.”
4. Please define what the Department considers to be “read-only” access to data on the payment systems? Are Tom Krause and other individuals affiliated with DOGE able to download that data? Can any of the data be shared with officials outside the Treasury Department, such as Elon Musk, at any time?
5. Treasury’s February 4<sup>th</sup> letter claims that Mr. Krause’s hiring process included a review of his credentials and background, and that his role “demands the same ethical standards of privacy, confidentiality, conflicts of interest assessment, and professionalism of other government employees.” The letter further states that Mr. Krause “is subject to the same security obligations and ethical requirements, including a Top Secret security clearance.”
  - a. Did these same standards apply to the hiring of all other DOGE affiliated personnel with access to the payment systems, including Mr. Elez?
  - b. Were all other DOGE affiliated personnel, such as Mr. Elez, given Top Secret security clearances?

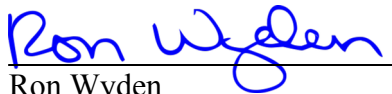
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<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

- c. Reports indicate Mr. Elez has resigned his position due to his links to a social-media account that advocated racism and eugenics. Was this account known to the individuals who conducted his background assessment? If not, please describe the shortcomings in the background vetting process that led to this oversight.
6. Did Dan Katz write senior Treasury personnel directing them to give DOGE affiliated Treasury personnel access to the payment system in order to implement a “pause” on payment instructions on foreign aid or any other component of the federal spending? If so, please provide all correspondence reflecting these discussions.
7. Please list all personnel affiliated with DOGE who have worked at the Treasury Department or Treasury facilities since January 20, 2025, and please list their current federal employment status and job titles.
8. Does Elon Musk have access to the data contained in the fiscal service’s payment systems? If not, will he be granted access? Please answer yes or no.
9. Did Elon Musk ever seek access to data on the fiscal service’s payment system, or has anyone done so on his behalf?
10. Has any data from the Fiscal Service’s payment systems been downloaded onto any servers outside of those that were in use by the Bureau of Fiscal Service on January 19, 2025? If yes, why, and who is now in control of those servers?
11. Please provide responses to all outstanding questions from my January 31, 2025 letter.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this request, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator  
Ranking Member, Committee  
on Finance