

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 6, 2025

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins,

Among many tasks, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is entrusted with safeguarding the private and sensitive information of millions of veterans. Today, we call on you to immediately secure any personal and related information regarding veterans provided by VA or other agencies to Elon Musk and associates under the auspices of the “Department of Government Efficiency” established under Executive Order 14158. Further, we call on you to deny and sever their access to any VA or other government system that includes information about veterans, and to require them to immediately and permanently delete any information in their possession. Veterans risked their lives to defend our country, and they deserve better than to have an unelected billionaire reviewing their medical records, targeting the benefits they have earned, or using their private information for personal gain.

Our nation’s veterans have entrusted their health records, including genetic samples, disability data, bank information, and other private information, to VA. The Department also stores sensitive veteran casework, files of whistleblowers who have come forward with concerns about waste, fraud, and abuse, and sensitive investigative files with veteran and federal employee information. Veterans and VA employees entrusted the Department with this information with the understanding that it would be kept private and only used to help deliver the highest quality of services to veterans, their families, and survivors.

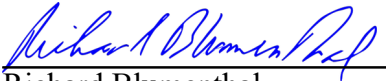
Meanwhile, the President has given unfettered access to federal databases and systems to Mr. Musk, an unelected citizen, and a team of colleagues with no formal documented employment agreement with the U.S. government. It is a group of private citizens with no experience in the federal government, who lack proper approval from legal and agency authorities, lack the appropriate security clearances, and lack the requisite background investigations or ethical conflict requirements. We are outraged these unelected, unvetted, and unaccountable individuals now have access to sensitive information that has been heavily secured for decades and by Administrations of both parties.


These actions are in direct violation of federal laws meant to protect our national security and the privacy of our citizens’ personal information. This includes information on Social Security payments, Medicare, Medicaid, student loans, veterans’ disability compensation payments, GI Bill payments, federal civil servants’ personnel records, and much more. With


every hour, we see DOGE further expand its efforts to create a massive private database of previously guarded data outside the federal government's cyber and legal protections. It is an abhorrent and illegal overreach of executive powers, which conflicts with various federal statutes, including the Federal Information Security Modernization Act, the Privacy Act, the E-Government Act of 2002, and likely several other cyber and national security laws.


During your confirmation process, you claimed you would be focused on rooting out corruption and ensuring accountability at VA, and committed to following the laws passed by Congress. We now call on you to respond quickly and comprehensively to these privacy violations by revoking DOGE's access to VA systems and insisting they permanently remove all VA data collected from their files.


Sincerely,

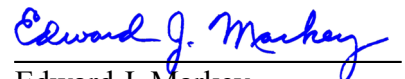

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

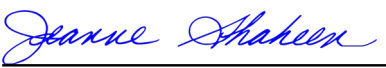

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

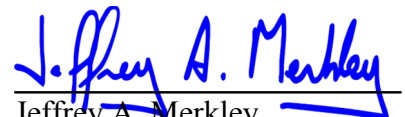

Raphael Warnock
United States Senator

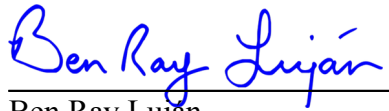

Tim Kaine
United States Senator


Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator


Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



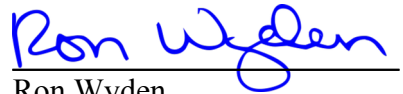
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



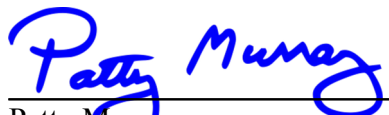
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
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Jacky Rosen
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Patty Murray
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator