

RIGHTSIZING GOVERNMENT

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

FEBRUARY 5, 2025

Serial No. 119-2

Printed for the use of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform



Available on: *govinfo.gov*,
oversight.house.gov or
docs.house.gov

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

58-803 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2025

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- * Fiscal Note, LSA, Iowa Legislative Services Agency; submitted by Rep. Pressley.
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- * Questions for the Record: to Dr. Resh; submitted by Rep. Turner.
- * Questions for the Record: to Dr. Resh; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
- * Questions for the Record: to Ms. Reynolds; submitted by Rep. Turner.
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RIGHTSIZING GOVERNMENT

Thursday, February 5, 2025

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, HVC-210, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Jordan, Gosar, Foxx, Grothman, Cloud, Palmer, Higgins, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, Fallon, Donalds, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Greene, Boebert, Luna, Langworthy, Burlison, Crane, Jack, McGuire, Gill, Connolly, Norton, Lynch, Krishnamoorthi, Khanna, Mfume, Brown, Stansbury, Garcia, Frost, Lee, Casar, Crockett, Randall, Subramanyam, Ansari, Bell, Simon, Min, Pressley, and Tlaib.

Also present: Representative Nunn.

Chairman COMER. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform will come to order. I want to welcome everyone here today.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

I now recognize myself for the purpose of delivering an opening statement.

This morning, we will explore how we can make the Federal Government work better for all Americans. President Trump promised he would eliminate Washington waste and reform the unchecked Federal bureaucracy, and he is delivering on his promise made to the American people. President Trump created the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, to conduct a governmentwide audit to root out waste, fraud, and abuse and ensure we protect taxpayer dollars. At the helm of President Trump's effort is Elon Musk, one of the most successful entrepreneurs ever.

For decades, and on a bipartisan basis, Members of this Committee have lamented the inefficiency of the Federal bureaucracy. We fought never-ending battles against the waste, fraud, and abuse the bureaucracy generates during both Republican and Democrat administrations. One byproduct of this inefficiency according to GAO is the near quarter trillion dollars in annual improper payments the government issues. But now that President Trump is taking action to drain the swamp and expose how the Federal Government is spending taxpayer money, which he was elected to do, Democrats are hyperventilating and sensationalizing it.

Over the past few days, we have heard wild claims from Democrats that we are "at the beginning of a dictatorship," and we are

in a “constitutional crisis.” This kind of theatrical rhetoric is exactly what the American people rejected in November. Americans know that Washington needs reform, and DOGE is taking inventory to bring about change and steward taxpayer dollars entrusted to the Federal Government. Real innovation is not clean and tidy. It is necessarily disruptive and messy, but that is exactly what Washington needs right now, and it is what the American people voted for in November: a departure from the broken status quo. This Committee intends to work in partnership with DOGE. We want to reinforce its efforts and not blunt the momentum it is generating for needed change to the Federal bureaucracy.

At the Oversight Committee, our core mission remains unchanged: identifying waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government and proposing solutions to make it more efficient and effective for the American people. For this Congress, we created a subcommittee, chaired by Marjorie Taylor Greene, that is dedicated to working with DOGE, but I expect all of our subcommittees will be participating in this effort to make Washington more accountable. I am hopeful that we can find some common ground with our Democrat colleagues to ensure the Federal Government more efficiently and effectively serves the American people.

I ask all my colleagues here today, who among us believes that the Federal Government operates at peak efficiency? The Federal Government has expanded dramatically since the early years of our republic. There are today more than 400 executive branch agencies and subagencies and roughly 1,000 commissions. Most of these entities are relatively new creations. They did not exist for most of our Nation’s history. Not only has the government grown in size and complexity, but it has also taken on many functions once handled by the states or even the private sector.

How did we get here? Tom Schatz, the President of Citizens Against Government Waste and one of our witnesses today, notes that Congress tends to respond to each new problem that arises by creating a new program or agency, and even if the problem goes away, the program or agency remains. Congressional authorizing committees tend to generate these new programs and entities, all too often without sufficient regard to similar Federal activities occurring outside of their jurisdiction.

Over time, the expansion of entities and programs has yielded an increasingly complex bureaucracy with a massive amount of overlap and duplication. For instance, the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, recently found 43 job training programs scattered across nine different Federal agencies. That is just one of dozens of areas of wasteful duplication the GAO has identified across a range of Federal activities.

I hope we can learn today from Governor Kim Reynolds, who proposed her own wide-ranging reorganization in Iowa, which the state legislature enacted. For example, she will detail how Iowa consolidated a host of state-level job training programs. Iowa’s reorganization also eliminated or consolidated a slew of state agencies, commissions, and vacant job positions. Iowa’s example shows that the chief executive of any unit of government—Federal, state, or local—is well-positioned to propose ways to streamline that government. After all, they are the ones who run it on a day-to-day basis.

At the Federal level, the President has considerable authority within existing law to reorganize certain government offices and functions. That is the case, for instance, with respect to USAID. But some reorganizations do require changes in law. Throughout our Nation's history, such reorganization legislation typically originated from the White House. That is, in part, because for much of the 20th century, Presidential reorganization proposals requiring changes in law were granted special consideration by Congress. I think renewing that special authority requiring Congress to take an up or down vote on reorganizations proposed by the President would help facilitate needed improvements in government operations. In the meantime, I look forward to learning more about keys to successful reforms from our witnesses during today's hearing.

I now yield to Ranking Member Connolly for his opening statement.

MR. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our government was designed to be by, of, and for the American people. It is made up of civil servants who take an oath to serve the American people and to support and defend the Constitution. More than 1 in 3 Federal workers is employed by either the Postal Service, ensuring every American can get mail, or the Department of Veterans Affairs, providing care to our veterans in VA hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes. Almost 1 in 3 Federal workers is a veteran, and more than 85 percent live outside the D.C. Metropolitan Area, across every state, and serving every community in America. One in 3 Americans and half of all American children are enrolled in a government program. Our government provides the support these Americans are counting on, including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, Head Start, the National School Lunch Program.

We depend on our government to safeguard our food supply and to ensure life-saving medication is safe to consume. We depend on our government to provide alerts about extreme weather through the National Weather Service, which you know all too well from the tornado that devastated your community, Mr. Chairman, a few years ago, and to provide disaster relief to communities where it is needed, such as in Los Angeles after the devastating fires of the last few weeks.

This is the so-called Deep State that President Trump and his acolytes continue to demonize, and these are the programs and services sitting on Elon Musk's chopping block right now. Their efforts to "right size government" serve no one but themselves and fellow oligarchs who want to destroy, deregulate, and privatize, leaving everyday Americans to foot the bill with not only their paychecks, but even potentially their well-being and their lives.

Just last week, the country watched in horror as a commercial aircraft and a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter collided over the Potomac River, killing 67 people, including several of my constituents, including young children. We know that disasters are more likely to happen when the agencies that ensure our safety are unsupported and under resourced. Our Nation's air traffic control facilities were already operating below recommended staffing levels, but 1 day before the horrific crash, the Trump Administration sent an email to more than 2 million Federal employees offering them

a purported financial incentive to immediately quit their jobs. Can you imagine what might yet happen if our air traffic controllers accept this offer to quit en masse?

This is just the tip of the iceberg. In its first 2 weeks, the Trump Administration has ordered a hiring freeze on all Federal civilian positions, ordered all Federal employees back to the office full time, unless, of course, you take their early retirement offer, and then you do not have to come to work for 8 months, paved the way to purge more than a hundred thousand nonpartisan career civil servants and replace them with political loyalists, and wage war on our Nation's commitment to civil rights by eviscerating diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. The new Administration also ordered the politicization of the Senior Executive Service, forced employees to surveil and report on colleagues, and fired the Democratic commissioners of the National Labor Relations Board and the Equal Opportunity Commission. They administered loyalty tests to career civil servants at the National Security Council, granted security clearances to incoming White House officials without vetting, reportedly violated cyber security procurement and privacy laws by recklessly handling Federal systems and data, and attempted a late-night purge of 17 nonpartisan Inspectors General, a brazenly illegal act that will only provide cover for the corruption that inevitably will ensue.

The Trump Administration also ordered a freeze of Federal grants, loans, and other financial assistance programs. Immediately after the funding freeze was issued, Medicaid and Head Start reported disruptions, and some of FEMA'S online portals were cutoff. Although the freeze was halted by a judge and then rescinded by the Administration, we saw in only 48 hours how willing this Administration is to threaten the health, safety, and security of Americans in service of its unlawful and partisan agenda.

If these initiatives sound familiar, it is because so many of them are ripped right out of the Project 2025 playbook. Remember that deeply unpopular tome that President Trump, as candidate Trump, desperately tried to distance himself from during the campaign? Many of these executive orders mirror Project 2025 proposals, and at least four prominent 2025 authors now have top positions in the Administration. Trump's disavowal of Project 2025 was just part of the con.

President Trump and Elon Musk are using a wrecking ball to systematically dismember the government piece by piece. The American people deserve better, and we in Congress have a constitutional duty to uphold the laws that we created. We must protect the government workers, programs, and services that the future of this country depends on and stop an unconstitutional assault on the government.

Mr. Chairman, you correctly cited the role of Elon Musk. It is a puzzling role for many people, certainly on this side of the aisle and, I think, for some on yours. Who is this unelected billionaire that he can attempt to dismantle Federal agencies, fire people, transfer them, offer them early retirement, and have sweeping changes to agencies without any congressional review, oversight, or concurrence? Therefore, Mr. Chairman, given his prominence and his importance, I move that the Committee subpoena Elon Musk

to come forward as a witness at the earliest possible moment, and I so move.

VOICE. Second.

Chairman COMER. There has been a motion and second. The motion is not debatable.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Chairman, why is it not debatable? Point of order.

Mr. CONNOLLY. It is debatable.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Chair, I strike the last word.

Chairman COMER. Hold on.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. CASAR. Mr. Chairman, why don't we want to debate Elon Musk coming in and talking to us about his work and how he has enriched himself with \$164 billion—

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman?

