

**From:** Cashour, Curtis E.  
**Sent:** Tue, 4 Feb 2025 23:57:06 +0000  
**To:** Gartland, Lavin; Syrek, Christopher D.  
**Subject:** FW: for review: VA holding statement re: DOGE

Lavin – is Justin a (b)(5)

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**From:** (b)(6) EOP/WHO <(b)(6)@who.eop.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 6:55 PM  
**To:** Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: for review: VA holding statement re: DOGE

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5) Thank you

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**From:** Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 6:05 PM  
**To:** (b)(6) EOP/WHO <(b)(6)@who.eop.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** for review: VA holding statement re: DOGE

(b)(6) (b)(5)

(b)(6)

VA has one DOGE employee, who is specifically focused on identifying wasteful contracts, improving VA operations and strengthening management of the department's IT projects. The DOGE employee will be solely focused on improving VA performance and efficiency and will not have access to Veterans' or VA beneficiaries' data. VA looks forward to working with DOGE to improve services to Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

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**From:** Shane III, Leo <(b)(6)@militarytimes.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 11:45 AM  
**To:** (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>;  
VA Public Affairs <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Elon Musk at VA central office today

I've heard from several sources that officials from the Department of Government Efficiency have been meeting with VA leaders in recent days, and that Musk is over at the building today to talk about the work ahead. I've got a handful of questions related to that:

- Who is Musk and the other officials meeting with?
- Why are those meetings taking place before Collins' confirmation vote? Or is he read into all of these meetings as well?
- Can you characterize what the focus of the meetings are?
- What will VA's level of cooperation with the Department of Government Efficiency be?
- Are there any guarantees in place that veterans' personal data and health care information will not be shared with outside agencies like the Department of Government Efficiency?

I appreciate whatever insight you can lend.

Leo Shane III

Deputy Editor, Military Times

(b)(6)

[@militarytimes.com](mailto:(b)(6)@militarytimes.com)

202-656 (b)(6)

**From:** Syrek, Christopher D.  
**Sent:** Wed, 5 Feb 2025 00:56:51 +0000  
**To:** Cashour, Curtis E.; Runyan, Danielle A.; (b)(6)  
**Subject:** FW: INCOMING: FW: RB Letter  
**Attachments:** 2025-02-04 RB Letter to Collins.pdf

Expected this.

(b)(6) OCLA action.

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**From:** Runyan, Danielle A. (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 5:26 PM  
**To:** Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: INCOMING: FW: RB Letter

FYSA (just in case you did not already receive this)

Very Respectfully,

Danielle Runyan  
Senior Advisor  
Office of General Counsel  
Department of Veterans Affairs

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**From:** Johnson, Glenn (SES) (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 1:29 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)@va.gov (b)(6)@hna3xapaaw0o9hl7ydq2la2w17p2l88voy2ctr6jho58lv3dr.t-4x38eae.na21.apex.salesforce.com>  
**Cc:** VA Member Letters - Incoming (b)(6)@va.gov>; OCLA Front Office (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** INCOMING: FW: RB Letter

ExecSec

Please see attached letter from Ranking Member Blumenthal to SecVA re. assurances made during confirmation process.

Thanks  
Glenn

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**From:** (b)(6) (Veterans Affairs) <(b)(6)@vetaff.senate.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 1:12 PM  
**To:** Johnson, Glenn (SES) (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6) (Veterans Affairs) (b)(6)@vetaff.senate.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RB Letter

Hi Glenn –

Sharing the attached letter from Ranking Member Blumenthal to Secretary Collins.

Thank you,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Staff Director  
U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
412 Russell Senate Office Building  
Office: (202) 224-(b)(6)

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
**VETERANS' AFFAIRS**





JERRY MORAN, KANSAS  
CHAIRMAN  
JOHN BOOZMAN, ARKANSAS  
BILL CASSIDY, LOUISIANA  
THOM TILLIS, NORTH CAROLINA  
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA  
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JIM BANKS, INDIANA  
TIM SHEEHY, MONTANA

(b)(6) STAFF DIRECTOR

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT  
RANKING MEMBER  
PATTY MURRAY, WASHINGTON  
BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT  
MAZIE HIRONO, HAWAII  
MAGGIE HASSAN, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
ANGUS S. KING, JR., MAINE  
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS  
RUBEN GALLEGOS, ARIZONA  
ELISSA SLOTKIN, MICHIGAN

(b)(6) STAFF DIRECTOR

February 4, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Collins,

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Having a Senate-confirmed leader in this role helps ensure VA is held accountable to deliver on its sacred obligation – to deliver the quality of health care and level of benefits our nation's veterans have earned. As Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I plan to hold you accountable for the assurances you made throughout your confirmation process. Together, we can accomplish a great deal on our shared priorities, and build upon the many bipartisan accomplishments achieved on behalf of veterans in recent years. However, your success as Secretary, as well as your credibility, will be largely determined by the initial actions you take upon assuming your new office.

