

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
“Rightsizing Government”
February 5, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Our government was designed to be by, of, and for the American people. It is made up of civil servants who take an oath to serve the American people, and to support and defend the Constitution.

More than 1 in 3 federal workers is employed by either the Postal Service, ensuring every American can get mail, or the Department of Veterans Affairs, providing care to our veterans in VA hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes. Almost 1 in 3 federal workers is a veteran, and more than 85% live outside the D.C. metropolitan area, across every state and serving every community in America.

1 in 3 Americans—and half of all American children—are enrolled in a government program. Our government provides the support these Americans are counting on, including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, Head Start, and the National School Lunch Program.

We depend on our government to safeguard our food supply and ensure lifesaving medication is safe to consume. We depend on our government to provide alerts about extreme weather through the National Weather Service and to provide communities with disaster relief when that weather hits home.

This is the so-called “Deep State” that President Trump and his acolytes continue to demonize, and these are the programs and services sitting on Elon Musk’s chopping block right now. Their efforts to, “rightsize government” serve no one but themselves and fellow oligarchs who want to destroy, deregulate, and privatize, leaving everyday Americans to foot the bill with not only their paychecks, but potentially their well-being and their lives.

Just last week, the country watched in horror as a commercial aircraft and a US Army Black Hawk helicopter collided over the Potomac River, killing 67 people, including some of my constituents. We know that disasters are more likely to happen when the agencies that ensure our safety are unsupported and under-resourced. Our nation’s air traffic control facilities were already operating below recommended staffing levels, but, one day before the horrific crash, the Trump Administration sent an email to more than two million federal employees offering them a purported financial incentive to immediately quit their jobs. Can you imagine what might yet happen if our air traffic controllers accept this offer to quit en masse?

This is just the tip of the iceberg. In its first two weeks, The Trump Administration has ordered a hiring freeze on all federal civilian positions; ordered all federal employees back to the office full-time; paved the way to purge more than 100,000 non-partisan career civil servants and replace them with political loyalists, and waged war on our nation’s commitment to civil rights by eviscerating diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

The new Administration also ordered the politicization of the Senior Executive Service, forced employees to surveil and report on colleagues, and fired the Democratic Commissioners of the National Labor Relations Board and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. They administered loyalty tests to career civil servants at the National Security Council; granted security clearances to incoming White House officials without vetting them; reportedly violated cybersecurity, procurement, and privacy laws by recklessly handling federal systems and data; and attempted a late-night purge of 17 nonpartisan inspectors general—a brazenly illegal attack that will only provide cover for the corruption that inevitably will ensue.

The Trump Administration also ordered a freeze of federal grants, loans, and other financial assistance programs. Immediately after the funding freeze was issued, Medicaid and Head Start reported disruptions, and some of FEMA's online portals were cut off. Although the freeze was halted by a judge and then rescinded by the Administration, we saw in only 48 hours how willing the Trump Administration is to threaten the health, safety, and security of all Americans in service of its unlawful and partisan agenda.

If these initiatives sound familiar, it's because many of them are ripped right out of the Project 2025 playbook. Remember that deeply unpopular tome that Trump tried desperately to distance himself from during the campaign? Many of these executive orders mirror Project 2025 proposals, and at least four prominent Project 2025 authors now have top positions in the Administration. Trump's disavowal of Project 2025 was just part of the con.

President Trump and Elon Musk are using a wrecking ball to systematically dismember our government piece by piece. The American people deserve better, and we in Congress have a constitutional duty to uphold the laws that *we created*. We must protect the government workers, programs, and services that the future of this country depends on and stop this unconstitutional assault on our government.

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Contact: Alexandra Bell, Communications Director (202) 226-5181