

# Editor's Corner: Difficulties Documenting DOGE

Elizabeth Sanders

## Introduction

For many, the US Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, is synonymous with President Donald Trump's second term—for good reason, as it featured heavily in the first months of his presidency. State legislatures, especially in Republican majority states, also launched their own versions of DOGE or other “government efficiency” initiatives after DOGE's establishment.<sup>1</sup> DOGE's early prominence and large-scale slashing of government resources makes both its dissolution and how said dissolution was announced initially puzzling.

On November 23, 2025, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director Scott Kapor's announced that DOGE no longer exists—later clarifying via social media that it no longer exists as an independent agency.<sup>2</sup> As of November 25, 2025, there has been no formal announcement or press release from OPM or any other government entity regarding DOGE's status or why it has been dissolved eight months early. These actions taken in larger context, however, are not surprising at all. From the beginning, information related to DOGE has vacillated between that which is documented formally and clearly via the government and that which is informally documented in the press and social media, if documented at all.

Given the immediate and yet unknown long-term consequences of DOGE's work and similar, continuing efforts in federal and state governments under the auspices of “government efficiency,” being able to locate information about this short-lived entity will likely continue to be important. This editorial seeks to provide a short overview of government information related to DOGE and its efforts as of December 2025. It is not, and does not try to be, comprehensive but instead acts as a starting point for future, more in-depth research. Numerous journal articles examining DOGE have been published as well but will not be discussed in this editorial.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, several excellent resources tracking and discussing DOGE's impacts exist but will not be discussed in this editorial.<sup>4</sup>

## Timeline

*The New York Times* published two articles in February 2025 based on interviews with over 60 individuals that helps with understanding the origins of DOGE and Trump's Elon Musk's, and other key players' roles therein.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this editorial, I will highlight only that efforts began prior to Trump's election and inauguration with a small circle of individuals, with the intent of implementing changes quickly after Trump's inauguration.

In January 2025, Trump signed Executive Order (Exec. Order) No. 14158, which established DOGE.<sup>6</sup> Specifically, it reorganized and renamed the US Digital Service (USDS) into DOGE; established the DOGE Service Temporary Organization (USDSTO) to advance DOGE's agenda until July 4, 2026; and directed all agency heads to establish DOGE teams to coordinate with DOGE and advise the agency head on implementing DOGE's agenda.<sup>7</sup> Elon Musk began working as the head of DOGE in January, with the White House confirming his position as a “special employee” in early February 2025 via a CSPAN clip.<sup>8</sup> No formal appointment documentation or press release exists, to my knowledge. DOGE's website also launched in January 2025.<sup>9</sup>

In February 2025, Trump signed Exec. Order No. 14210, No. 14219, and No. 14222, which implemented DOGE's Workforce Optimization Initiative, Deregulatory Initiative, and Cost Efficiency Initiative, respectively.<sup>10</sup> Also in February 2025, several senators and representatives expressed concerns regarding Musk's role with DOGE via letters to various government administrators and agencies and a factsheet.<sup>11</sup>

In March 2025, Representative Connolly wrote a letter to Amy Gleason, acting administrator of DOGE, discussing lack of transparency and conflicts of interest in DOGE, as well as requesting information.<sup>12</sup> The House Committee on the Budget also released a fact sheet titled *The So-Called “DOGE”* that provides some key details about DOGE's creation and management, as well as overviews of key ethical concerns.<sup>13</sup>

In April 2025, several members of Congress signed a letter to Trump reminding him that Musk must be removed from his government position by May 30. The letter also detailed how Musk's actions as a special government employee (SGE) harmed Americans while he profited.<sup>14</sup> The US Homeland Security Government Affairs (HSGAC) Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations Minority Staff released a memo titled *Calculating Risk: Estimating the Legal Liability Elon Musk May Avoid Through His Government Takeover*, which summarizes complaints against Musk's interests unresolved prior to his becoming an SGE, as well as Musk's conflicts of interest and benefits since becoming a SGE.<sup>15</sup>

In May 2025, Musk left his position with DOGE, which led to a flurry of press coverage.<sup>16</sup> However, the White House posted only a short video and pictures from a press conference on May 30.<sup>17</sup> No formal documentation or press release regarding his dismissal exists, to my knowledge.