During your confirmation hearing, I asked whether you would defend veterans and oppose outside efforts harmful to them and their families. You responded you would always “put the veteran first” and pledged not to “balance budgets on the back of veterans’ benefits.” I strongly believe veterans and VA need a leader who will keep the needs of veterans at the forefront, particularly in the face of pressure to scale back, cut costs, and pursue harmful policies that negatively impact veterans. I, therefore, appreciated your commitment to being this kind of advocate. But over the past two weeks, we have seen an unprecedented number of dangerous and unlawful actions from the White House that will decrease access to care for veterans across the country, delay delivery of recently-expanded benefits for toxic-exposed veterans and their families, and disrupt a wide array of critical services and opportunities they rely upon. This deluge of harmful actions is a betrayal of trust for veterans, and must be reversed quickly and unequivocally.

Today is your opportunity to make good on the assurances given during your confirmation hearing – to stand up for veterans in strong opposition to these arbitrary and harmful directives and to put veterans first. In the very first test of your leadership, I urge you to take the following actions without delay:

1. Exempt all VA positions from President Trump's hiring freeze.
2. Work with other federal agencies to ensure financial assistance programs for veterans are exempted from President Trump's funding freeze.
3. Work with President Trump to re-appoint Mr. Mike Missal as the VA Inspector General.
4. Ensure and clarify to veterans, CHAMPVA beneficiaries, and VA providers that Executive Order 14182, “Enforcing the Hyde Amendment,” does not apply to any of VA's operations.

5. Work with the Office of Personnel Management, and any other relevant parties, to address directives that only serve to remove due process and employment rights from public servants, and specifically:
  - a. rescind the delayed resignation offer from all VA employees,
  - b. cease and retract any atypical reviews and adverse actions against probationary employees initiated without cause, and
  - c. bar all VA positions from the new excepted service “policy/career” category, all of which exist solely to remove their due process and employment rights as public servants.
6. Rescind correspondence sent to VA employees threatening disciplinary action against those who do not inform on fellow employees regarding potential violations of President Trump’s crackdown on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility programs and staff.
7. Fully restrict, block, or remove Department of Government Efficiency employee access to all VA data systems and records, including those holding veterans’ private health, benefits, and related financial information, and VA employee personnel files.
8. Communicate clearly and comprehensively to all veterans and VA employees about the actions you will be taking to address #1-7 above.

Without immediate and decisive action, veterans will suffer from severed access to critical grant programs, a lack of oversight, and a politicized, divided, and depleted VA workforce. During your nomination hearing, you stated, “if I am confirmed by this body, the VA will be my mission. It’ll be the mission to take care of our veterans and to make sure they get the benefits that they deserve.” Today, I call on you to put those words into action, to rise to this challenge, and to immediately and strongly push back against President Trump’s destructive actions that have undermined VA’s mission and made it more difficult for our nation to fulfill its sacred obligation to veterans and their families who have already sacrificed on its behalf.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs



**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Thu, 6 Feb 2025 21:24:52 +0000  
**To:** Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)  
**Cc:** Syrek, Christopher D.; Runyan, Danielle A.; Bartrum, John J.; Quill, Joshua J.  
**Subject:** FW: INCOMING: FW: Letter from RM Blumenthal + 25 Senators to SecVA re: DOGE at VA  
**Attachments:** 2025-02-06 Letter to Collins re DOGE at VA.pdf

Curt, team – FYI. SVAC-Ds will be pressing this one.

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**From:** Johnson, Glenn (SES) (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 6, 2025 4:21 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)@va.gov (b)(6)@hna3xapaaw0o9hl7ydq2la2w17p2l88voy2ctr6jho58lv3dr.t-4x38eae.na21.apex.salesforce.com>  
**Cc:** VA Member Letters - Incoming <(b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Subject:** INCOMING: FW: Letter from RM Blumenthal + 25 Senators to SecVA re: DOGE at VA

ExecSec

Please see attached letter from Ranking Member Blumenthal + 25 other Senators regarding DOGE at VA.

Thanks  
Glenn

---

**From:** (b)(6) (Veterans Affairs) (b)(6)@vetaff.senate.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 6, 2025 4:15 PM  
**To:** Johnson, Glenn (SES) (b)(6)@va.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6) (Veterans Affairs) (b)(6)@vetaff.senate.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter to SecVA re: DOGE at VA

Hi Glenn,

Attaching a letter to the Secretary from Ranking Member Blumenthal and 25 other Senators regarding DOGE at VA. Please confirm receipt.

Thank you,

(b)(6)

*Professional Staff Member*

U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
412 Russell Senate Office Building

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
**VETERANS' AFFAIRS**





# 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.

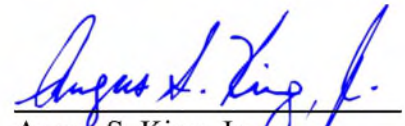
These actions are in direct violation of federal laws meant to protect our national security and the privacy of our citizens’ personal information. This includes information on Social Security payments, Medicare, Medicaid, student loans, veterans’ disability compensation payments, GI Bill payments, federal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

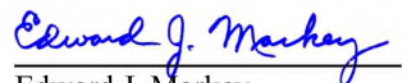
  
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

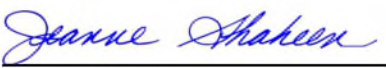
  
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator


  
Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator

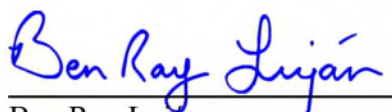
  
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

  
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



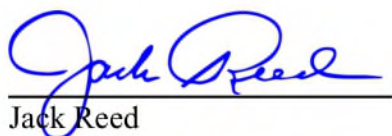
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



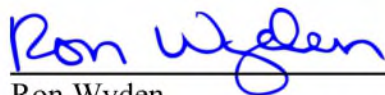
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



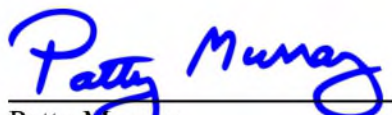
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



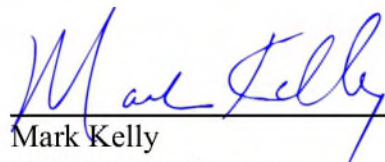
Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



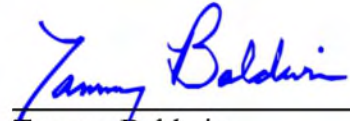
Mark Kelly  
United States Senator





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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Fri, 7 Feb 2025 22:02:02 +0000  
**To:** Syrek, Christopher D.  
**Subject:** EoD 07FEB2025  
**Attachments:** OSVA Meeting Request Form.docx, OSVA Meeting Request Form (SUGGESTED).docx, UPDATE, DPC/Hill Notices for Review - Bay Pines, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, 2025-02-06 Letter to Collins re DOGE at VA.pdf, REP CHRIS PAPPAS AND 7 REPRESENTATIVES LTR TO SECVA DTD 26 2025 REGARDING HIRING FREEZE AND VA EDUCATION BENEFITS.pdf, 2025.02.05 - HVAC Dems Ltr to SECVA re DEIA and Health Equity.pdf, 2025.02.06 - RM Takano Ltr to SECVA re Probationary Employees.pdf

Chief,

Go home! 😊

For your consideration:

1. **OSVA Meeting Request Form** - (b)(5)  
(b)(5)
2. **EXECSEC Meeting request** - (b)(5)  
(b)(5)

For your situational awareness:

1. (b)(5)
- 2.
- 3.

(b)(5)

Gentle Reminder:

1. Call (b)(6) back (b)(6)
2. Go home.

Best wishes and warmest regards,

(b)(6)

Ms. (b)(6)  
Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Washington, D.C.

# 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,

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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.


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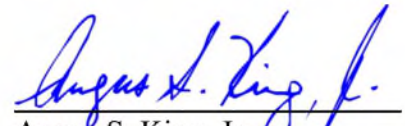
These actions are in direct violation of federal laws meant to protect our national security and the privacy of our citizens’ personal information. This includes information on Social Security payments, Medicare, Medicaid, student loans, veterans’ disability compensation payments, GI Bill payments, federal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


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Sincerely,

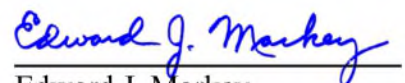
  
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

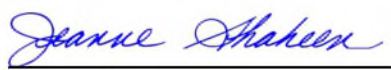
  
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator


  
Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator

  
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

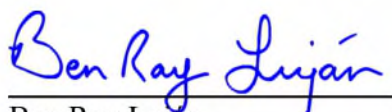
  
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

  
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



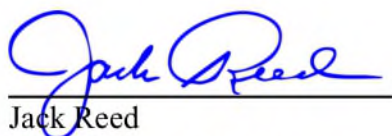
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



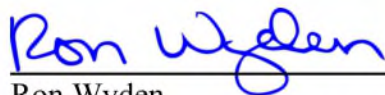
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



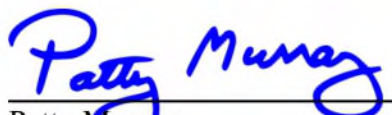
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



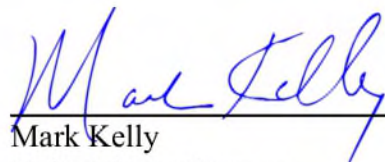
Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator