

Trump intensifies mass firing of federal workers after judge refuses to block layoffs

Kevin Reed**21 February 2025**

The mass layoff of federal employees by the Trump administration and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) led by Elon Musk—the wealthiest individual in the world—intensified on Thursday and Friday.

Those being targeted by DOGE are workers who are still in their probationary period of government employment. This means the workers are in the trial period of their jobs, which typically lasts one to two years, depending on the agency.

During this probationary period, government employees do not have full civil service protections. They can be more easily fired without being able to appeal the decision as legally required for permanent federal employees.

The number of government workers in this category has been estimated at 200,000, although the exact number is unknown, according to *The Hill*. The latest directive from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) overrides the initial claim of the White House that only those who were seen as “poor performers” were being terminated.

On Thursday, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) began laying off 6,700 employees, approximately 6 percent of its workforce, in the middle of the busy tax filing season. The IRS layoffs primarily affect those hired during the Biden administration. The agency had approximately 80,000 workers when Biden took office in 2021.

According to Reuters, “Those fired include revenue agents, customer-service workers, specialists who hear appeals of tax disputes, and IT workers, and impact employees across all 50 states, sources said. The IRS did not respond to a request for comment.”

The Reuters report said probationary workers at the IRS office in Kansas City office found all functions had

been disabled on their computers except email, which then delivered their dismissal notices.

One Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employee told ABC News, “I was three weeks shy of my probationary employment with the FAA, and I received an email late Friday night into Saturday morning, outlining my termination effective immediately. It was a shock given the fact how critical my position was with public safety, with air travel.”

The employee said inside the FAA, there is “a lot of fear for public safety,” given the layoffs.

The further job destruction demanded by Trump and implemented by Musk’s DOGE come after a decision by a federal judge on Thursday that allowed President Trump’s assault on federal employees to continue moving forward. US District Judge Christopher Cooper of the federal district court in Washington, D.C. declined the request from a group of labor unions to temporarily block Trump’s firing of federal workers and other actions targeting government workers.

In a 16-page decision, Judge Cooper claimed he had to deny the unions’ request for relief because he lacks jurisdiction over the matter. The judge, who was appointed by Barack Obama, said the unions must pursue their legal challenges through the setup established by Congress in the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute, which governs labor relations in the federal workforce. The claims, he said, must be filed with the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

Judge Cooper also wrote that the first month of the Trump administration “has been defined by an onslaught of executive actions that have caused, some say by design, disruption and even chaos in widespread quarters of American society.” Cooper also wrote that mixed decisions by federal judges halting some of

Trump's actions and letting others proceed while cases move forward are no surprise.

Trump's deputy press secretary, Anna Kelly, hailed the decision, saying in a statement that the district court "properly determined that it did not have jurisdiction to review the termination of probationary employees." Kelly went on to state falsely that the jobs massacre was supported "by the American people's mandate to eliminate wasteful spending and make federal agencies more efficient."

The outcome of the legal appeal by the federal employee unions further exposes the role of the AFL-CIO and the US government employees labor union apparatus—which is generally aligned with the Democratic Party—as a primary impediment to the struggle of the working class against the formation of a personalist dictatorship by Donald Trump and the handing over of the functions of the US government to a cabal of billionaires led by Elon Musk.

Other recently reported layoffs include: 400 workers at the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA); 100 workers with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB); 2,000 workers at the Department of Energy; 50 workers at the National Nuclear Security Administration; 700 workers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 1,000 employees with the National Institutes of Health; 2,300 workers with the Department of the Interior, including 800 with the Bureau of Land Management and 1,000 with the National Park Service; more than 1,000 with the Department of Veterans Affairs; 388 with the Environmental Protection Agency; 100 employees with the General Services Administration; 720 workers with the Small Business Administration and 3,400 workers with the National Forest Service.

The layoffs are on top of the 75,000 civil service workers who, according to the Trump administration, accepted the buyout offer from the White House. However, at least some federal workers who accepted the buyout were fired anyway.

A story by ABC News on Thursday reported, for example, that a federal employee at the Department of Agriculture in the Midwest received an email offering her a chance to resign with pay through September or otherwise face the prospect of termination. One week after she accepted and was confirmed as part of the "deferred resignation program," the worker received an

email saying she had been terminated.



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