Ms. GREENE. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Dr. Foxx.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move to table the motion.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. There is—

Ms. GREENE. I second.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. A motion to table.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Chairman, a point of order.

Chairman COMER. It is seconded by Mr. Higgins.

Ms. STANSBURY. A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Now, the motion is not debatable. As many are in favor of tabling—

Ms. STANSBURY. A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. A point of order. State your point.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Chairman, I think it is outrageous that this Committee will not even entertain a motion—

Chairman COMER. No, that is not a point of order.

[Cross talk.]

Ms. STANSBURY. If somebody who is breaking the law—

[Cross talk.]

Ms. STANSBURY. And you will not even entertain—

VOICE. Out of order.

Chairman COMER. Out of order.

Ms. STANSBURY [continuing]. A motion to bring him in front of the Oversight Committee? He is attacking the personal data—

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman, this is demagoguery. This is out of order.

[Cross talk.]

Chairman COMER. All those who are in favor of tabling, signify—

Ms. STANSBURY. Yes, let us have order in this country.

Chairman COMER. Ms. Stansbury, you are out of order. You know you are out of order. You know the rules of this Committee. There has been a motion and a second to table—

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Elon Musk is out of order in dismantling—

Ms. FOXX. I call the question.

Chairman COMER. There has been a motion and a second, a motion by Dr. Foxx, second by Mr. Higgins to table.

All those in favor of tabling, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and the motion to table—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote is ordered. We will set up for the clerk to call the roll.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. We will stand at ease when we get the staff ready to go for this.

[Pause.]

Ms. STANSBURY. For those watching at home, they do not have the votes in the room.

[Pause.]

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Chairman, speaking of efficiency of our time, since we are just sitting here, I would love to hear from someone why we do not want to have Mr. Musk come testify?

Chairman COMER. The gentleman is not recognized. This is a committee hearing about eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse. You pulled a parliamentary move, which you have the right to do. This was not expected. It was not in the agenda. We are trying to print everything and get it ready to have the roll call vote.

Mr. GARCIA. Well, speaking of abuse, we have someone in the Federal Government eliminating programs.

[Cross talk.]

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman, he is out of order.

Mr. GARCIA [continuing]. Benefiting billions of dollars himself.

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman, he is out of order. This is just demagoguery again.

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman, can you control the other side? They are out of control.

Chairman COMER. I am trying.

Ms. STANSBURY. Hashtag, irony.

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Chairman, it appears the clerk is ready for roll call.

The CLERK. Mr. Jordan?

[No response.]

The CLERK. Mr. Turner?

[No response.]

The CLERK. Mr. Gosar?

[No response.]

The CLERK. Ms. Foxx?

Ms. FOXX. Foxx votes aye to table.

The CLERK. Ms. Foxx votes aye.

Mr. Grothman?

[No response.]

The CLERK. Mr. Cloud?

Mr. CLOUD. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Cloud votes aye.

Mr. Palmer?

[No response.]

The CLERK. Mr. Higgins?

Mr. HIGGINS. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Higgins votes aye.

Mr. Sessions?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. Biggs?
 Mr. BIGGS. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Biggs votes aye.
 Ms. Mace?
 Ms. MACE. Aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Mace votes aye.
 Mr. Fallon?
 Mr. FALLON. I vote aye to table it.
 The CLERK. Mr. Fallon votes aye.
 Mr. Donalds?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. Perry?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. Timmons?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. Burchett?
 Mr. BURCHETT. I vote aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Burchett votes aye.
 Ms. Greene?
 Ms. GREENE. Aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Greene votes aye.
 Ms. Boebert?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mrs. Luna?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. Langworthy?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. Burlison?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. Crane?
 Mr. CRANE. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Crane votes aye.
 Mr. Jack?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. McGuire?
 Mr. MCGUIRE. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. McGuire votes aye.
 Mr. Gill?
 Mr. GILL. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Gill votes aye.
 Mr. Connolly?
 Mr. CONNOLLY. Nay.
 The CLERK. Mr. Connolly votes nay.
 Ms. Norton?
 Ms. NORTON. No.
 The CLERK. Ms. Norton votes no.
 Mr. Lynch?
 Mr. LYNCH. No.
 The CLERK. Mr. Lynch votes no.
 Mr. Krishnamoorthi?
 Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. No.
 The CLERK. Mr. Krishnamoorthi votes no.

Mr. Khanna?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. Mfume?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Ms. Brown?
 Ms. BROWN. Ms. Brown votes no. I am sorry, yes. Yes.
 VOICE. Do you vote no to table?
 Ms. BROWN. Yes, voting no to table.
 The CLERK. Ms. Brown votes no.
 Ms. Stansbury?
 Ms. STANSBURY. I vote no to a motion that would table a subpoena for Elon Musk.
 Mr. FALLON. More demagoguery.
 Ms. STANSBURY. It is out of order to discuss what the motion is?
 OK, guys. Cool.
 Chairman COMER. It is out of order.
 Ms. MACE. And you are out of control over there.
 Chairman COMER. Order, order, order. All right. Let us go.
 The CLERK. Ms. Stansbury votes no.
 Mr. Garcia?
 Mr. GARCIA. No.
 The CLERK. Mr. Garcia votes no.
 Mr. Frost?
 Mr. FROST. No.
 The CLERK. Mr. Frost votes no.
 Ms. Lee?
 Ms. LEE. No.
 The CLERK. Ms. Lee votes no.
 Mr. Casar?
 Mr. CASAR. No on the motion to table our motion to have Elon Musk at this Committee.
 The CLERK. Mr. Casar votes no.
 Ms. Crockett?
 Ms. CROCKETT. No on giving the American people the transparency that they deserve by bringing this oligarch before us.
 Mr. FALLON. Demagoguery again. More of this. No.
 The CLERK. Ms. Crockett votes no.
 Ms. Randall?
 Ms. RANDALL. No.
 The CLERK. Ms. Randall votes no.
 Mr. Subramanyam?
 Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. No.
 The CLERK. Mr. Subramanyam votes no.
 Ms. Ansari?
 Ms. ANSARI. No.
 The CLERK. Ms. Ansari votes no.
 Mr. Bell?
 Mr. BELL. No.
 The CLERK. Mr. Bell votes no.
 Ms. Simon?
 Ms. SIMON. No.
 The CLERK. Ms. Simon votes no.
 Mr. Min?
 Mr. MIN. Min is a hard no.

The CLERK. Mr. Min votes no.
 Ms. Pressley?
 Ms. PRESSLEY. No.
 The CLERK. Ms. Pressley votes no.
 Ms. Tlaib?
 Ms. TLAIB. I decided to put my residents before Elon Musk, and I am voting no.
 The CLERK. Ms. Tlaib votes no.
 Mr. Chairman?
 Chairman COMER. I vote yes.
 The CLERK. Mr. Chairman votes yes.
 Mr. TIMMONS. Mr. Chairman, how am I recorded?
 Chairman COMER. Yes. Who is recognized?
 Mr. TIMMONS. Mr. Chairman, how am I recorded?
 Chairman COMER. Oh. Has Mr. Timmons been recorded?
 The CLERK. Mr. Timmons is not recorded.
 Mr. TIMMONS. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Timmons votes aye.
 Mr. PERRY. Mr. Chairman, how am I recorded? Representative Perry.
 The CLERK. Mr. Perry is not recorded.
 Mr. PERRY. Representative Perry votes aye.
 Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chairman, how is Boebert——
 The CLERK. Mr. Perry votes aye.
 Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chairman, how is Boebert recorded?
 The CLERK. Ms. Boebert is not recorded.
 Ms. BOEBERT. Boebert votes aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Boebert votes aye.
 Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Chairman, how is Burlison recorded?
 The CLERK. Mr. Burlison is not recorded.
 Mr. BURLISON. Votes aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Burlison votes aye.
 Mr. GROTHMAN. How is Mr. Grothman recorded?
 The CLERK. Mr. Grothman is not recorded.
 Mr. GROTHMAN. I will vote aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Grothman votes aye.
 Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, how is Mr. Gosar recorded?
 The CLERK. Mr. Gosar is not recorded.
 Mr. GOSAR. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Gosar votes aye.
 Mr. DONALDS. Mr. Chairman, how is Mr. Donalds recorded?
 The CLERK. Mr. Donalds is not recorded.
 Mr. DONALDS. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Donalds votes aye.
 Chairman COMER. Has Mr. Jack been recorded?
 The CLERK. Mr. Jack is not recorded.
 Mr. JACK. Mr. Chairman, I vote aye, please.
 The CLERK. Mr. Jack votes aye.
 Chairman COMER. Are there any other Members who have not been recorded?
 [No response.]
 Chairman COMER. Any Members who wish to change their votes?
 [No response.]
 Chairman COMER. Do we have a Member en route?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Will the clerk please tally the roll call?

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 20. The nays are 19.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it and the motion fails. And I might add, Mr. Ranking Member, you all could have invited Mr. Musk to be your Minority witness, but you all chose to have a college professor, which is what you normally choose to have as a witness at any hearing, and that is fine. But you all had an opportunity to invite Elon Musk and you chose not to, so.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, could I just respond?

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you. You make a point. But from our point of view, given the prominence Mr. Musk has been given by President Trump in this Administration, sweeping unprecedented powers, from our point of view, he is not a Minority witness. He ought to be a full Committee witness because of the prominence and the role he is playing and subject to the oversight and scrutiny of this Committee. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. I ask unanimous consent that Representative Nunn from Iowa be waived on to the Committee for today's hearing for the purpose of asking questions.

Without objection, so ordered.

The next order of business is ratifying the subcommittee roster for the 119th Congress. The clerks have distributed the roster electronically. I ask unanimous consent that the Committee approve the appointments and assignments as shown on the roster.

Without objection, so—the subcommittee roster is approved.

I am pleased to welcome an expert panel of witnesses who each bring experience and expertise that will be valuable to today's discussion. I would first like to welcome the 43d Governor of the great state of Iowa, Governor Kim Reynolds. Since assuming office in 2017, Governor Reynolds has instituted numerous reforms to reorganize state-level operations to better serve the people of Iowa.

