

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>

February 7, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Acting Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Acting Administrator Rubio:

We write to condemn the Administration's freeze of federal foreign aid and the ongoing effort to eliminate the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).¹ The Trump Administration is attempting to purge USAID with the intent to eliminate the agency without Congressional authorization.² USAID was created by statute and cannot be eliminated by executive fiat.³ We urge the Administration to revoke immediately the January 20, 2025, Executive Order (EO) titled "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid," and restore the functions, leadership, and employees of USAID.

The Administration has engaged in an opaque and Orwellian effort to dismantle the world's premier development and foreign assistance agency. On January 27, 2025, 56 senior officials at USAID were placed on administrative leave and escorted out of USAID by law enforcement for supposedly taking "actions within USAID that appear to be designed to circumvent the President's Executive Orders and the mandate from the American people."⁴ The same day, several hundred contractors were laid off without advanced notice.⁵ On January 30, 2025, the USAID Director for Employee Relations and Labor sent an email to the officials previously put on leave, which stated that "[t]he materials show no evidence that you engaged in

¹ The White House, *Reevaluating And Realigning United States Foreign Aid* (Jan. 20, 2025) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/reevaluating-and-realigning-united-states-foreign-aid/).

² *End Appears Near for U.S. Aid Agency, Democratic Lawmakers Say*, New York Times (Feb. 1, 2025) (online at www.nytimes.com/2025/02/01/us/us-aid-agency-trump.html); *USAID Personnel Told to Stay Away from DC Headquarters After Elon Musk's Shutdown Comments*, NBC News (Feb. 3, 2025) (online at www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/usaid-personnel-told-stay-away-headquarters-elon-musks-shutdown-commen-rcna190405).

³ 22 U.S.C. § 2151 et seq.

⁴ *US places dozens of senior aid officials on leave, citing possible resistance to Trump orders*, Associated Press (Jan. 27, 2025) (online at <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-leave-87704ee4897b24a79072e32e3df58a0>).

⁵ *Id.*

misconduct...As a result, I no longer have the authority to maintain you in this [administrative leave] status.”⁶ The Director also refused to carry out illegal firings ordered by “DOGE and political appointees.”⁷ Hours later, the Director was placed on administrative leave.⁸

On January 31, 2025, reports emerged that the Trump Administration was exploring merging USAID into the Department of State.⁹ The following day, February 1, 2025, USAID’s website was replaced with a version suggesting USAID had been subordinated to the Department of State.¹⁰

That same day, members of Elon Musk’s “DOGE” team allegedly attempted to infiltrate a restricted area and access classified information at USAID headquarters.¹¹ Two top security officials at USAID were subsequently put on leave after denying Mr. Musk’s DOGE team access to classified materials in restricted areas.¹²

This week, the Trump Administration made clear that it intends to eliminate USAID. On February 3, 2025, Mr. Musk alleged President Trump agreed with Mr. Musk to “shut [USAID] down.” That same day, an email sent to all USAID personnel forbade them from coming into the office for reasons that remain unclear.¹³ Additionally, the Administration has placed remaining top USAID officials on administrative leave, and fired nearly 500 people in the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.¹⁴ On February 4, 2025, the Administration

⁶ *Senior USAID official ousted after fighting back against removal of career leadership*, NBC News (Jan. 31, 2025) (online at www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/usaaid-labor-director-pushed-fighting-back-removal-career-leadership-rcna190132).

⁷ Dylan Matthews (@dylanmat) X.com (Jan. 30, 2025) (online at <https://x.com/dylanmatt/status/1885094358032011771>).

⁸ *Senior USAID official ousted after fighting back against removal of career leadership*, NBC News (Jan. 31, 2025) (online at www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/usaaid-labor-director-pushed-fighting-back-removal-career-leadership-rcna190132).

⁹ *Trump Administration Explores Bringing USAID Under State Department, Sources Say*, Reuters (Jan. 31, 2025) (online at www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-administration-explores-bringing-usaid-under-state-department-sources-say-2025-01-31/).

¹⁰ *End Appears Near for U.S. Aid Agency, Democratic Lawmakers Say*, New York Times (Feb. 1, 2025) (online at www.nytimes.com/2025/02/01/us/us-aid-agency-trump.html).

¹¹ *Elon Musk said Donald Trump agreed USAID needs to be ‘shut down’*, CNN (Feb. 3, 2025) (online at <https://amp.cnn.com/cnn/2025/02/02/politics/usaaid-officials-leave-musk-doge>).

¹² *Two top security officials at USAID placed on leave, sources say*, CBS News (Feb. 3, 2025) (online at www.cbsnews.com/news/usaaid-dramatic-changes-security-officials-on-leave/).

¹³ *USAID Staffers Told to Stay Out of Washington Headquarters After Musk Said Trump Agreed to Close It*, AP (Feb. 3, 2025) (online at <https://apnews.com/article/trump-musk-usaid-c0c7799be0b2fa7cad4c806565985fe2>).

¹⁴ *More Than 50 Career Civil Servants at USAID Are Placed on Administrative Leave*, NBC News (online at www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/dozens-usaid-career-civil-servants-put-administrative-leave-rcna189539); *Scoop: USAID furloughs hundreds of contractors from humanitarian bureau*, DevEx (Jan. 28, 2025) (online at www.devex.com/news/scoop-usaid-furloughs-hundreds-of-contractors-from-humanitarian-bureau-109196?skip_optional_steps=true).

circulated an internal notice placing all “direct hire” staff on paid leave starting February 7, 2025.¹⁵ Agency employees serving overseas, including in dangerous locations, are being forced to uproot their lives and their families on a moment’s notice to abandon their work and return to the United States.¹⁶

On February 6, 2025, reports emerged that the Trump Administration will reduce the number of employees at USAID from more than 10,000 to approximately 290 – effectively eliminating the agency.¹⁷ These reports also indicate that around 800 grants and contracts awarded through USAID will be cancelled.¹⁸

On February 3, 2025, Members of Congress attempted to enter the USAID headquarters in Washington, D.C. to perform their Constitutional oversight duties, but they were denied entry.¹⁹

The potential repercussions to global humanitarian and development assistance caused by the sudden stoppage of U.S. foreign aid are dire.²⁰ Foreign assistance makes investments abroad that keep Americans safe at home. Global health operations prevent outbreaks of disease. Development programs address the roots causes of terrorism. In the wake of the Trump Administration’s unilateral global retreat on foreign aid, our adversaries like China and Russia will step in to fill the vacuum.

We request that you provide the following information by February 20, 2025:

1. A detailed and comprehensive explanation of the legal authorities used by Elon Musk, the DOGE team, or any representative of the Administration to place USAID staff on administrative leave, cancel contracts, or take any other action to eliminate USAID;
2. A detailed and complete list of programs and funding that are affected by the humanitarian waiver issued on Tuesday, January 28, 2025;
3. A detailed and complete list of programs and funding that are affected by the exemption issued on Friday, January 24, 2025, for emergency food assistance;

¹⁵ *USAID Announces Sweeping Moves to Sideline Remaining Staff*, Washington Post (Feb. 5, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/04/usa-id-trump-foreign-aid/).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Trump Administration Live Updates: Nearly All Jobs Are Said to Be Cut at Aid Agency*, New York Times (Feb. 6, 2025) (online at www.nytimes.com/live/2025/02/06/us/president-trump-news?smid=url-share#usa-id-job-cuts).

¹⁸ *Id.*

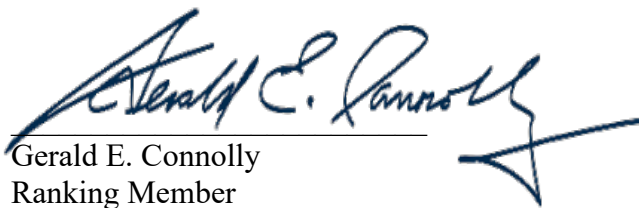
¹⁹ *Democrats Blocked From Entering USAID Headquarters*, The Hill (Feb. 3, 2025) (online at <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5123663-democrats-blocked-entry-usa-id/>).

²⁰ *Freezing US foreign aid will result in humanitarian disaster*, Doctors Without Borders (Feb 2, 2025) (online at www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/freeze-us-foreign-aid-will-result-humanitarian-disaster).

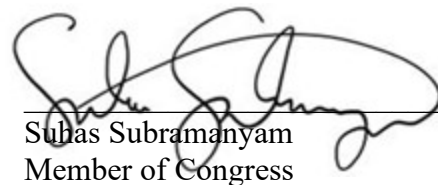
4. A detailed and complete list of medical programs and medical research programs that were temporarily suspended due to unclear funding as a result of the freeze in foreign aid;
5. A detailed list of the personnel, processes, and evaluation criteria being used to make determinations on the continuation or elimination of foreign aid programs;
6. The timeline within which you expect to make final aid decisions pursuant to the President's Executive Order on foreign aid and share them publicly;
7. A detailed account of which bird flu outbreaks active in 49 countries have worsened during the ongoing freeze in foreign aid;
8. A complete list of all maternal health programs affected by the freeze in foreign aid and the number of individuals served by those programs;
9. The number of U.S. based individuals, organizations and contractors that have been issued "Stop Work" orders pursuant to the January 20, 2025, Executive Order (EO) titled "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid,"; and
10. Detailed information on the federal employment status of Elon Musk, all staff members of the United States DOGE Service (USDS), and other individuals involved in the review of USAID programs, documents, and personnel. Please provide information including, but not limited to, details of said individuals' ethics compliance, security clearance status, and legal approval entering secured facilities at USAID headquarters.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member



Subhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman