

Dear Congress:

We are former members of Congress — Republicans, Democrats, and independents. While we represent different political perspectives, we stand united in our conviction that the United States Constitution represents humanity's greatest testament to self-governance.

The Framers of our Constitution, in their wisdom, established three distinct branches of government, each serving as a check on the others.

Article I of the Constitution places Congress at the center of our democracy for a profound reason. The legislative branch was designed to be the primary voice of the people, containing all political viewpoints, not just one. This is why the Constitution grants Congress specific and immutable powers, including the power of the purse — a vital check on executive authority.

The Framers acutely understood that unchecked power, no matter its source, poses a fundamental threat to liberty.

But America is suddenly at a perilous crossroads. The executive branch must yield to checks and balances. It must not seize for itself — or for any unelected billionaire — powers that defy accountability.

The challenges we face today are not partisan — they are constitutional. Recent actions taken by certain actors within the executive branch, Elon Musk, and his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) represent an unprecedented challenge to congressional authority.

Musk and his DOGE operatives, many bearing no official government role, have positioned themselves as the final authority on hiring, spending, and governance — without input from elected lawmakers. Even more alarming, these operatives have been granted direct access to federal payment systems, placing Social Security payments, military salaries, and government disbursements under private influence.

This is not governance. This is a direct threat to democratic accountability and the separation of powers that protects the rights and freedoms of all Americans.

Many of us agree that wasteful spending and burdensome bureaucracy can and should be addressed, but this is not the way to do it. Congress must not allow their constitutional authority to be usurped.

We are also troubled by efforts to bring independent agencies under the control of the White House, including the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Federal Election Commission (FEC), Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). These agencies were legally established by Congress to operate independently from the president and implement regulations impartially.

If Congress fails to exert their Article I powers, it risks becoming nothing more than a ceremonial body, debating policies it no longer has the power to enforce. This is not a theoretical concern — it is an immediate threat to our constitutional order.

We, the undersigned, call on every sitting member of Congress — regardless of party — to take immediate action:

- Launch comprehensive oversight hearings into the unprecedented access granted to DOGE operatives.
- Subpoena key officials and documents related to DOGE’s hiring practices, financial access, and decision-making authority.
- Publicly reaffirm Congress’ constitutional authority under Article I.
- Most importantly, reject any attempt to shift power permanently into unaccountable private hands.

As America marches toward its 250th year, we call upon those in Congress and the White House to heed the wisdom of the Framers.

The future of the country we love will be shaped by the choices we make today.

Signed,

The Honorable Mike Arcuri (D-NY)

The Honorable Les Aucoin (D-OR)

The Honorable Brian Baird (D-WA)

The Honorable Mark Begich (D-AK)

The Honorable Charles Boustany (R-LA)

The Honorable Carol Moseley Braun (D-IL)

The Honorable Cheri Bustos (D-IL)

The Honorable Mike Capuano (D-MA)

The Honorable John Carlin (D-KS)

The Honorable Arne Carlson (R-MN)

The Honorable Russ Carnahan (D-MO)

The Honorable John Cavanaugh (D-NE)

The Honorable Ben Chandler (D-KY)

The Honorable Rodney Chandler (R-WA)

The Honorable Barabara Comstock (R-VA)

The Honorable Sam Coppersmith (D-AZ)

The Honorable Tom Daschle (D-SD)

The Honorable Lincoln Davis (D-TN)

The Honorable Susan Davis (D-CA)

The Honorable Charlie Dent (R-PA)

The Honorable Chris Dodd (D-CT)  
The Honorable Donna Edwards (D-MD)  
The Honorable David Emery (R-ME)  
The Honorable Karan English (D-AZ)  
The Honorable Russ Feingold (D-WI)  
The Honorable Harold Ford Jr. (D-TN)  
The Honorable Dick Gephardt (D-MO)  
The Honorable Jim Greenwood (R-PA)  
The Honorable Steve Gunderson (R-WI)  
The Honorable Chuck Hagel (R-NE)  
The Honorable Michael J. Harrington (D-MA)  
The Honorable Gary Hart (D-CO)  
The Honorable Joseph Hoeffel (D-PA)  
The Honorable Paul Hodes (D-NH)  
The Honorable Jerry Huckaby (D-LA)  
The Honorable Bob Inglis (R-SC)  
The Honorable Bob Kerrey (D-NE)  
The Honorable Ron Kind (D-WI)  
The Honorable Ray LaHood (R-IL)  
The Honorable John LeBoutillier (R-NY)  
The Honorable Sander Levin (D-MI)  
The Honorable Mel Levine (D-CA)  
The Honorable Blanche Lincoln (D-AR)

The Honorable Larry LaRocco (D-ID)  
The Honorable Marjorie Margolies (D-PA)  
The Honorable Matt McHugh (D-NY)  
The Honorable Susan Molinari (I-NY)  
The Honorable Jim Moran (D-VA)  
The Honorable Connie Morella (R-MD)  
The Honorable Larry Pressler (R-SD)  
The Honorable Reid Ribble (R-WI)  
The Honorable Denver Riggleman (R-VA)  
The Honorable Bill Ritter (D-CO)  
The Honorable Tim Roemer (D-IN)  
The Honorable Bill Sarpalius (D-TX)  
The Honorable Claudine Schneider (R-RI)  
The Honorable Joe Schwarz (R-MI)  
The Honorable Philip Sharp (D-IN)  
The Honorable Chris Shays (R-CT)  
The Honorable Gerry Sikorski (D-MN)  
The Honorable David Skaggs (D-CO)  
The Honorable Peter Smith (R-VT)  
The Honorable Robin Tallon (D-SC)  
The Honorable Mark Udall (D-CO)  
The Honorable Jim Walsh (R-NY)  
The Honorable Tim Wirth (D-CO)