I would now like to recognize Representative Nunn from Iowa to welcome the Governor here.

Mr. NUNN. Well, thank you, Chairman, and thank you very much to this Committee for having the Governor of Iowa join us today.

When President Trump was elected, he asked for three things: secure our community, unleash our natural energy, and make sure that we reform government to put money back in taxpayers' pocket. They need look no further than what Governor Reynolds has done with our state legislature when I served as a Senator in Iowa. During Governor Reynolds' time, she has helped lead us out of a massive Democrat-caused debt to be able to balance the state's budget, to be able to provide fiscal responsibility that rightsized our community, and provide tax cuts to put more of Iowans' hard-earned tax dollars right back in their britches. So, with this, Iowa is now one of the most well-managed citizen-led democracies, Mr. Chairman, in the world. It has resulted in a balanced budget of over \$9 billion in our general fund as well as a billion-dollar rainy day fund with more tax returns on the way after she led these three largest tax cuts in state history.

Governor Reynolds, we want to say thank you very much. As a citizen of Iowa, not only are you a great Governor, but your examples help us lead to real solutions that could address a \$36 trillion debt right here at the national level. All it takes is one hero from the Heartland to be able to come here and show Washington how business can get done. So, with that, Governor Reynolds, thank you for making government efficient again in Iowa. It is a best practice we can take in a playbook right here in D.C. We welcome you to the Committee.

Chairman COMER. Very good. Next, we have Tom Schatz, president of the Citizens Against Government Waste. Tom has spent over 36 years at Citizens Against Government Waste, identifying areas of waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement in government, and this helped save taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. Finally, we have William G. Resh, who is an associate professor at the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy. He has been a member of the USC faculty since 2014.

I want to thank each of the witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to you all's testimony.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), the witnesses will please stand and raise their right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

[A chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. Let the record show that the witnesses answered in the affirmative. Thank you all. You may take a seat.

We appreciate you all being here today and look forward to your testimony. Let me remind the witnesses that we have read your written statement, and it will appear in full in the hearing record. Please limit your oral statement to 5 minutes. As a reminder, please press the button on the microphone in front of you so that it is on, and the Members can hear you. When you begin to speak, the light in front of you will turn green. After 4 minutes, the light will turn yellow. When the red light comes on, your 5 minutes have expired, and we would ask that you please wrap up.

I now recognize Governor Reynolds for her opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE KIM REYNOLDS
GOVERNOR
STATE OF IOWA**

Governor REYNOLDS. First, let me thank Congressman Nunn for your kind words, and thank you for your service. Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Connolly, Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

Since this hearing is about government efficiency, I will get right to the point. Iowa was doing DOGE before DOGE was a thing. When I was elected to office in 2018, our tax structure was uncompetitive. Our top income tax rate was 8.98 percent, one of the highest in the Nation, as was our 12 percent corporate rate. Antiquated state policies made our tax code complex and hard to reform. Soon after President Trump signed TCJA into law, I signed legislation that eliminated Federal deductibility, cut rates across the board, provided for additional reductions in future years, and reduced the

number of income tax brackets. After four more historic reforms, Iowa taxpayers today pay a flat income tax rate of 3.8 percent. Our corporate rate is moving to 5.5 percent, and we have eliminated tax on retirement and inheritance income. Over 10 years, Iowans will save an estimated \$24 billion in a state with an annual budget of about \$10 billion.

But it is not enough just to cut taxes. You have to make sure that they are sustainable, especially if you want to keep reducing them. The growth they create helps, but you also need to keep spending in government in check, and I have worked closely with our General Assembly to do just that. In fact, the Cato Institute has ranked Iowa the most fiscally responsible state in the country for 3 years running, but that was not always the case. When we started our alignment work in 2022, state operations had not been reviewed for 40 years, and it showed. Layers of bureaucracy had accumulated over decades, expanding government beyond its core function. We were too big, too fragmented, and too inefficient.

One example became clear during COVID, where the separation of our public health and human services departments resulted in both duplication and gaps in service. We merged them into the Department of Health and Human Services in 2022, the first big step in our work to align state government. It was a successful proof of concept and a roadmap as we saw similar misalignment across state government. We had 11 separate state agencies operating workforce programs. A hundred and thirty-six professional licensing functions were spread across 11 agencies. Our administrative code had ballooned to more than 20,000 pages with 190,000 restrictive terms. At one point, I discovered that the state owned a cow-calf operation, and to make matters worse, it operated at a loss.

Given our limited staff and scope of the initiative, we partnered with an outside firm while bringing agency directors and their staff into the discussion early, and we asked the hard questions that bring about accountability and change. What is the core mission of each agency? How is it funded? How is it staffed, and what does it own? Are the programs working? How did the structure of the agency compare to other states? Is there duplication or misalignment?

Next, we benchmarked Iowa against our neighboring states as well as those with similar populations and budgets. We found that my 37-member cabinet was the most by far, while our expenditures on a per capita basis were the third highest. In 2023, we introduced a 1,300-page bill that passed with only one technical amendment and took effect less than a year after we began the process. I also initiated a moratorium on new rulemaking and ordered a comprehensive review of all rules already on the books. Together, these actions cut 21 agencies from my cabinet, eliminated 600 open positions, removed 1,200 regulations in year one, and identified 4,700 acres of state-owned farmland to sell.

Nearly all licensing functions are now in one agency, and we are currently in the process of consolidating six separate licensing platforms into one. One agency that operated out of 10 buildings now operates out of just one. Altogether, we have saved taxpayers \$217 million in just 18 months, surpassing our initial projections for the first 4 years, and our government is not just smaller, it is better.

Getting your medical license recognized used to take 65 days. Now it takes 3. Unemployment case rulings used to take 3 months. Now it takes 11 days. Moving our motor vehicle enforcement unit into the Department of Public Safety put a hundred more state troopers on the road.

After aligning agencies, we then streamlined our system of boards and commissions, cutting 83 boards, about a third of the boards and commissions. We also brought IT systems spread across 20 different agencies into one department. And last year, we consolidated 32 substance use and mental health regions into seven unified behavioral health regions, resulting in greater investment on the ground and treatment delivered to Iowans when and where they need it. And now we are taking yet another step. I recently announced my intention to launch an Iowa DOGE to continue reducing the cost of government, maximizing the return on taxpayers' investment.

Like most Americans, I am thrilled by the priority that President Trump is placing on shrinking government and making it work better. Not only do I believe Iowa is a model, but I am committed to doing everything I can to help in the months ahead, and I look forward to working with you and the Trump Administration to do just that. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, Governor. I now recognize Mr. Schatz for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF THOMAS A. SCHATZ
PRESIDENT
CITIZENS AGAINST GOVERNMENT WASTE**

Mr. SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Connolly for the opportunity to testify today. Citizens Against Government Waste was founded following the report of the Grace Commission under President Ronald Reagan, the last time there was a comprehensive review of the Federal Government by the private sector. The Commission made 2,478 recommendations that would save \$424.4 billion over 3 years. Since CAGW was created to follow up on the Grace Commission recommendations, we have helped save taxpayers \$2.4 trillion through the implementation of Grace Commission and other cost-saving recommendations.

The taxpayers' hard-earned money should be spent in the most effective manner possible, following the objectives set forth in statutes enacted by Congress and carried out by the Executive branch. Success should be measured by whether the intended results are being achieved. If that does not occur, the program should be re-evaluated to determine if it needs to be modified, consolidated, or terminated. The solution should not be to spend more money on that program, create another program, or duplicate what the private sector is already doing. The proper size of government can be determined after those actions are taken, but that is, unfortunately, not how it works now.

Despite the availability of recommendations from both within the government, including the Congressional Budget Office, Government Accountability Office, and Inspectors General, as well as non-governmental sources like CAGW's "Prime Cuts," which would save \$5.1 trillion over 5 years, not enough is being done. There is no

lack of ideas, just a lack of action by Congress to determine which programs are most effective and efficient, leading to the appropriate size and scope of the Federal Government.

President Trump campaigned on a platform of making the government more efficient, including his promise to create a Department of Government Efficiency. The establishment of DOGE along with the DOGE Subcommittee and House and Senate DOGE caucuses should lead to the adoption of policies that will establish more effective use of taxpayer dollars and more efficient delivery of government services. Another method to drive efficiency would be to give the President greater reorganization authority, as the Chairman has noted. This was first provided in 1947 when Congress established what became known as the Hoover Commission to develop recommendations to increase efficiency and improve the organizational structure of the government after World War II, and comparing the debt to GDP ratio then and now, it is fairly close, so it is certainly time to do this again. According to a 2012 congressional Research Service Report, Presidents used this authority regularly, submitting more than 100 plans between 1932 and 1984. The last President to receive reorganization authority was Ronald Reagan, and the last one to use it was Jimmy Carter.

In May 2024, GAO released its annual report on ways to reduce duplication, overlap, and fragmentation of programs. The report listed 112 new items and noted that \$667 billion had been saved since the first report was issued in 2011. CAGW has long maintained that Congress should not only hold hearings in this Committee but across committees that have multiple jurisdiction over a lot of the programs identified by GAO, and then vote on those recommendations, and GAO reports about duplicative spending provide other opportunities to improve efficiencies.

A May 10, 2023, GAO report found 133 Federal programs across 15 agencies that have the goal of increasing broadband access and bridging the digital divide. These programs should be assessed to determine which are inefficient and ineffective, and funds should then be directed to those programs that can deploy broadband to every remaining unserved and underserved business and household across the country that wishes to be connected to the internet. And broadband is one of many programs included in CAGW's critical waste issues for the 119th Congress, which was released this morning. The report contains 12 policy areas, including greater accountability and transparency, budget reform, earmarks, healthcare, privacy, technology, and telecommunications. I want to also remind the Committee of CAGW's concerns about the U.S. Postal Service, which we provided in testimony submitted for the record for the December 10, 2024, Oversight hearing.

Rightsizing government is an objective on which all Members of Congress should agree. It requires constant vigilance and oversight to determine if Federal tax dollars are being spent in the most effective and efficient manner and achieving intended objectives. Increased efficiency will go a long way to restore the public's confidence in the ability of the Federal Government to avoid as much waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement as possible.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Dr. Resh, and make sure your microphone is on.

Dr. RESH. OK. Sorry. Mr. Chairman, Ranking——

Chairman COMER. And if you do not care, pull it to you. It is OK, yes. Now we are in business.

Dr. RESH. All right.

Chairman COMER. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM G. RESH, PH.D
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC POLICY
AND MANAGEMENT
C.C. CRAWFORD PROFESSOR IN MANAGEMENT AND
PERFORMANCE
SOL PRICE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

Dr. RESH. Thank you. I am so sorry. So, Mr. Chairman, thank you for having me. Ranking Member Connolly and Committee Members, thanks for the opportunity to address you today on the critical issue of right-sizing government that takes place amongst recent administrative actions that I find somewhat troubling, not just myself, but according to the literature, the scholarship, and observations through history that show that these types of actions threaten integrity, effectiveness, and stability of our Federal workforce.

For decades, debates over the size of government have focused too narrowly on a headcount of civilian employees, which obscures a more pressing concern: the growing misalignment between Federal responsibilities and the government's capacity to manage them. While the number of civilian Federal employees has remained stable at around 2.4 million, not including postal workers, Federal spending has increased fivefold since the 1960's. More than \$759 billion was spent on contracts in 2023 alone, and this is relatively small in comparison to the last year of the first Trump Administration, where estimates were as high as \$1.2 trillion in contracts, meaning that much of what government does today is carried through private firms rather than through career civil servants. Some estimate that there is as many as three to four contract employees for every Federal civil servant, and this shift has weakened oversight, increased inefficiencies, and created accountability gaps, leaving taxpayers footing the bill for cost overruns on contracts, delays, and policy failures. They come not from incompetence of the civil service, but from incapacity.

At the same time, civil servants are underpaid relevant to their private sector counterparts, earning on average 23 percent less than similarly qualified professionals in the private sector. The salary gap combined with mounting political pressures and the expanding scope of government responsibilities has made it increasingly difficult to attract and retain top talent. This is particularly concerning given that 70 percent of Federal employees work in national security roles, and 80 percent serve outside of Washington providing vital services to the communities across the country. And despite these challenges, recent administrative actions threaten to destabilize the civil service further by increasing politicization and eroding the principles of professional nonpartisan workforce.

The so-called policy/career reclassification would strip job protections from tens of thousands of career civil servants, allowing them to be dismissed and replaced with political appointees at-will, and this risks creating a climate of fear and self-censorship, where professionals hesitate to provide objective, evidence-based advice for fear out of political retaliation. History and research are clear. Governments that rely on merit-based civil service systems perform better. They are less prone to corruption and deliver more effective public services. By contrast, increased politicization, substituting experienced professionals with short-term political loyalists reduces efficiency, complicates long-term planning, and increases the risk of policy failures.

Beyond inefficiency, politicization weakens the very mechanisms that ensure accountability and integrity in government. Civil servants are often the last line of defense against waste, fraud, and abuse, ensuring that government funds are spent wisely and in accordance with the law. When experienced professionals are replaced by individuals selected for political loyalty rather than expertise, government oversight erodes and leads to costly mismanagement and a decline in public trust.

This dynamic is not theoretical. It has played out in past administrations and has been extensively documented in research. Countries that move toward greater political control over bureaucracies see decline in effectiveness, increased regulatory capture, and greater difficulty in responding to crises. Conversely, nations that invest in independent professional civil service see better policy outcomes, stronger economic growth, and higher public confidence.

The U.S. has long benefited from a stable, merit-based civil service that has helped sustain democracy through times of war, economic upheaval, and national crises. Attempts to weaken the system, whether it is through mass firings, loyalty-based appointments, or the dismantling of institutional safeguards do not lead to a more effective government. Instead, they result in greater instability, inefficiency, and governance failures that harm all Americans.

In conclusion, any discussion of right-sizing government must grapple with the structural transformation that has already been underway. Rather than reducing the number of career civil servants or subjecting them to politically motivated purges, we should reinvest in the workforce to ensure that government functions effectively, remains accountable, and serves the public interest. The evidence overwhelmingly supports one clear lesson; that is, strengthening, not weakening the civil service has the surest path to effective and democratic government that works for all of us. Thank you very much.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. We will now begin our questions. The Chair recognizes Dr. Gosar from Arizona.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are here today to tame the labyrinth of the Federal bureaucracy. That is why I was elected, and, frankly, that is why President Trump was reelected this past November. More responsible government spending means less need for taxation on the American people. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have claimed cuts to waste, fraud, and abuse will include cuts to Social Security and Medicare. However,

promoting efficiency and cutting wasteful spending actually protects Social Security and Medicare by ensuring available and continued funding. And if they have any more doubts, I would invite them to sign on to my LASSO Act that actually puts these decisions out of the public arm and into the public's domain.

When Elon Musk acquired Twitter, now X, in 2022, he fired about 6,000 employees, or nearly 80 percent of his workforce, but there was no lapses in X's management, while perhaps only less community notes and less removal of lawful political speech. Elon Musk trimmed the fat on X, and we have the opportunity to do the same here in Washington.

Governor Reynolds, not only did you lead a successful state-level government reorganization, but you did it twice. Congratulations. My question to you is, how did you identify waste, and were members of the state legislature empowered to also identify those areas with you?

Governor REYNOLDS. Thank you for the question. It was definitely a collaborative effort. It started with the tax cuts, so we did comprehensive reform there. And as a manner to sustain it, then we needed to look at the overall government. When you coupled COVID on top of that and the inefficiencies that I saw in our response to COVID, it led us to start looking at processes in the state government, and they were commonsense changes, too.

When we were looking at licensing, when we were looking at IT spread across 20 different agencies—I mean, the list went on and on—it made sense to restructure it. So, what we did is, first of all, we brought our agencies in and their team and had them do an overall review of their operation, asking the tough questions that really leads to accountability and change. And then on top of that, because we are a small team, we also brought in an outside consultant to help us with the comparisons and help manage it, and then we worked closely with the legislature for any ideas that they may have. We spent a lot of time walking through the bill in its entirety. When we were working with our agencies, that gave us an opportunity to understand where some of the pushback might be, so we could also get in front of that with the answers to the questions that might be posed from realigning a state government.

But it has made us more efficient. It has made us more effective. It is common sense. I think the data is proving out. We are seeing it every day, so we will have data to actually point to on how we are more efficient and more effective. And we are taking dollars from the administration and from the bureaucracy, and we are actually putting it into programs, getting it on the ground and putting it into people. So, it has been very efficient from that perspective as well.

Mr. GOSAR. Well, I noticed you sold state-owned land to eliminate waste and generate revenue. Is that correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes. We had; I think it was about 5,400 acres that we were able to sell. I had a cow-calf operation with the Department of Corrections. We were not aware of that. Then to come to find out we were operating at a loss. You know, we need to get back to the core function of government, and as the bureaucracy continues to grow, the scope also grows with it, and that is when we start to see the inefficiencies.

Mr. GOSAR. Well, I tell you what. That is music to my soul because I have got a HEARD Act. It mimics what Harry Reid did in Southern Nevada. He found out that Las Vegas was surrounded by BLM. He could not grow it.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. GOSAR. And so, what they did is they found out that the Federal Government has the propriety to look at what the land is used for, does it have a purpose, and if not, it has to be sold. So, I think there is a great opportunity there.

Mr. Schatz, I want to touch base with you in regards to, the 2024 "Prime Cuts" report recommends that the National Park Service, Forest Service, and BLM suspend Federal land purchases until they effectively manage their currently owned land. I agree with you wholeheartedly. Do you generally agree that selling public land to states and local communities would eliminate unused assets, generate revenue, and provide an overall benefit to the Federal Government and to local communities?

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes, Congressman, and it would generate about \$15 billion over 3 years, so there is a lot of land out there. In fact, the government probably does not even know what it owns.

Mr. GOSAR. Yes.

Mr. SCHATZ. And it needs to get it done.

Mr. GOSAR. The one thing I really want to make a note of, and I am running out of time here, is the National Emergencies Act. We have spent \$12 trillion since Bill Clinton, and it is about one-third of our national debt. I would love to work with you in regard to cleaning these up, cleaning them out, and getting some aspects and assets back to the people. Thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member for 6 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your consideration. Governor Reynolds, welcome, and your story is a very impressive one. I was the Chairman of a county of 1.2 million people, one-third of your population, and what you talk about resonates with somebody like me, hands-on, trying to make sure things work.

Governor REYNOLDS. Right.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Iowa has a population, as I understand, of 3.24 million people, and you have got a state workforce of 16,700 full-time employees. Is that correct? That is correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Now, of course, with respect to the Federal Government, we are talking about 2.4 million, so it is not only a matter of scale. I mean, we are just talking about very different kinds of entities. That does not mean we cannot learn from a state like Iowa, but I do think that the challenges we face at the Federal level are formidably different than what we face in my county or your state. As I said, it does not mean we cannot learn from it, at all.

And I listened carefully to you. Is my understanding correct that in order to effectuate the reforms you proudly championed today, you put on the payroll your wealthiest donor who came in and decided what agencies to abolish, which cabinet members were to go,

how many people were to be fired, and other kinds of decision-making that was imbued with him or her? Is that how you did it in Iowa, your wealthiest donor took that lead?

Governor REYNOLDS. No, that is a complete misstatement, and first of all, we did it without any layoffs whatsoever. We made that commitment when we moved into our realignment.

Mr. CONNOLLY. No layoffs?

Governor REYNOLDS. Absolutely no layoffs. I was able to eliminate 600 open positions that had been open for over a year, but through the transition process and what we have been able to accomplish, we did that right now without laying off any state employees.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And excuse me, because my time is limited, Governor. I do not mean to be interrupting you. So, the idea that your wealthiest donor kind of shepherded all of this is false?

Governor REYNOLDS. That is false.

Mr. CONNOLLY. That is false, and you did not lay off people. You tried, in fact, to move people around, or?

Governor REYNOLDS. No, we made that commitment at the beginning of the process.

Mr. CONNOLLY. You made a commitment to that?

Governor REYNOLDS. First of all, these were commonsense changes. It was a realignment. It was——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Got it.

Governor REYNOLDS. [continuing]. Highlighting the cabinet members that I thought should be in the cabinet and making government operate more efficiently and reduce the amount of time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I think that is a very Iowan concept, too: commonsense.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And I like it. It is a non-ideological approach to governance.

Professor Resh, would it be fair to say that what you have heard from Governor Reynolds is distinctly different from what we are experiencing in the first 15 days of the Trump Administration with Elon Musk allegedly at the helm? And please speak loudly into that microphone so we can hear you.

Dr. RESH. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yes.

Dr. RESH. Quite simply, yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Very different?

Dr. RESH. It seems different, yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And would you say that it is unprecedented, unusual, and maybe even of dubious legality that so much authority and power has been vested in one individual who is an outside billionaire with no government experience, other than benefiting from government contracts, to wield this kind of power and influence and be firing people, laying off people, threatening to dismantle whole agencies, something that apparently Governor Reynolds actually actively tried to avoid, to get political buy-in and to try to create a spirit of cooperation?

Dr. RESH. It seems to me that the actions that are being promulgated by DOGE lack legal authority. I am not a legal scholar. I am a scholar of executive politics and public management. But from

what I can tell, this violates several legal authorities that are granted by Congress, not unilaterally by the President.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Governor Reynolds made a point of saying she worked with the legislature to effectuate the reforms, which always sounds to me like a pretty good idea. You want to work with your legislators. Here in Washington, there are laws on the books, you know. For example, you may want to dismantle the Agency for International Development, but Congress created AID, that agency, in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. And it seems to me that if you want to dismantle it or fold it into another agency, you got to come back to Congress and amend that Act. Do you think that is a fair statement?

Dr. RESH. I think that is a fair statement.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And likewise, when it comes to freezing funding for Federal agencies, the Impoundment Control Act of 1974 governs impoundment, and the Supreme Court ruling during the Nixon years made it very clear that the power of the purse is exclusively vested in the legislative branch of Congress under the Constitution of the United States. Is that a fair statement?

Dr. RESH. It is a fair statement, and it is the standing position of the courts.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I am sorry?

Dr. RESH. I said it is a fair statement, and it is the standing position of the courts.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Ms. Mace from South Carolina for 5 minutes.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has been a lot of pearl clutching over the last several days from my colleagues across the aisle on Donald Trump, Secretary Rubio, the Department of Government Efficiency's plan to reorganize the U.S. Agency for International Development, or, as we all now know, USAID. They are screaming about Elon Musk over there, but, hey, George Soros and his boy are OK. You know, they scream that we are all a threat to democracy when they have been systematically dismantling democracy before our eyes. They have been caught with their hand in the cookie jar, and there is no going back. So, I tell my colleagues across the other side, I will take your salty tears and sit right back down.

USAID has long strayed from its mission to effectively and efficiently administer aid to advance American interests. USAID has become rotten to its core, sacrificing the prudent use of taxpayer dollars at the altar of advancing radical centers for social and political agendas abroad, from discriminatory DEI initiatives to extreme gender ideology, to marginalize real, bona fide biological women. For decades, while homeless veterans sleep on our streets, our communities rebuild from natural disasters, and American families struggle to get by, USAID has pillaged and plundered the American treasury, essentially lighting American taxpayer dollars on fire, funding some of the dumbest, I mean, stupidest, just dumbest initiatives imaginable, all supported by the left, and that is why their party is crumbling.

Today, I am going to expose some of the initiatives USAID has funded over the years and ask each of you a yes or no question—if you believe these expenditures of American taxpayer dollars put America First. So, it will be “yes” or “no.”

USAID awarded \$2 million to strengthen trans-led organizations to deliver gender-affirming health care in Guatemala. So, to each of you this morning, does this advance the interests of American citizens paying for trannies in Guatemala to the tune of \$2 million? Yes or no? Governor?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. I have no position.

Ms. MACE. Of course you do not. OK. USAID awarded over \$750,000 to fund alleviating loneliness among migrant garment workers in India. Does this advance America’s interests? Governor?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. I have no position.

Ms. MACE. USAID awarded \$1.5 million for providing a gender-sensitive response to migration at the Venezuelan border. Does this advance America’s interests? Governor?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. I have no position.

Ms. MACE. Does this advance the interest? OK. So, USAID awarded \$4.3 million on October 1, 2023, to a group to fund comprehensive health services for men having sex with other men in South Africa. Does this advance the interests of American citizens? Governor?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. I have no position.

Ms. MACE. I bet you do not. OK. USAID awarded \$1.5 million to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in Serbia’s workplaces and business communities by promoting economic empowerment and opportunity for LGBTQI+ people in Serbia. Does this advance America’s interests?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. No position.

Ms. MACE. You have no idea, right? OK. USAID awarded over \$70,000 to a group to deliver a live musical event to promote the U.S. and Irish shared values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Does this advance the interests of America?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. No position.

Ms. MACE. No position or no clue? OK. USAID awarded \$1.5 million to fund strengthening community support structures to upscale LGBT rights advocacy in Jamaica. Does this advance our interests?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. No position.

Ms. MACE. USAID awarded \$28 million to a group to facilitate the economic insertion of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Peru and Ecuador. Does this advance our interests?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. No position.

Ms. MACE. OK. USAID awarded \$17.5 million to fund voluntary medical male circumcision overseas. Does this advance America's interest?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. No position.

Ms. MACE. I do not know what circumcision overseas has to do with America First either. USAID awarded nearly \$150,000 to fund HIV prevention services targeting men who have sex with men and transgender. Does this advance America's interests?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Dr. RESH. No position.

Ms. MACE. Yes. Unfortunately, I am limited to 5 minutes, but these are the programs Democrats are so desperate to save, our foreign assistance system is badly broken, and this ends now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, parliamentary inquiry.

Chairman COMER. Yes, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. The gentlelady has used a phrase that is considered a slur in the LGBTQ community and the transgender community. Let me please finish without an interruption.

Ms. MACE. Tranny, tranny, tranny. I do not really care. You want penises in women's bathrooms, and I am not going to have it.

Chairman COMER. OK.

Ms. MACE. No. Thank you. This is disgusting.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Let the gentleman state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you. To me, a slur is a slur, and here in the Committee, a level of decorum requires us to try, consciously, to avoid slurs. You just heard the gentlelady, actually, actively, robustly repeat it, and I would just ask the Chairman that she be counseled—that we ought not to be engaged—we can have debate and policy discussion without offending human beings who are our fellow citizens. And so, I would ask, as a parliamentary inquiry, whether the use of that phrase is not, in fact, a violation of the decorum rule.

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to be counseled by a man over men in women's spaces or men who have mental health issues dressing as women. I am not being counseled by some guy over that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. My inquiry is to the Chairman. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. OK. Order. The inquiry is about decorum. Decorum is at the discretion of the Chair.

Ms. MACE. That is mansplaining, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. I will be honest with the Ranking Member. I am not up to date on my politically correct LGBTQ terminology. We will look into that and get back with you on that. I do not know what is offensive and what is not. I do not know much about pronouns or offensive terms and that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman, we do not have to anymore.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So, I thank the Chair for his willingness to further engage in this matter.

Chairman COMER. All right. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Norton from Washington, DC, for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is only the second oversight hearing this Congress. The first one was about denigrating Federal employees. This one is about denigrating Federal employees, too.

The Trump Administration, including the Trump shadow government, seems intent on dismantling much of the Federal Government in violation of the Constitution, statutes, and regulations. The Administration has relentlessly attacked Federal employees, subjecting them to chaos and fear. The Administration has imposed a hiring freeze, offered deferred resignation, fired employees, put employees on leave, effectively established Schedule F, and ended telework and remote work. Our two hearings so far are designed to lay the predicate to gut the nonpartisan Federal civil service and to convert a significant portion of the remaining civil service into political appointees.

Federal workers deserve praise for their expertise, dedication, and service, not derision. Thousands of civil Federal servants have given their lives in the line of duty for the country. Instead of attacking Federal employees, this Committee should be considering bills to support the Federal workforce, such as my bill to combat Federal pay compression or my bill to make permanent the free identity protection coverage that Congress required OPM to temporarily provide to individuals whose Social Service [sic] numbers were potentially compromised during the OPM data breaches. As I said at our last hearing, this Committee can do better for the American people, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Will the gentlelady please yield to the Ranking Member?

Ms. NORTON. I will be glad to.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes the Ranking Member.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the Chairman.

Chairman COMER. It was 2 minutes and 10 seconds.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the gentlelady. So, Dr. Resh, could you elaborate just a little bit more on your answer to the previous question about, sort of, unelected, superannuated appointees who are not subject to the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate and have arrogated apparently to themselves, either with or without the acquiescence or consent of the President himself, enormous powers? I mean, could you elaborate a little bit on that, on how unprecedented that is, and what are the dangers? What could go wrong with that? Why should we be concerned? And please speak louder into that microphone.

Dr. RESH. Yes, sir. So, the problems that can arise from a lack of accountability are many. Particularly in the form of DOGE, we see a person that is leading it that is entangled in billions upon dollars of Federal contracts, has an empire that is regulated across various industries, across various agencies. Having a person that is potentially influencing where workforce cuts might take place, without any transparency as to the decisionmaking, potentiates conflicts of interest, particularly in those domains in which he is regulated or in which he has contracts with various agencies.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And interestingly enough, you heard Governor Reynolds, a testimony about her process. This is not how they did it in Iowa.

Dr. RESH. No, I am very impressed with her reforms, but it had nothing to do with politically connected individuals deciding.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And one of the cautions I heard you say is we have got to also be concerned about conflicts of interest when that same individual, imbued with all of these powers, has government contracts.

Dr. RESH. I would say that across the contract state, there are laws, but they are very weak in terms of regulating the extent to which political donations can be made by large contractors.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Grothman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you much. A lot of other people have weighed in on Mr. Musk, so I felt I should weigh in just as briefly. In another committee, we are waiting on an opportunity to publicize a study showing that on this transgender lifestyle, the more you talk about it, the more you get. And if you do not talk about it, like they do not in Europe, there are not that many people going into it, and, therefore, I would like to thank Mr. Musk and Mr. Trump. When they found out that we were talking about this stuff or apparently promoting it in other countries, they slammed the brakes on that agency really quick, which was, I think, the right and moral thing to do. And it is unfortunate the U.S. Government was apparently engaging in activity that would increase the people choosing that lifestyle.

Now, I was in the state legislature for many years before I got here, Governor Reynolds, and, quite frankly, one of the reasons I ran for this job is, again and again, I wanted to do things at the state level, and was told I could not because it was Federal law. I wonder if you can give us some examples of things, and whether it be health care, education, welfare, what have you, or you wish you could do things in Iowa, but cannot do them because of Federal mandates.

Governor REYNOLDS. The list is long, especially as we have aligned government and become more efficient. You know, I would say the lack of accountability was what I saw in the complete review that we did. We reviewed over 800 agency programs in which there was not one KPI, there was not one metric, there was not one accountability measure tied to any of it whatsoever with the existing programs. And so, nothing comes before me now from my agency, my cabinet, without a KPI and a metric tied to it if they want to, you know, continue the program or if they want to add to it.

But I can talk about a couple different things. SNAP would be one example. You know, we have an antiquated system, as does a lot of the governments, especially the Federal Government. And right now, we have about 500 workers that are doing eligibility, manually, validating it from a dozen different points. And we have, of course, have a fairly high error rate, of which there are fines attached to a timely delay, a timeliness and error rate. I have asked FNS for just the opportunity to issue an RFP so I can get a system that would allow me to use technology to collect all of the different data points, reduce the timeline and that error rate and the fines that my state is being charged. And I have been waiting for over a year to get an approval just on an RFP, to go out and select a vendor to be able to offer that, and then it has to go back to them for a sign off on that.

CMS is just another nightmare. We have waited up to 3 years to get managed care rate approvals. I have a Thrive platform that I am trying to put in place, which is a public-private partnership, which would allow faith-based organizations and nonprofits to help lowans in need, to partner with what we are doing at the government, at the state level. And we have, again, waited over a year just to simply get them to sign off on the RFP so that I can implement technology and serve my constituents, especially those in need, in a better manner, and, you know, we see this time and time again, especially with CMS. Just the delay in getting the answers, there is a cost of money in that, and we are not able to effectively serve the citizens in our reflective states.

Mr. GROTHMAN. If you could, are there ways you would change these programs that you feel would reduce dependency, reduce the number of people on the programs, but cannot because of Federal law?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, I cannot even move forward. I mean, I am getting fined because I cannot aggregate the data. We collect a lot of data at the state level, but we cannot aggregate it, and I am trying to stand up a system that would allow us to do that, and they are preventing us from doing that by simply signing off on an RFP so that we can move forward.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Give me—

Governor REYNOLDS. A block grant would be another example. Department of Education is a great example of how we could do things differently with the ESSA title funding formula. There are 10 different streams. They all have different funding formulas. They all have different requirements. They all have different outcomes. And if we could streamline those into one formula with consistency across it, and block grant that back to the states, and give us the flexibility to be innovative and to really meet the various needs in our states. They are all different. We can do that.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Do you think you could get people out of the special education system quicker if you have more flexibility?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes, so that is another example. We could tie the two together, and it could be based on the state plan. The AEA, Area Agency Educators, are what run the special education program in our state. It is about \$530 million with state and Federal funding. Not one person that I talked to, not a school board, not a teacher, not anybody in the AEA system could tell me the

cost of providing a service. I mean, so, when you continue to grow government, those types of questions, those types of analysis, are not even taking place. They just need more money, or they want to know if they have spent all of it.

There is never an evaluation that is done. There is never an accountability, there is no transparency, and that is why we are getting the results that we are getting. Our scores are horrible, and when I try to bring some accountability to the system, shut down. I mean, so it is happening at the state and Federal level, but if we can work collectively together, I think we can get the results that we are looking for.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you very much. A big mistake whenever we do anything on a Federal level.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Lynch from Massachusetts.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As former Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security on this Committee many years ago, and as a Member for many years as well, we had the opportunity to work extensively with Members on both sides of the aisle, Mr. Grothman and others, to conduct oversight of our Federal security clearance process. We had a very bad incidence in the 2018 timeframe where our security clearance process that was conducted at OPM was hacked by the Chinese. And so, they were able to get the identities of anybody who had appeared to try to get security clearance. It was a major intelligence failure. So, in 2020, Members on this Committee and others, especially the Intelligence Committee, made an agreement that we shifted that responsibility over to DOD. And so, since then, since 2020, the Department of Defense—it is called the Counterintelligence and Security Agency, DCSA—has been conducting those security clearance applications, and they have been doing very, very well compared to what was going on before.

The problem is this, that on day one of his new term, President Trump took an end-run around our entire national security apparatus by allowing White House counsel to grant new White House officials immediate security clearance at the top secret and sensitive compartmental information level, even though many of those individuals were not treated with the traditional vetting by the FBI. So, top secret SCI security clearance allows individuals to access classified intelligence sources and methods. So, these are some of our Nation's most sensitive pieces of information, which could cause exceptionally grave damage to U.S. national security and to our intelligence personnel and others who cooperate with them if it was exposed.

Dr. Resh, to make matters worse, Mr. Trump has now given Elon Musk and his so-called DOGE team unfettered access to Treasury Department, and Office of Personnel Management, and other Federal agencies and systems that manage personnel files, confidential payment systems, and highly classified information. What are the risks? What are the risks of sidestepping the existing security clearance process run by DOD that has worked very, very well to protect our intelligence personnel?

Dr. RESH. I think some of the risks are substantial, particularly given the extent to which this data could be used in training

foundational models that Mr. Musk and his team could use to do this data analysis. I have no idea, actually no one has any idea exactly what servers are being used with the access to this data. There is privileged information that the DOGE team could use to position themselves or their private interests as players in government contracts for satellite deployment, defense technology, even orbital logistics. He could leverage his ties to Trump to position his own foundational model, xAI, to have exclusive access to protected individual government data to train the models that are really black box, could wield the advantage to undercut competition, shape the AI landscape in fairly frightening ways, if this private individual information and government protected data is being used to train those models.

Now, this is speculation, pure speculation because I do not know, and neither do you, and frankly, no one does. But beyond creating better-performing models, exclusive access to government data would give significant edge in securing long term contracts——

Mr. LYNCH. But, Dr. Resh?

Dr. RESH. Yes.

Mr. LYNCH. Beyond the speculation, why is it important that sensitive information is only handled by those who have been vetted and granted access to that information?

Dr. RESH. Well, for exactly these reasons, so that it cannot be used for corruptible purposes, and, yes, there are positions in place for our Federal career employees to pass through various ethics and conflicts of interest thresholds that SGEs just simply do not have.

Mr. LYNCH. OK. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Dr. Foxx from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I thank our witnesses for being here today to talk about this important subject.

Governor Reynolds, as you are aware, our sprawling Federal Government has over 400 executive branch agencies and subagencies and nearly 1,000 Federal boards and commissions. We must reduce the burden and cost of the Federal Government. With your government reorganization reforms in the state of Iowa, you were able to reduce the number of cabinet level departments and eliminate many state boards and commissions. What was the impact of your reorganization effort?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, thank you for that question. I appreciate it very much. Actually, just the efficiencies and just the culture in state government—I now have a cabinet that communicate, that work together, that come up with innovative ideas on their own. And, you know, with the 37-member cabinet, I would not know the people that were in the room, and it is just not manageable. Thirty-seven direct reports is not manageable. And so, to be able to streamline the cabinet and to lay out a vision and get them excited about the direction that we are taking the state. And whether it is the time that it takes to get a physician's license—it went from 65 days to 1—whether it talks about when you are getting a building permit—you used to have to go to three different agencies, now you go to one—to be able to have IT all in one de-

partment. When that cyberattack hit with CrowdStrike, because we had all of our IT in one agency, we were able to get the state of Iowa back up and going shortly after lunch, and some of the states were out for weeks and businesses. So, we are more responsive. We are more effective. We are serving citizens better.

And again, not only are we returning taxpayer dollars back to our citizens and continuing to reduce the tax burden on them, but we are also utilizing those dollars in a better manner. We are reducing the administrative cost. When you add Federal administrative costs, and then when you have three different agencies that you are running through, each one of them are taking an administrative cost off of the top. And so, by consolidating and realigning, that puts that money back into the programs, back into the ground, and back into serving Iowans, and so, and it also gives me the visibility now that I have into the various agencies because of the reduction. We can continue to get better, and we are continuing to make changes, and we will, and a lot of those are coming directly from the cabinet.

Ms. FOXX. Let me follow up a little bit. Given your successful reorganization, what advice do you have for the Trump Administration to reduce the cost and size of the government, and what advice do you have for Congress to work with the Trump Administration to do this?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, do not buy into the fact that you cannot do it. You can do it, and it needs to be done. You know, there is just so much waste at all levels of government, at the Federal, at the state, and at the local levels, and we are all serving the same constituency. We need to do it better. Every time there is a duplication, that is a cost to the taxpayer. So, we need to think about it holistically, and we need to think about how we can streamline the way in which we are providing these services. I am a big advocate for block grants back to the states. Again, I think that, you know, reduces a lot of the overhead, a lot of the bureaucracy. It takes an army of people to manage the Federal programs that are coming in, especially with Department of Education, and then the school districts, also, have to take people off the line aside on really educating our students, and they are doing compliance instead of working on instruction, so it makes us all better.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Governor, for being a shining light for us.

Mr. Schatz, the Grace Commission, created by President Reagan in 1982, claimed that if its recommendations were followed, the national debt would have been \$1.9 trillion by the year 2000. Its recommendations were not followed. Instead, the debt reached \$5.6 trillion in 2000 and skyrocketed to over \$36 trillion today. How can President Trump, DOGE, and Congress ensure that today's government reorganization and reform efforts actually get implemented and start reducing our massive debt?

Mr. SCHATZ. Thank you, Representative Foxx. The Grace Commission did save money. President Reagan had \$100 billion immediately by executive action in 10 years, \$240 billion, and again over time, \$2.4 trillion from the Grace Commission and other cost-saving recommendations by CAGW. It takes Congress and the executive branch working together, 400 agencies, a thousand commis-

sions. That is far too much. The budget has only been balanced 5 times in the last 50 years. Think about that. If you are a family and you only balanced your budget 5 times in 50 years, you are pretty much broke, and whatever and however it gets done, something needs to be done. And it may not be comfortable for a lot of people, but it really is time to move forward quickly, because if we do not, it is our children and grandchildren that will suffer. Social Security is already spending more than it takes in, so a lot of examples of what needs to be fixed and quickly.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Schatz. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Krishnamoorthi from Illinois.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, Mr. Schatz. On the campaign trail, Donald Trump said on August 15, 2024, "Grocery prices have skyrocketed. When I win, I will immediately bring down prices starting on day one." You do not dispute that, right?

Mr. SCHATZ. That was the statement, yes.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Unfortunately, the price of groceries and eggs have only risen since Donald Trump took office. According to the USDA, the wholesale cost of a dozen eggs has increased from \$6.59 on Inauguration Day, until now it is \$7.53, a 14-percent increase. Again, you do not dispute that, right?

Mr. SCHATZ. No.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. I assume you are not happy with this particular increase either, right?

Mr. SCHATZ. No. I wish the bird flu was not around, but it is.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Well, I am glad you brought that up. According to PBS and Axios, some of the reasons for high grocery prices and high egg prices are avian flu and recalls related to salmonella and listeria. You do not dispute that, right?

Mr. SCHATZ. Correct.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. My staff went back and checked the hundreds of executive orders that have been issued by Donald Trump, and yet, not a single one has mentioned the words "avian flu." You do not dispute that, right?

Mr. SCHATZ. As far as I know, that is correct.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. And not one has mentioned shutting down salmonella, right?

Mr. SCHATZ. I do not know if you can shut down salmonella, but I guess so.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Or combating salmonella?

Mr. SCHATZ. Again, if you say so.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. And not one has mentioned listeria?

Mr. SCHATZ. Again, if you say so.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Well, I do not see a single executive order that will do anything to address high grocery prices or egg prices. This hearing is about rightsizing the Federal workforce. I think we should rightsize the cost of eggs, Mr. Schatz.

Governor Reynolds, in your testimony, you said that the state of Iowa hired an "outside firm" to assist you with your efforts to modernize Iowa state government, right?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Of course, at no time did you allow this outside firm to ever control Iowa state payment systems, right?

Governor REYNOLDS. Correct.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. And of course, you did not at any time give this outside firm access to the private personal information of all Iowans in the state's payment systems, did you?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Of course not. Let us talk about what has happened with DOGE for a moment. According to this letter, which was sent by the Treasury Department, Jonathan Blum of the Treasury Department, a DOGE affiliate of Elon Musk, is now "a special government employee with access to the coded data of the Fiscal Services Payment System." This is the most important Federal payment system in the Nation, responsible for making \$6 trillion in payments every year to hundreds of millions of Americans. And just moments ago, *Politico* just disclosed that DOGE now has access to all Medicare and Medicaid payments as well. Now, Elon Musk is in charge of DOGE, Governor Reynolds. He has not been confirmed by the Senate to any position in the Federal Government, right?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. And he has not been elected by anybody to anything, right?

Governor REYNOLDS. Correct.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. He has not, to your knowledge, given a financial disclosure to Congress, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Not that I am aware of.

[Poster]

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Ma'am, I want to bring your attention to something very disturbing that Musk just recently tweeted out. As we see at this visual, he said, "The DOGE team is rapidly shutting down illegal payments to Lutheran Family Services." Musk retweeted a post from Michael Flynn likening Lutheran Family Services to "a money laundering operation." Governor, you do not believe that the Lutheran Church or Lutheran Family Services is a money laundering operation, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Look, I can tell you that in Iowa, the taxpayers of Iowa hold me personally responsible and accountable for state government, just as they hold President Trump accountable for his——

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. But Lutheran Church is not a money laundering operation, right?

Governor REYNOLDS. [continuing]. As the President of the United States, and the election that——

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Ma'am, Des Moines, Iowa, is the home to the largest Lutheran congregation of the United States.

Governor Reynolds. [continuing]. I think Americans overwhelmingly, Iowans overwhelmingly——

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Is the Lutheran Church a money laundering operation?

Governor REYNOLDS. Listen.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Of course not.

Governor REYNOLDS. First of all, every program should be looked at, and that is what we are trying to do.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. OK. But Lutheran Family Services has some connection to money laundering. Is that what you are suggesting?

Governor REYNOLDS. I am not saying that, but I said every—

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Yes or no question. Is it a money laundering operation?

Governor REYNOLDS. It is not a yes or no question. I cannot speak to that.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. You cannot speak to that. Oh, my God. Let us go to this USAID issue. The USAID purchases crops from Iowa farmers. Recently, Elon Musk called it a criminal organization. Purchasing crops from Iowa farmers is not a criminal activity, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. I am the Governor of Iowa. I do not have anything—

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Yes or no. Is that a criminal activity?

Governor REYNOLDS. I am the Governor of Iowa, and I do not work with USAID. It is not a position that I am familiar with.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Is purchasing crops from Iowa farmers a criminal operation?

Governor REYNOLDS. In general, purchasing crops from Iowans is not.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. Governor Reynolds and Mr. Schatz, thanks for being here. In 2021, Governor Reynolds, you led the state of Iowa in challenging OSHA's unconstitutional private sector COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the filed lawsuit by Governor Reynolds and Governor Reynolds' November 5, 2021, press release be entered into the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. In that suit, Iowa, Arizona—my state—and nine other states argued that the Federal Government lacks the constitutional authority under its enumerated powers to issue this mandate, and its attempt to do so unconstitutionally infringes on the state powers expressly reserved by the Tenth Amendment. That is what the lawsuit said, Governor, and I agree with that, and guess who else agreed with it? The courts agreed with it. And it was the same vaccine mandate that led me to introduce my legislation, which is pending. It is called NOSHA, which would return to the states the authority to regulate workplace health and safety. And I notice that Iowa and Arizona, along with 20 other states, currently operate under an OSHA state plan.

Governor REYNOLDS. Right.

Mr. BIGGS. Is it correct that to approve a state plan, OSHA certifies that the state's workplace health and safety plans exceed Federal requirements?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. And Iowa, like Arizona, has maintained an approved state plan since 1985.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. Do you believe that state officials and the people of Iowa are better positioned to set workplace health and safety standards than the Federal Government?

Governor REYNOLDS. I do.

Mr. BIGGS. If the power to set these standards were returned fully to the states, would you maintain Iowa's existing high standards for workplace safety, or would you make it your mission to put your constituents at risk of danger in the workplace?

Governor REYNOLDS. I would keep it as the exemplar as it is right now.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. Now, let us go to a different topic, kind of where you have been when my colleague would not let you answer questions, but we will try to get there here. So, our Nation is \$36 trillion in debt with a structural deficit; that is a structural deficit, not a cyclical deficit, of \$2 trillion each year, and it is rising. Just last year, for the first time, payments on interest on our debt loan eclipsed our defense budget. Meanwhile, we are losing hundreds of billions of dollars annually to waste, fraud, abuse, improper payments, et cetera.

Mr. Schatz, thanks for your testimony today. If you are tasked with stopping taxpayers from being defrauded in transfer payment programs, could that be accomplished without a thorough review of how the Federal Government actually sends money out the door?

Mr. SCHATZ. Absolutely not. In order to determine how the money is being spent, somebody has to see what it looks like, and that has been a big problem for a long time, is no one has looked at it. They just make the payments, and they do not prevent it from being wasted when it goes out of the door.

Mr. BIGGS. Governor Reynolds, you know, you have done great work in Iowa. I have watched it. Your model that you provided for the country is fantastic. Did your reorganization include reviews and improvements to state systems focused on stopping waste, fraud, and abuse, as Mr. Schatz described?

Governor REYNOLDS. It absolutely did, and with the realignment and the visibility, as I said earlier, that I now have into each agency, it gives us even more opportunities to continue to refine and make our systems better. There is money in the system. We are just not using it efficiently and effectively, and there is no accountability, there is no transparency, and this has allowed us to bring that to the forefront.

Mr. BIGGS. Right. And so, I am going to ask you, Governor Reynolds, and then you, Mr. Schatz, to respond to this. When you get an opportunity to look at line-by-line budgeting, where the expenses go, that allows you to make adjustments to what is really critical on fraud, waste, duplicative programs, et cetera?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes, especially the duplicate and the fraud. It allows us to review them line-by-line and make decisions accordingly.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. Mr. Schatz?

Mr. SCHATZ. That is correct. In fact, the Federal Government does not have anything online where taxpayers can see exactly how every penny is being spent. Ohio has an Ohio checkbook. You can look it up online. There were so many things that are not done here the way they are done, not just in the private sector, but

among the states. And I know there has been efforts to modernize technology with 80 percent of the IT being legacy systems. Government is far behind in providing the transparency taxpayers need. That is part of what they are trying to do.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. So, I am actually baffled that instead of cheering the Administration's efforts to conduct a thorough and necessary review of the systems, they are receiving, you know, these doomsday scenarios, these statements that they want to stop it, and I do not know why you want to stop it. I mean, in my home state of Arizona, we actually do the same thing. You can go online and you can see a line-by-line. I asked for a line-by-line, one single agency. I just wanted one agency; can you give me a line-by-line budget to look at? They brought me two books like this, and none of them were line-by-line. They did not cover every program within that agency. They did not describe everything that was there. This is what we have to correct if we are going to get out of our structural deficit hole. And I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, witnesses.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Khanna from California.

