



**SPECIAL INTERESTS OVER THE PUBLIC INTEREST:
ELON MUSK'S 130 DAYS IN THE TRUMP
ADMINISTRATION**



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JUNE 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Donald Trump's presidency has been profitable for Elon Musk. Since Election Day, Musk's staggering [net worth has increased by over \\$100 billion](#).

While serving as a "Special Government Employee" in the White House and leading the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), Musk has maintained extensive financial conflicts of interest through his ownership or stake in several private and publicly traded companies: Tesla, SpaceX, X and xAI, the Boring Company, and Neuralink.

Before Trump took office, Musk's companies faced at least [\\$2.37 billion](#) in [potential liability](#) from pending agency enforcement actions. Now many of those enforcement actions have stalled or been dismissed.

Musk's companies have received or are being considered for large contracts with the federal government, with foreign governments, and with other private sector companies.

Musk and individuals acting on his behalf have been involved in dozens of questionable actions that raise questions about corruption, ethics, and conflicts of interest.

Not every action listed below represents a violation of federal law. In many cases, Musk has violated norms at an astonishing pace, contributing to Trump Administration actions that have benefitted his private interests while hurting the American public — scandalous behavior regardless of whether it subjects him to criminal prosecution.

But in other cases, Musk has engaged in action that may have violated the statutory prohibition regarding federal employees' participation in particular matters in which a government official has a financial interest, laws against bribery and gratuities, or the regulations prohibiting use of one's government position for private gain.

130 DAYS OF ELON MUSK

Government resources to promote Musk's businesses

Official government time and resources have been spent promoting Musk's businesses.

1. Trump and Musk turned the White House lawn into a [Tesla showroom](#).
2. Commerce Secretary Lutnick, who is reportedly "[close to Elon Musk](#)," appeared on Fox News telling viewers to "[buy Tesla](#)."

Federal Contracts for Musk's businesses

Under the Trump Administration, federal government agencies — perhaps influenced by Musk or seeking his favor — have entered or explored new lucrative contracts for his companies and turned to his companies' services.

3. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is exploring a contract to use Starlink technology in [surveillance towers](#) to monitor the border.
4. The Commerce Department changed the terms of the [Broadband Equity Access and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#), which expands broadband in rural communities, to allow Starlink to apply for the program, even though expert staff [warned](#) that Starlink could mean inferior service and higher costs for users.
5. The White House is calling for [13% more spending for the Department of Defense \(DoD\)](#) and "SpaceX is considered likely to be the [top recipient](#)" of new Pentagon funding.
6. Reports show SpaceX has become a frontrunner for the [Golden Dome missile shield](#).
7. DOGE has [sought changes](#) to [DoD contracts](#) — a clear conflict of interest while SpaceX has made over [\\$7 billion](#) in DoD contracts.
8. SpaceX began [leasing Starlink kits](#) to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
9. Then DOGE sought to further embed Starlink in the FAA's telecommunications infrastructure through [Project Lift](#), a secretive initiative that required employees to sign NDAs.
10. The FAA reportedly explored [canceling its \\$2.4 billion contract with Verizon](#) and instead giving it to SpaceX for communications infrastructure.
11. Under DOGE's influence, the FAA reportedly told staff to [find tens of millions of dollars](#) to award Starlink a sweetheart deal.
12. The Department of Transportation is in talks with the Boring Company for a new engineering contract in a multi-billion-dollar [Amtrak](#) project.

13. Tesla is seeking to [supply cars](#) for the federal government (though Ford currently has a \$8.5 billion contract with the General Services Administration (GSA) for federal vehicles).
14. Musk and DOGE have sought to [increase the federal government's reliance on artificial intelligence](#) (AI) and even [replace](#) federal employees with AI, which could profit Musk's own AI company, xAI and its chatbot Grok.
15. Musk has pushed the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to wind down its [International Space Station](#) so that NASA can turn its attention toward more missions to [Mars](#), [using SpaceX's rocket](#), as [SpaceX shifts](#) to making a Mars mission a company priority.
16. Musk also pushed NASA to deprioritize its Artemis moon-exploration program — in which taxpayers have already invested \$93 billion — and drop NASA's moon-related contracts to free up resources for the Mars mission — to help advance [SpaceX's vision](#) of “build[ing] a self-sustaining civilization on Mars.”
17. The White House has proposed [phasing out NASA's Space Launch System](#), a rocket made by Boeing, which “would potentially free up billions for [Mars efforts](#),” which are largely led by SpaceX.
18. The White House has also proposed canceling use of Lockheed Martin's [Orion capsule](#) and transitioning to other “[commercial systems](#),” potentially including those made by SpaceX.
19. NASA awarded SpaceX a contract for launch services for a [space telescope](#), at a cost of approximately \$100 million to NASA.
20. The Space Force awarded SpaceX a [rocket launch contract](#) worth up to \$5.9 billion.
21. The State Department reportedly was taking steps to award a \$400 million contract to [Tesla for armored vehicles](#) — then appeared to backtrack following public outcry.
22. Starlink has been [installed across the White House](#).
23. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [is expected](#) to offer subsidies for SpaceX to provide satellite broadband services, through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund program, in reversal of the FCC's [prior decision](#) not to give SpaceX roughly \$900 million in subsidies because the company failed to meet program requirements.
24. The FCC has opened an investigation against [SpaceX competitor EchoStar](#), which holds EchoStar satellite licenses “coveted by rival firms including SpaceX.”
25. Under the guidance of a former SpaceX employee, the Pentagon is now considering a contract that would likely pay SpaceX to transport [military cargo](#) around the globe.
26. As the National Park Service prepares for a [U.S. Army parade](#) on President Trump's birthday, the Administration is considering using [Starlink for WiFi services](#) at the event.
27. The [Social Security Administration \(SSA\)](#) began using X for official public communications, and an SSA representative [recommended “subscrib\[ing\] to the official SSA X account”](#) for agency updates, which requires creating an X account, though the SSA heavily serves elderly individuals who may have trouble navigating social media.

Ending enforcement actions against Musk's businesses

During the Trump Administration, federal agencies have dropped investigations into Musk companies, declined to enforce regulations against them, or foregone penalties that appear to have been warranted.

28. [Dormant cases](#) abound: reportedly "in more than 40 other federal agency matters [related to Musk], regulators have taken no public action on their investigations for several months or more."
29. The Air Force [declined to even review](#) SpaceX for suspension or debarment as a contractor, despite concerns that Musk is repeatedly engaging with top Russian officials, including Vladimir Putin.
30. Similarly, it is unclear whether the [Pentagon Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security](#) has continued its review of Musk allegedly failing to report [communications with foreign leaders](#), as required by DoD's continuous vetting process.
31. The Department of Justice (DOJ) [dropped its immigration case](#) against SpaceX for [discriminating against refugees and asylees](#) in hiring.
32. The [National Labor Relations Board](#) (NLRB) [took steps to settle](#) allegations against SpaceX.
33. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [closed an investigation](#) into Tesla for allegedly violating workplace safety rules.

Undercutting agencies regulating and investigating Musk's businesses

Largely guided by Musk's DOGE, the Trump Administration has hamstrung the agencies overseeing Musk's companies, gutting their staff, throwing sand in the gears of their operations, and embedding DOGE staff loyal to Musk.

34. Musk has direct business interests before [over 70%](#) of agencies and departments targeted by DOGE.
35. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) was a top target. Musk called for "delet[ing]" the agency and DOGE attempted to [fire up to 90% of CFPB staff](#), who would regulate [X Money](#).
36. President Trump fired the CFPB Director and the new head of CFPB [forbade](#) the agency from doing work — after CFPB had received over [300 consumer complaints](#) about [Tesla](#).
37. X also [deleted CFPB's official account](#) on the social media platform, limiting the public communications of an agency that regulates Musk companies.

38. X [deleted](#) the account of Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Commissioner Richard Trumka Jr. after he posted about President Trump's allegedly illegal [firings](#) of Democratic CPSC commissioners.
39. The Trump Administration fired [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\) commissioners](#) after EEOC investigated Tesla for [alleged racial harassment](#) and retaliation at the company's Fremont Facility.
40. The Trump Administration plans to cut potentially [thousands of EPA employees](#), after the EPA [found](#) that SpaceX violated the Clean Water Act, investigated Tesla's actions at its [Austin Facility](#), and investigated an [xAI facility](#) in Tennessee for air pollution.
41. The Trump Administration began requiring any [EPA spending](#) greater than \$50,000 to obtain DOGE approval, potentially allowing Musk to slow down environmental enforcement actions, like past investigations into [Tesla](#) and [SpaceX](#) for hazardous waste dumping and other alleged activity.
42. The Trump Administration attempted to [fire hundreds of FAA employees](#), including some who directly contribute to air safety, after the [FAA required](#) SpaceX to abide by environmental requirements.
43. Even before Trump took office, Musk successfully [pressured FAA Administrator Michael Whitaker](#) — who regulated Musk companies — to resign, though his term was not set to end until 2028.
44. The Head of the [Office of Commercial Space Transportation](#) within the FAA, which Musk [threatened to sue](#) for “regulatory overreach” against SpaceX, departed under DOGE's early retirement offer.
45. DOGE reportedly [fired Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) employees](#) overseeing Neuralink — [including](#) "20 people in the FDA's office of neurological and physical medicine devices, several of whom worked on Neuralink."
46. President Trump [fired FEC Commissioner Weintraub](#) after the FEC [received](#) (and appeared to still be [reviewing](#)) an official complaint against Musk's company X for his potentially illegal campaign contributions for a virtual rally.
47. President Trump [fired the DoD Inspector General](#) that had opened a [review](#) of Musk's meetings with foreign leaders.
48. President Trump [fired the USAID Inspector General](#) that [inspected](#) SpaceX's provision of Starlink terminals to Ukraine, while allegedly providing Russia with access to the service.
49. President Trump then attempted to [shut down USAID](#), which “raises a potential conflict of interest, as Musk's company was [under investigation by USAID](#) shortly before he began calling for the shutdown.”
50. President Trump [fired](#) the Senate-confirmed Director of the Office of Government Ethics shortly after members of Congress [called for](#) OGE to investigate Musk.
51. [Fish and Wildlife Service \(FWS\) staff](#) experienced [mass firings](#) after FWS investigated the impact of SpaceX's Starbase on a nearby migratory bird habitat at Boca Chica.

52. Nearly [20% of Department of Labor \(DoL\) staff left](#) after Musk pushed them to take "fork in the road" resignations, following intense DoL investigations of [Musk's companies](#).
53. DOGE deactivated agency credit cards and imposed [\\$1 spending limits](#), [paralyzing](#) the work of agencies, including those that [regulate](#) Musk's companies — such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), FAA, FDA, and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)).
54. The Trump Administration has also narrowed who can [approve spending](#), such as requiring that 2 procurement officers at NASA approve all purchases — centralizing control over NASA's spending in ways that Musk may influence.
55. Musk's cost-cutting team is laying off workers at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the auto safety agency [investigating Tesla](#) for crashes stemming from its "full self-driving" and remote control features.
56. The Trump Administration first [shut down NLRB](#) altogether — which had [cases](#) against multiple Musk companies (including SpaceX, Tesla, and X).
57. Then President Trump [removed independent NLRB members](#).
58. DOGE is gutting NOAA while Musk eyes privatization of NOAA [weather satellites](#), which could present a business opportunity for Starlink.
59. President Trump signed an executive order halting operations of the Labor Department's [Office of Federal Contract Compliance](#), which had Tesla on its list of contractors scheduled for audits.
60. [OSHA has 27 cases](#) against Tesla for workers rights violations and investigated SpaceX for workplace injuries — and now DOGE is [limiting](#) the agency's work.
61. President Trump tried to fire over [90% of National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (NIOSH), which put two Musk companies — Boring and Tesla — on its ["dirty dozen" list](#) of worst workplace safety offenders.
62. The Department of Transportation's (DoT) [Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration](#) — which [fined Neuralink](#) for improperly handling hazardous waste — has faced mass layoffs.
63. Under the Trump Administration, the SEC [fired regional directors](#) and SEC staff were pushed to voluntarily [resign](#), undermining the Commission's enforcement capacity — after the Commission [sued Musk](#) for failing to properly disclose Twitter ownership and launched a [probe into Neuralink](#).
64. The SEC [restricted](#) staff authority to launch investigations, limiting enforcement capacity as it is [investigating Tesla](#) over potentially false claims about its self-driving vehicles.
65. The Trump Administration pushed out thousands of [Transportation Department](#) employees after DoT planned to [fine SpaceX](#) last year for violations such as failing to follow [licensing requirements](#).
66. The Trump Administration gutted DoJ's Civil Rights Division, driving out around [70% of the Division's attorneys](#), after the Division [sued SpaceX](#) for discrimination.

67. President Trump fired the [USDA Inspector General](#), who had been investigating Neuralink for improper animal testing.
68. President Trump fired [Democratic commissioners at the Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#) after the FTC [investigated](#) Musk's takeover of Twitter and the company's data security and privacy practices.

Policy changes and approvals that benefit Musk's businesses

Agencies have pursued policy changes and regulatory approvals that benefit Musk's companies.

69. The FAA suddenly gave SpaceX permission to [increase launches fivefold](#) in Texas.
70. The [FAA](#) redrew hazard zones and gave SpaceX [final approval to launch Starship](#), even after failed test flights exploded in January and March, raining debris over multiple countries.
71. The [FAA allowed](#) SpaceX to [double](#) its launches from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.
72. The Department of Transportation weakened reporting [requirements for self-driving car companies](#), which has been called a "boon for Tesla."
73. President Trump froze enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), a bribery law that previously [hit Tesla suppliers](#).
74. The [FCC approved](#) a waiver for SpaceX to provide satellite service directly from orbit to smartphones, over the [objection](#) of cell network providers who say this move will worsen mobile network service for many.
75. The [SEC allowed](#) Tesla to block nearly all proposed shareholder proposals, including those that would have forced Tesla to stop interfering with unionization efforts and meet certain climate goals.
76. Commerce Secretary Lutnick announced that cars built in the U.S. with [85% domestic content](#) would be exempt from tariffs on auto parts — and reportedly, only [Tesla vehicles](#) are likely to meet that standard in the immediate term.

Special access to sensitive meetings and data

Musk received special access to sensitive government meetings, classified information, and proprietary government data that can boost his companies.

77. DoD prepared a highly classified [China war planning briefing](#) for Musk with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which could have provided Musk with information that would have given

- his company inside knowledge about DoD’s contract needs and information he could have been pressured to share with China to continue to be able to do business.
78. After public outcry, DoD walked back its plan, but Musk still had a [private meeting with Defense Secretary Hegseth](#), while having [billions at stake](#) in current and potential DoD contracts.
 79. Musk sat in on multiple [cabinet meetings](#), becoming privy to upcoming policy changes at the highest level of government (and reportedly speaking three times longer than cabinet members at one meeting), while leading companies with a combined valuation of over \$1 trillion.
 80. Starlink transceivers were installed at [GSA](#), possibly to siphon off agency data.
 81. Musk’s [AI chatbot Grok](#) increasingly is being used to analyze federal data, and is being trained on government data, giving it an advantage over competitor chatbots.
 82. The Trump Administration targeted the [Library of Congress](#), which some believe could have the effect of reducing “resistance to AI companies using copyrighted material to train models without having to pay for it” — potentially increasing Musk’s access to intellectual property to feed into his AI tool.
 83. A [whistleblower](#) revealed [DOGE](#) targeted NLRB confidential data — potentially including investigations into Musk companies and its competitors.
 84. DOGE infiltrated the Treasury Department’s [Federal Payment System](#), which could provide Musk with access to [financial information about his competitors](#) that hold government contracts.

Influence over government personnel

Musk has been involved in selecting and installing personnel loyal to him in agencies that regulate or contract with his companies.

85. Musk sat in the room during Air Force nominee [Troy Meink’s interview](#), while he sought Air Force contracts, and while facing an Air Force review of SpaceX violating security reporting requirements.
86. Musk [helped select](#) President Trump’s initial NASA administrator nominee [Jared Isaacman](#), who is a [SpaceX investor](#) and has been called “[Elon’s conduit](#).”
87. Longtime SpaceX employee [Michael Altenhofen](#) secured a role as a senior advisor at NASA.
88. DOGE members joined [NASA senior leadership](#) meetings.
89. President Trump selected a Musk [supporter](#) as Chair of the FCC, which regulates SpaceX.
90. SpaceX engineer and [Musk ally Ted Malaska](#) became embedded at the FAA and warned FAA staff that “[a]nyone who impeded progress, Malaska said, would be reported to

Musk and risked losing their jobs” — while the FAA had active enforcement actions against Musk.

91. President Trump selected [former SpaceX Fellow Gen. Michael Guetlein](#) to lead the Golden Dome missile program, which could become one of SpaceX’s most lucrative contracts.
92. The Trump Administration [installed](#) a head of Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs — a Labor Department office that was auditing Tesla — who had previously represented SpaceX.
93. President Trump pushed out the head of the Library of Congress’s [Copyright Office](#), soon after it released a report on how AI companies may be violating copyright laws, which some believe reflects the [influence of Musk](#) — owner of an AI company — over personnel decisions.

Musk’s parochial interests over the public interest

Musk appeared to redirect foreign aid and immigration policy toward his personal parochial interests rather than the public’s interest.

94. Amidst [Musk’s vocal opposition](#) to racial justice laws in his country of origin, South Africa, President Trump issued an [executive order](#) cutting aid to South Africa in order to pressure it to change the new law (Expropriation Act) to redistribute land from White to Black South Africans.
95. Musk also appeared to influence Trump’s decision to allow [Afrikaaner white South Africans](#) — who Musk says face a “[genocide](#)” — to enter the United States as refugees, while [shutting down refugee admissions](#) for virtually every other group in the world.

Leveraging Musk’s power to threaten other businesses

Musk companies reportedly use the promise of federal assistance — or threat of federal penalties — to extract better deals from business partners and competitors.

96. Executives at X reportedly [threatened to block a merger](#) for an advertising firm if it failed to get companies to spend more on advertising on X, invoking Musk’s name.

Weaponizing agencies against Musk’s enemies

The Trump Administration weaponizes federal enforcement powers against Musk’s enemies.

97. The Federal Trade Commission ([FTC](#)) [launches a seemingly baseless investigation](#) into Media Matters, which Musk says targeted X because it investigated antisemitic content on the platform.

Securing policy benefits through Congress

Musk's influence-peddling in Congress will benefit his bottom line.

98. Under pressure from the White House, House Republicans passed a tax bill that includes [\\$25 billion for Golden Dome](#) — much of which could go to Musk's company.
99. Musk used his influence to [advocate](#) for the House Energy and Commerce Committee to push for the energy needs of the artificial intelligence industry, which can benefit Musk's AI company, xAI.
100. House Republicans passed a tax bill with cuts to [electric vehicle subsidies](#), which may help Tesla by [disproportionately hurting its competitors](#).
101. The White House has pushed Congress to pass the [GENIUS Act](#), which includes a carveout for Big Tech companies like XMoney to issue their own stablecoins.

Foreign deals

Musk secured deals with foreign nations and companies, often after using his unique access to Trump Administration policy discussions and staff.

102. During President Trump's Gulf tour, Musk announced a deal for [Neuralink to conduct clinical trials](#) in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
103. Starlink has a pending deal with [Bangladesh](#), after Musk's personal meeting with a Bangladeshi official.
104. Starlink secured a deal with [India](#) amid threats of tariffs.
105. Starlink secured a deal with [Vietnam](#) amid threats of tariffs.
106. Starlink secured assurances from [Lesotho](#) amid threats of tariffs.
107. Starlink secured a deal with [Gambia](#) amid threats of tariffs.
108. Starlink secured a deal with [Pakistan](#) amid threats of tariffs.
109. Starlink secured a deal with [Somalia](#) amid threats of tariffs.
110. Starlink secured a deal with [DRC](#) amid threats of tariffs.
111. Starlink has sought a deal with [Djibouti](#) and U.S. embassy staff planned to help with "facilitating discussions."
112. Starlink is in discussions with [Cambodia](#) for a deal.
113. A Starlink deal is being developed in [Mali](#).

114. A Starlink deal is under review in [Namibia](#) where the company would need an exemption.
115. Starlink secured a deal with [Saudi Arabia](#) during his visit with President Trump.
116. Starlink is close to a deal with [South Africa](#), winning an exemption from [post-apartheid laws](#) requiring partial Black ownership in order to get the contract, which "appears to be a direct effort for the nation to appease the president and his extremely rich ally."
117. In a press conference with President Trump and Elon Musk, a [South African official](#) said: "We need Starlink at every police station" to fight crime.
118. The Boring Company secured a deal with the UAE to build a [high-speed transit system in Dubai](#).
119. The Boring Company is also in talks for a deal in [Saudi Arabia](#).
120. Starlink is in talks with the UAE to become the in-flight WiFi provider for [Emirates Airline](#).
121. xAI was included on a shortlist of companies that can [buy chips](#) under an agreement between the U.S. and UAE — after Musk joined President Trump's Middle East tour and "worked hard to try to derail the [UAE AI] deal if it didn't include his own AI startup."

Deals for Musk's family

Musk's family members also receive new business opportunities – soon after Musk becomes top advisor to the president.

122. Musk's brother, Kimbal Musk, reached deals with Qatar and Abu Dhabi for his company [Nova Sky Stories](#) to provide drone light shows.
123. Musk's father, Errol Musk, entered talks with a foreign firm to build a [Musk Tower in UAE](#).
124. Musk's mother, [Maye Musk](#), has been highlighted in state-controlled media of foreign governments as they "are jockeying for influence over the Trump administration."

Meddling in the electoral and judicial processes

Musk uses his influence to meddle in the political and judicial processes in ways that could help protect his political — and financial — interests.

125. Musk wore a [MAGA hat](#) in the Oval Office, potentially violating the Hatch Act, which is [meant to](#) "ensur[e] that taxpayer resources are spent on official government business rather than partisan politics."

126. Musk pledged \$2 million in a lottery for [Wisconsin voters](#) who supported a conservative state Supreme Court candidate — in a race that could influence the balance of power in Congress.
127. Musk called for the [impeachment of judges](#) who rule against President Trump’s policies.
128. Musk [pledged \\$100 million](#) to groups controlled by the Trump political operation (possibly Make America Great Again Inc., a super PAC, and Securing American Greatness, a political nonprofit).

Lack of public transparency

Despite his calls for the government to practice “[maximum transparency](#),” Musk has failed to inform the American people of critical information about his potential conflicts of interest.

129. Musk [refused](#) to make his [financial disclosure form public](#) — and we don’t even know whether he has filed a confidential financial disclosure form, as required.
130. Musk refused to inform the public of whether he has [received any waiver](#) of the statutory [rule](#) preventing him from working on projects that create conflicts of interest.