In June 2025, Senator Warren's office released a report titled *Special Interests over the Public Interest: Elon Musk's 130 Days in*

*the Trump Administration*, which summarizes actions taken to that profited Musk, along with links to various sources.<sup>18</sup>

In August 2025, Senator Warren, Representative Garcia, and Senator Blumenthal wrote a letter about continued concerns over DOGE's role in the federal government, including embedding DOGE employees in key government agency positions and that such efforts are likely illegal.<sup>19</sup>

In September 2025, the HSGAC Minority Staff released a report titled *Unchecked and Unaccountable: How DOGE Jeopardizes Americans' Data Without Regard for Law and Congress*.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, in November 2025, DOGE's dissolution was announced, as mentioned previously. As a result, several news stories were published discussing the event, though again nothing formal from the government was released, to my knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

## Related Entities

In this section, I will briefly introduce two entities related to DOGE that may be of interest. First, the Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency was established in the HSGAC. This Subcommittee held several congressional hearings in 2025.<sup>22</sup> As of February 2026, the subcommittee remains active. Second, the Congressional DOGE Caucus was established in early 2025, though by mid-2025 it seems to have stagnated. As of February 2026, however, the caucus continues to exist.<sup>23</sup>

## Conclusion

Though this editorial attempts primarily to provide an overview of government resources related to DOGE, it also highlights two larger, disturbing trends in government information during Trump's second presidential term. First, critical government information that impacts decisions with widespread consequences is not shared directly or transparently—within the federal government or outside of it. Second, the information the government releases regarding its decisions is often politicized, if not propagandized, heavy on style while light on credible, verifiable substance. These features, in turn, make it difficult to understand and trust said information, much less act on it or preserve it. Most chilling, these features and their impacts are not accidental; they are acting as designed. Neither contemporary stakeholders nor future researchers should shy away from that knowledge.

*The views expressed in this editorial are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government Documents Round Table (GODORT), the American Library Association (ALA), Lamar University, or any other entity.*

**Elizabeth Sanders** (esanders5@lamar.edu), Director of Learning & Research, Lamar University

## Notes

1. Nikki Davidson, "Where Are State DOGE Groups? A Map of Efficiency Initiatives," *Government Technology*, March 28, 2025, <https://www.govtech.com/biz/data/where-are-state-doge-groups-a-map-of-efficiency-initiatives>; Nina Mast, Jasmine Payne-Patterson, and David Cooper, "At Least 26 States Have Launched Their Own Version of DOGE," *Working Economics Blog*, Economic Policy Institute, April 16, 2025, <https://www.epi.org/blog/at-least-26-states-have-launched-their-own-version-of-doge-these-states-are-simply-rebranding-longstanding-efforts-to-undermine-government-in-service-of-the-wealthy/>; Mari Henderson et al., "Taking a Cue from DOGE, States Adopt Efficiency Initiatives," *National Conference on State Legislatures (NCSL)*, July 21, 2025, <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/taking-a-cue-from-doge-states-adopt-efficiency-initiatives>.
2. Courtney Rozen, "Exclusive: DOGE 'Doesn't Exist' with Eight Months Left on Its Charter," Reuters, November 24, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/doge-doesnt-exist-with-eight-months-left-its-charter-2025-11-23/>; Ryan Adamczeski, "DOGE Is Gone, Leaving Behind 300,000 Fired Federal Workers, 600,000 USAID Deaths, and More," *Yahoo News*, November 24, 2025, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/articles/doge-gone-leaving-behind-300-181852756.html>; Sarah Fortinsky, "OPM Pushes Back on Report DOGE Dissolved Ahead of Schedule," *The Hill*, November 24, 2025, <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5620378-trump-doge-commission-status/>; Rebecca Schneid, "DOGE Disbanded: Elon Musk's Cost-Cutting Project Quietly Ended Ahead of Schedule," *Time*, November 24, 2025, <https://time.com/7336327/doge-disbanded-elon-musk/>.
3. The following articles are a small sample of journal articles published discussing DOGE and its impacts that may be of interest. This list is not comprehensive. Kressent Pottenger, "'You're Terminated': Under Siege at the DOE," *New Labor Forum* 34, no. 3 (2025): 104–108, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10957960251364517>; Ally Coll, "Redefining Efficiency in the DOGE Era: The Value of Equitable Evidence-Based Policymaking in Federal Agencies," *Harvard Law & Policy Review* 20, no. 1 (2025): 1–45, <https://journals.law.harvard.edu/lpr/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2026/01/HLPR-20.1-Coll.pdf>; Kathryn M.

