

Musk seeks access to IRS tax data on all Americans

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The Trump-appointed “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE), headed by billionaire Elon Musk, the world’s richest man, is seeking access to the Internal Revenue Service system that contains private financial information on every taxpayer, business and nonprofit organization in the United States.

Trump and Musk are operating under the principle, proclaimed by Trump over the weekend, that “he who saves his Country does not violate any Law.” That is, that the president and his cabal can assert dictatorial power over the entire population, in defiance of all legal and constitutional restraints.

A report from the *Washington Post* on these plans claimed that the access had not yet been granted. However, a DOGE employee, 25-year-old Gavin Kliger, known for promoting far-right and fascistic views, arrived at IRS headquarters Thursday. He has a 120-day appointment to serve as a special adviser to the head of the IRS, acting Commissioner Doug O’Donnell.

The Biden administration’s IRS commissioner, Danny Werfel, resigned January 20 when Trump became president. Trump’s appointee to succeed him, former Missouri Republican Representative Billy Long, has not yet been confirmed by the Senate, or even appeared before the Senate committee that will consider his nomination.

The *Post* reported:

Under pressure from the White House, the IRS is considering a memorandum of understanding that would give officials from DOGE ... broad access to tax-agency systems, property and datasets. Among them is the Integrated Data Retrieval System, or IDRS, which enables tax agency employees to access IRS accounts—including personal identification

numbers—and bank information.

While the memorandum would supposedly require Kliger to maintain confidentiality and block “unauthorized access” to it, there is little doubt that the entire contents of the IRS database will pass swiftly into the hands of Musk. The fascist oligarch is seeking to assemble the world’s largest database. This has been only temporarily blocked by court orders that barred him from gaining access to the Treasury Department system that processes most US government payments, including the federal payroll, Social Security checks and tax refunds.

Once assembled, this database could be weaponized for political purposes, identifying contributors to political and social causes to which the White House is hostile, and cross-referencing them with financial data to aid in the creation of dossiers that would make Richard Nixon’s “enemies’ list” look amateurish.

The *Post* report touched off alarm bells in the wider public, to the point that Trump dispatched his Deputy White House Chief of Staff Stephen Miller to make a public statement guaranteeing the privacy of all taxpayers’ personal financial information. Reassurances from this cynical fascist liar will cut no ice with anyone.

Given Miller’s role in spearheading the nationwide assault on the democratic rights of immigrants, his statement in defense of taxpayer privacy should be taken as a declaration by Trump that he fully intends to “weaponize” the IRS and every other government agency to target his political opponents: defenders of immigrants’ rights, antiwar activists, striking workers and, above all, socialists.

A statement delivered by White House spokesman Harrison Fields underscored the retaliatory purpose of the data access. “Waste, fraud and abuse have been deeply entrenched in our broken system for far too long,” he

said. “It takes direct access to the system to identify and fix it. DOGE will continue to shine a light on the fraud they uncover as the American people deserve to know what their government has been spending their hard earned tax dollars on.”

Trump gave advance notice of the politically motivated intrusion into the IRS data system in a fund-raising email sent out to his political supporters on Saturday, asking whether he should order Musk and DOGE to investigate the agency. “Are you sick of being targeted and harassed by the I.R.S.?” Trump asked. “Well maybe it’s time that somebody audited them for a change!”

The report of the Musk/DOGE effort to gain access to the IRS database came the same day that the White House asked the Supreme Court to step into litigation over whether Trump has the power to fire the head of an independent federal agency that receives and investigates whistleblower reports about government misconduct.

Hampton Dellinger, the head of the Office of Special Counsel, filed a lawsuit after the White House fired him earlier this month. He pointed to legislation that bars the removal of officials of agencies like his “except in cases of neglect of duty, malfeasance or inefficiency.” Trump made no such claim in the one-sentence email dismissing Dellinger.

Federal District Judge Amy Berman Jackson issued a preliminary order against Dellinger’s firing, reinstating him in office, and set a February 26 court hearing to take up the firing. On Saturday, a three-judge panel of the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit rejected an emergency appeal by the White House on a split vote.

Judges J. Michelle Childs and Florence Y. Pan wrote, “There is no dispute that the President violated the statute by not making any finding of ‘inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office’ before removing Dellinger.” The dissenter, Judge Greg Katsas, was appointed by Trump and served as a deputy White House counsel in Trump’s first term.

Both court rulings cited the controlling Supreme Court precedent, a 1935 ruling in *Humphrey’s Executor v. United States*, that upheld the right of Congress to limit the president’s ability to fire the head of an independent agency.

Acting Solicitor General Sarah Harris told Senate Democrats last week that the Trump administration “intends to urge the Supreme Court to overrule” the 1935 precedent. She noted that several recent court rulings, in 2020 and 2024, suggested that a majority of the court might be prepared to do so. “The department,” Harris

wrote, “has concluded that those tenure protections are unconstitutional.”

On Sunday, Harris wrote in an emergency filing that the Supreme Court should step in immediately to overturn rulings that “irreparably harm the Presidency by curtailing the President’s ability to manage the Executive Branch in the earliest days of his Administration.”

Meanwhile, layoffs and firings of federal workers continue, some by agency heads directed by DOGE, others ordered by Trump personally. Several top staff members at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) retired or resigned, including the acting archivist, after they were told that Trump would be removing the entire leadership team. Jim Byron, president and CEO of the Richard Nixon Foundation, has been named acting manager of the National Archives pending the nomination of a permanent archivist. Trump fired archivist Colleen Shogan two weeks ago, in retaliation for the NARA’s role in seeking the return of documents he had taken illegally from the White House and stored at his Mar-a-Lago estate after his first term.

In an indication of the continuing prostration of the corporate media before Trump, the *Washington Post* has backed out of an agreement with several liberal advocacy groups to run a “Fire Elon Musk” wrap-around ad in its Tuesday print editions. Common Cause, End Citizens United and the Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund (SPLC Action Fund) had agreed to pay \$115,000 for the ad branding Musk as unelected and illegitimate and calling on Congress to demand Trump fire him.

The bankruptcy of this political appeal, which typifies the impotence of the Democratic Party and groups long aligned with it, is obvious. But the ad was too much for the *Post*, owned by billionaire Jeff Bezos, Musk’s fellow oligarch who is now seeking to curry favor with Trump.

A spokeswoman for Common Cause told *The Hill*, “Is it because we’re critical of what’s happening with Elon Musk? Is it only ok to run things in *The Post* now that won’t anger the president or won’t have him calling Jeff Bezos asking why this was allowed?”



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