

U.S. NEWS

13 states to sue over DOGE access to government payment systems containing personal data



Elon Musk speaks at an indoor Presidential Inauguration parade event in Washington, Jan. 20, 2025. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke, File)

BY DAVE COLLINS

Democratic attorneys general in several states vowed Thursday to file a lawsuit to stop Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency from accessing federal payment systems [containing Americans' sensitive personal information](#).

Thirteen attorneys general, including New York's Letitia James, said in a statement that they were taking action "in defense of our Constitution, our right to privacy, and the essential

funding that individuals and communities nationwide are counting on.”

AP

one is above the law, the statement said. ~~The President does not have the power to give away~~ our private information to anyone he chooses, and he cannot cut federal payments approved by Congress.”

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday afternoon.

Government officials and labor unions have been among those raising concerns about DOGE’s involvement with the payment system for the federal government, saying it could lead to security risks or missed payments for programs such as Social Security and Medicare.

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Also Thursday, a federal judge ordered that two Musk allies have “read only” access to Treasury Department payment systems, but no one else will get access for now, including Musk himself. The ruling came in a lawsuit filed by federal workers unions trying to stop DOGE from following through on what they call a massive privacy invasion.

It was not immediately clear when the Democratic attorneys general will file their lawsuit.

Joining James in the statement were the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont.

President [Donald Trump](#) tapped Musk, the world’s richest man, to shrink the size of the U.S. government.

Democrats have criticized the tech billionaire's maneuvers, which include the hostile seizure of [taxpayer data](#) and the apparent closure of the [government's leading international humanitarian aid agency](#).

DOGE recently gained access to sensitive payment data within the Treasury Department after Treasury's acting Deputy Secretary David Lebryk [resigned under pressure](#).

"This level of access for unauthorized individuals is unlawful, unprecedented, and unacceptable," the attorneys general said. "DOGE has no authority to access this information, which they explicitly sought in order to block critical payments that millions of Americans rely on — payments that support health care, childcare, and other essential programs."

Democratic members of Congress have expressed similar concerns that Musk, an unelected citizen, wields too much power within the U.S. government and states blatantly on his social media platform X that DOGE will shut down payments to organizations.

Musk has made fun of the criticism of DOGE on X while saying it is saving taxpayers millions of dollars.

DOGE officials sought access to the Treasury payment system [to stop money from flowing](#) into the U.S. Agency for International Development, according to two people familiar with the matter. That effort undermines assurances the department has given that it only sought to review the integrity of the payments and had "read-only access" to the system as part of an audit process.

The two people familiar with the matter spoke Thursday to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

Associated Press writers Fatima Hussein, Ellen Knickmeyer and Lindsay Whitehurst contributed from Washington.

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