- Olesko, Anthony Eames, Cyrus C. M. Mody, et al., "The Crisis in American Science," *History of Science* 63, no. 2 (2025): 125–165, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00732753251343655>; Julia Lynch and Michael Tu, "The DOGE Ate My Data: Lessons from Europe for Rebuilding the Health Data Linkage Infrastructure in the US after Trump," *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1215/03616878-12262648>; Jonathan Roberge, Nicolas Chartier-Edwards, and Victor Galaretta, "DOGE Blitzkrieg: On Musk's Artificial Intelligence Statecraft," *Science as Culture* (2026): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09505431.2025.2607357>; Geneviève Morin, Lauren B. Mullins, and Étienne Charbonneau, "Department of Government Efficiency: Federal Workers' Views of the Early Stages," *Administrative Theory & Praxis* (2026): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10841806.2025.2605601>.
4. "Tracking the Harm of DOGE Cuts," The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Accessed February 5, 2026, <https://www.clasp.org/doge-tracker/>; Jason Powell and Sasha Frank-Stempel, "DOGE's Big Illusion: The Heavy Costs of the Trump Administration's So-Called Efficiency," Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), June 23, 2025, <https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/crew-reports/doges-big-illusion-the-heavy-costs-of-the-trump-administrations-so-called-efficiency/>; "DOGE," Center for American Progress (CAP), Accessed February 5, 2026, <https://www.americanprogress.org/topic/doge/>; "REPORT: Project 2025 and DOGE Effects," American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), May 21, 2025, <https://aflcio.org/2025/5/21/report-project-2025-and-doge-effects>; Jessie Blaeser, "Just How Much Has DOGE Exaggerated Its Numbers? Now We Have Receipts," Politico, August 12, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/12/trump-doge-contract-claims-savings-inflation-00498178>; Hannah Natanson and Meryl Kornfield, "The Year Trump Broke the Federal Government," *The Washington Post*, December 22, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/2025/trump-federal-government-workers-doge/>.
  5. Jonathan Swan et al. "How Elon Musk Executed His Takeover of the Federal Bureaucracy," *New York Times*, February 28, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/28/us/politics/musk-federal-bureaucracy-takeover.html>; "How Musk Built DOGE: Timeline and Key Takeaways," *New York Times*, February 28, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/28/us/politics/musk-doge-timeline-takeaways.html>.
  6. Exec. Order No. 14158, 90 Fed. Reg. 8441 (Jan. 27, 2025), <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/FR-2025-01-29/2025-02005>.
  7. Dominick A. Fiorentino and Clinton T. Brass, *Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Executive Order: Early Implementation*, Congressional Research Service, IN12493, February 6, 2025, <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo237206>.
  8. Bryan Metzger and Jack Newsham, "Elon Musk Is Officially an Employee of the US Government—But He's Not Getting a Paycheck," *Business Insider*, February 3, 2025, <https://www.businessinsider.com/elon-musk-special-government-employee-doge-2025-2>; CSPAN (@cspan), @PressSec on Elon Musk: "I can confirm he's a special government employee. I can also confirm that he has abided by all applicable federal laws. As for his security clearance, I'm not sure, but I can check...I don't know about the security clearance, but I can check." February 3, 2025, 3:21 p.m., <https://x.com/cspan/status/1886525484277620998>.
  9. Department of Government Efficiency, Captured January 22, 2025, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250122000645/> <https://doge.gov/>; Department of Government Efficiency, Accessed February 5, 2026, <https://doge.gov/>.
  10. Exec. Order No. 14210, 90 Fed. Reg. 9669 (Feb. 14, 2025), <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/FR-2025-02-14/2025-02762>; Exec. Order No. 14219, 90 Fed. Reg. 10583 (Feb. 25, 2025), <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/FR-2025-02-14/2025-02762>; Exec. Order No. 14222, 90 Fed. Reg. 11095 (Mar. 3, 2025), <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/FR-2025-03-03/2025-03527>.
  11. Elizabeth Warren et al. to Denise Carter, February 6, 2025, [https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter\\_to\\_ed\\_re\\_doge\\_privacy\\_concerns.pdf](https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_ed_re_doge_privacy_concerns.pdf); Deborah K. Ross et al. to Pam Bondi and David Huitema, February 7, 2025, [https://ross.house.gov/\\_cache/files/b/7/b73e22b7-cb95-42d2-8ff7-e4eb5a3151f1/7D7EEB40C4C345844710558A4A3F5022.musk-letter-final-2.7.pdf](https://ross.house.gov/_cache/files/b/7/b73e22b7-cb95-42d2-8ff7-e4eb5a3151f1/7D7EEB40C4C345844710558A4A3F5022.musk-letter-final-2.7.pdf); "Letters to Science Agencies Demanding Answers Regarding Elon Musk Conflicts of Interest and Critical Data Accessed by DOGE," House Committee on Science, Space and Technology, February 10, 2025, <https://democrats-science.house.gov/letters-to-science-agencies-demanding-answers-regarding-elon-musk-conflicts-of-interest-and-critical-data-accessed-by-doge>; Maxine Waters and Brad Sherman to Mark Uyeda, February 13, 2025, [https://democrats-financialservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/02.13.25\\_ltr\\_to\\_sec\\_re\\_doge.pdf](https://democrats-financialservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/02.13.25_ltr_to_sec_re_doge.pdf); "Whitehouse Questions Musk Hiring in New Letter to Trump White House," press release,

- February 20, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/news/release/whitehouse-questions-musk-hiring-in-new-letter-to-trump-white-house/>; Sheldon Whitehouse to Susan Wiles, February 15, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-02-15-DOGE-Letter.pdf>; Elizabeth Warren et al. to Elon Musk, February 27, 2025, [https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter\\_to\\_elon\\_musk\\_re\\_dogegovsecurityfailures.pdf](https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_elon_musk_re_dogegovsecurityfailures.pdf); Jamie Raskin, “Fact Sheet: Trump Administration, DOGE Punish Agencies Investigating Elon Musk’s Companies,” House Committee on the Judiciary, Democrats, February 13, 2025, [https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/migrated/UploadedFiles/2025.02.13\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_re\\_Musk\\_Investigations.pdf](https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/migrated/UploadedFiles/2025.02.13_Fact_Sheet_re_Musk_Investigations.pdf).
12. “During Sunshine Week, Ranking Member Connolly Demands Transparency on DOGE Officials Double-Dipping and Conflicts of Interest with Outside Employment,” press release, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, March 19, 2025, <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/news/press-releases/during-sunshine-week-ranking-member-connolly-demands-transparency-doge>; Gerald E. Connolly to Amy Gleason, March 19, 2025, [https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-03-19-gec-to-doge-acting-administrator-gleason-re-volunteer-doge-conflicts\\_1.pdf](https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-03-19-gec-to-doge-acting-administrator-gleason-re-volunteer-doge-conflicts_1.pdf).
  13. Brendan F. Boyle, *The So-Called “DOGE,”* House Committee on the Budget, March 11, 2025, <https://democrats-budget.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-budget.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/the-so-called-doge.pdf>.
  14. Greg Casar et al. to Donald J. Trump, April 9, 2025, [https://vargas.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/vargas.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/elon-musk-sge-status-letter-1%29\\_0.pdf](https://vargas.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/vargas.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/elon-musk-sge-status-letter-1%29_0.pdf).
  15. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations Minority Staff to Interested Parties, April 27, 2025, <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025-04-27-Minority-Staff-Memorandum-Elon-Musk-Conflicts.pdf>.
  16. Irie Sentner, “After Four Months of Disruption, Elon Musk Signals He’s Leaving Government,” Politico, May 28, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/05/28/musk-doge-depart-government-00373963>; Chis Megegan, “Elon Musk Leaving Trump Administration After Efforts to Slash Federal Budget Through DOGE,” PBS, May 29, 2025, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/elon-musk-leaving-trump-administration-after-efforts-to-slash-federal-budget-through-doge>; Stephen Fowler, “Elon Musk Is Leaving the Federal Government. What’s Next for DOGE?,” NPR, May 30, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/05/30/nx-s1-5415641/musk-leaves-doge-what-comes-next>.
  17. “DOGE Is WINNING! Thank You, Elon! US,” The White House, May 30, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/videos/doge-is-winning-thank-you-elon>; “President Trump Participates in a Press Conference with Departing DOGE Advisor Elon Musk,” The White House, May 30, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/gallery/president-trump-participates-in-a-press-conference-with-departing-doge-adviser-elon-musk/>.
  18. *Special Interests over the Public Interest: Elon Musk’s 130 Days in the Trump Administration*, Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, June 2025, [https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/130\\_days\\_of\\_elon\\_musk\\_report.pdf](https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/130_days_of_elon_musk_report.pdf).
  19. Elizabeth Warren, Robert Garcia, and Richard Blumenthal to Scott Kupor and Russell Vought, August 6, 2025, [https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter\\_from\\_senator\\_elizabeth\\_warren\\_to\\_opm\\_omb\\_on\\_doge\\_embedding.pdf](https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_senator_elizabeth_warren_to_opm_omb_on_doge_embedding.pdf).
  20. Gary Peters, *Unchecked and Unaccountable: How DOGE Jeopardizes Americans’ Data Without Regard for Law and Congress*, Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs, HSGAC Minority Staff Report, September 2025, [https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/DOGE\\_REPORT\\_FINAL\\_7.pdf](https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/DOGE_REPORT_FINAL_7.pdf).
  21. Sophia Cal and Daniel Lippman, “Inside the DOGE Succession Drama Elon Musk Left Behind,” Politico, November 21, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2025/11/21/doge-elon-musk-succession-00641110>; Bill Barrow, “Elon Musk Says DOGE Was Only ‘Somewhat Successful’ and He Wouldn’t Do It Again,” PBS, December 10, 2025, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/elon-musk-says-doge-was-only-somewhat-successful-and-he-wouldnt-do-it-again>; Sasha Rogelberg, “DOGE Isn’t Dead—It’s Been Absorbed into the Bloodstream of the Government, Federal Employees Say,” *Fortune*, December 12, 2025, <https://fortune.com/2025/12/12/doge-is-still-alive-federal-employees-irs-nih-elon-musk/>.
  22. “Delivering on Government Efficiency,” Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, Captured January 1, 2025, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250129152950/https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/subcommittees/delivering-government-efficiency-119th-congress>; “Delivering on Government Efficiency,” Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, Accessed February

5, 2026, <https://oversight.house.gov/subcommittee/delivering-on-government-efficiency/>; House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, *The War on Waste: Stamping Out the Scourge of Improper Payments and Fraud*, Hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., February 12, 2025, <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo238756>; House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, *America Last: How Foreign Aid Undermined US Interests Around the World*, Hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., February 26, 2025, <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo240193>; House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, *Anti-American Airwaves: Holding the Heads of NPR and PBS Accountable*, Hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., March 26, 2025, <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo245023>; House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, *Federal Foreclosure: Reducing the Federal Real Estate Portfolio*, Field Hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., April 8, 2025, <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo245651>; House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency,

*The War on Waste: Stamping Out the Scourge of Improper Payments and Fraud*, Hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., May 7, 2025, <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo246314>; House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, *Public Funds, Private Agendas: NGOs Gone Wild*, Hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., June 4, 2025, <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo246895>; House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, *Locking in the DOGE Cuts: Ending Waste, Fraud, and Abuse for Good*, Hearing, 119th Cong., 1st sess., June 24, 2025, <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo251159>; House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency, *Playing God with the Weather—A Disastrous Forecast*, 119th Cong., 1st sess., September 16, 2025, <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo251238>.

23. “The DOGE Caucus,” Congressional DOGE Caucus, Accessed February 2, 2026, <https://bean.house.gov/doge-caucus>; Ben Johansen, “DOGE Caucus Is Dead: Rep. Jared Moskowitz Isn’t Attending the Funeral,” Politico, May 13, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/05/13/doge-caucus-dead-congress-00347009>.