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Schatz, you have said that you believe that the Department of Education should not exist, that you grew up without the Department of Education, had a good education, and you believe it should go to the states and local government. Is that an accurate representation of your position?

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes.

Mr. KHANNA. I just want to understand clearly where you stand. So, that would mean that you oppose any Title I funding that helps many public schools. It is about \$18 billion. Two-point-eight million American students are impacted. Yes or no. Would you be for cutting that \$18 billion?

Mr. SCHATZ. I did not say to eliminate the programs within the Department of Education. I said the Department itself should be eliminated. That money should be——

Mr. KHANNA. So, where would you stand on the Title I funding?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, that money should be assessed to determine whether it is being used effectively. Governor Reynolds mentioned how many different ways that money could be spent.

Mr. KHANNA. But right now, would you want that money paused, or do you think the money should be disbursed, the \$18 billion?

Mr. SCHATZ. I think it is something that Congress needs to determine in the administration——

Mr. KHANNA. Yes. Congress, not the——

Mr. SCHATZ. Both. Look——

Mr. KHANNA. No, but it is a simple question. Do you think the \$18 billion that Congress has appropriated and authorized should be disbursed?

Mr. SCHATZ. At the moment, it should be disbursed because that has been the law to disburse it.

Mr. KHANNA. And you are for examining it and then possibly cutting it?

Mr. SCHATZ. If there is a more effective way—look, spending has gone up, test scores have gone like this, or down.

Mr. KHANNA. Do you understand the difference between correlation and causation?

Mr. SCHATZ. What has happened is that spending has gone higher, education has not improved. That is the answer.

Mr. KHANNA. Yes, but they are also the state budget because—I do not want to get into the difference between correlation and causation, but just a simple question on Title I. So, you would be for examining it, but possibly cutting it, and that is your testimony.

Mr. SCHATZ. That is possible. Everything in the Federal Government needs to be reexamined.

Mr. KHANNA. OK. Pell Grants: 7,395 of the neediest low-income students annually get these grants. It has helped about 6.7 million students. Would you be for cutting Pell Grants?

Mr. SCHATZ. I think, again, it needs to be looked at and examined to determine if it is effective.

Mr. KHANNA. So, possibly cutting them?

Mr. SCHATZ. Anything is possible and——

Mr. KHANNA. OK. What about——

Mr. SCHATZ [continuing]. That is a different category, that is an entitlement, that is not discretionary.

Mr. KHANNA. So, you do believe they should be disbursed today?

Mr. SCHATZ. One of the problems with programs like Pell Grants are that they are not examined as much as they should be.

Mr. KHANNA. Do you agree, though, that Elon Musk—I have just been going back and forth with him on Twitter

—he said, “Don’t a dick.” I said, “Make sure you follow the Constitution.” But do you agree that he has no authority to stop payments on anything that Congress has authorized and appropriated?

Mr. SCHATZ. I think that is being tested, but I think, generally, that should be correct.

Mr. KHANNA. If he were asking you, would you advise him to not stop payments that have been authorized and appropriated by Congress?

Mr. SCHATZ. My statement said that Congress has appropriated money or provided money, and there should be an examination of the results of how that money is being spent. That is what I think should be done.

Mr. KHANNA. I missed the earlier procedural vote. I just want to make clear. I think that Mr. Musk should come and testify before this Committee to explain that he is not going to stop payments, at all, for money that Congress has authorized and appropriated. Now, the IDEA Program that is about \$14.2 billion—would you stop the funding or cut the funding for the IDEA Program that helps kids with disabilities?

Mr. SCHATZ. Again, something that Congress needs to review to determine if it is achieving its mission. That is the whole point of everything that we have been talking about.

Mr. KHANNA. Now, you realize that lot of local and state governments complain because the IDEA Program was supposed to be funded at 40 percent. Jared Huffman, my colleague, has a bill to do that. We only fund it at 15 percent. The school districts complain that they have an unfunded mandate, and you are saying maybe we should cut even more than the 15 percent?

Mr. SCHATZ. I did not say cut. I said it should be examined to determine if it is being effective and whether the money should go back to the states entirely.

Mr. KHANNA. Do you believe it is being effective?

Mr. SCHATZ. I think the Department of Education has proven that it has not provided the results that Congress wants to provide.

Mr. KHANNA. I have got 1 minute. Do you believe in these three things: Title I funding, Pell Grants, and IDEA—tell me if you think they have been effective or have not been effective. IDEA grants?

Mr. SCHATZ. I am honestly not familiar with that program as much as some of the others.

Mr. KHANNA. OK. I mean, that is——

Mr. SCHATZ. But that is also an answer that——

Mr. KHANNA. Pell Grants?

Mr. SCHATZ. Pell Grants have provided support, but, again, everything needs to be re-examined.

Mr. KHANNA. Title I funding?

Mr. SCHATZ. Again, the same thing. We have got a \$36 trillion debt, we have \$2 trillion deficit, so that is all combined in there.

Mr. KHANNA. Well, the Department of Education is a very small percent of the funding. It is the Defense Department spending that is the big part. I appreciate you are at least telling Musk that he should not stop these payments that have been authorized by Congress. I hope Elon will come in and explain that. He will not do that, but I am concerned that you want to cut programs like the IDEA Act, possibly, that are helping kids with disabilities across America.

Mr. SCHATZ. I did not say that, Congressman. What I did say was—look, part of the problem is everybody says this is only a small percentage of spending, and then you get a \$36 trillion debt.

Mr. KHANNA. Yes, because the big items are defense and the tax breaks for the wealthy.

Chairman COMER. OK. The gentleman's time has expired.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Higgins from Louisiana.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a lot to cover and not a lot of time to do it in.

I would like to enter for the record, please, a letter from the Associated Builders and Contractors of America regarding merit-based hiring, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My brothers and sisters on both sides of the aisle, we have a historical trend in our Nation. We have an opportunity to address legitimately from both liberal and conservative perspectives. I think it should be embraced because, generally speaking, we started losing our country about 40 years ago regarding the accelerated accumulation of debt. And this coincides, of course, with the massive growth of the Federal Government, and this coincides, of course, with the ongoing increasing infringement upon individual liberties, rights, and freedoms, and movement away from the sovereignty of our states regarding their ability to handle their business, reflective of the Tenth Amendment, might I add, which reserves to the states all authorities not specifically enumerated to the Federal Government or prohibited to the states by Congress or the Constitution.

So, I mean, ladies and gentlemen, President Clinton—when you have a unified government, when you have either party in majority control in the House, the Senate, and the White House, that is op-

portunity to really address the trajectory that won in our country. President Clinton was not going to reduce the size and scope of the Federal Government. President Bush was not going to reduce the size and scope of the Federal Government. President Obama was not going to do that. You have a unique moment in history right now. We have an obligation to address the trajectory that has been established over the last four decades. This is a trajectory toward doom for our country. It is unsustainable.

So, we have an executive branch that is pumping the brakes, and this is something that this town is very uncomfortable with, and, quite frankly, is new territory. It is a new exercise for our country in modern history. So, there is going to be maybe some wild steering, shall we say, when you are applying the brakes for the first time in modern history, but I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to grasp what is going on here. We are trying to save our republic from itself.

Governor Reynolds, I would like to ask you about your role. Your beautiful work reducing your own executive branch from 37 cabinet level departments to 16, is exactly the kind of thing we are trying to do. You saved your state a lot of money. You changed your trajectory of spending. You reestablished financial stability and economic prosperity because of your conservative approach, which is what we are trying to do. President Trump and Mr. Musk as an ambassador of common sense for President Trump, to look hard at the practices of our executive branches and to reduce their size and scope.

Governor Reynolds, I have a formula, essentially, that transitions Federal service back to the sovereign states. We can save a lot of money doing this. What are your thoughts on shifting Federal responsibilities away from the massive Federal Government to the sovereign states—generally speaking, agencies like EPA, FEMA, Bureau of Prisons? How would that work in your state, ma'am?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, we would welcome that. Again, and especially with the alignment, I think we are positioned very well to do that, so I appreciate what I see happening with DOGE. As I indicated in my remarks, I am standing up Iowa DOGE so we can continue to bring the private sector in to examine the way that we are doing business. Government has to operate more like a business. It had been 40 years—40 years—since we even looked at the structure of government in Iowa. It was ripe for reform. You know, they never eliminate a program. They never do away with one. Once it is started, it stays. If it is not working, they think more money is the answer to it, so we keep it. If it does not work, there are really no metrics ever tied to anything, but the ongoing thought is, if we put a little bit more money into it, eventually it is going to work.

So, I believe that states are well suited to implement block grants with accountability, with transparency, with metrics, with KPIs, so that we can report back to the Federal Government the results that we are seeing from the opportunity to take those streamlined dollars and be innovative and be effective, whether it is the Department of Education, FEMA. I had three Presidential disaster declarations in 2 months this last spring.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes, ma'am. Thank you. My time has expired. Governor, thank you for the work that you are doing. Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Brown from Ohio.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this very moment, an unelected, unaccountable billionaire is raiding our government, and instead of raising the alarm, the Oversight Committee—let me repeat that—the Oversight Committee is running cover as their President strips the government for parts. Two weeks in, here is where we are at:

President Trump attempted to freeze funding for vital programs, tried to make it easier to fire tens and thousands of Federal workers, pressured more to resign, and has attempted to bust union contracts. Meanwhile, Elon Musk, who has been tasked with running a fake governmental department, now has access to the Federal Payment System, and apparently the personal information of every American. And none of this is happening with congressional approval, and apparently my colleagues, the Republicans on this committee, also want it to happen without any congressional oversight. This is no way to govern, but they know that. Instead, they want to bully and intimidate Federal workers into submission. They want to replace experienced workers who are loyal to the country with lackeys loyal to one man.

The truth is that the civil service is filled with loyal, dependable, and knowledgeable folks. They are people who sacrifice for our country and keep the government ticking for the American people. They ensure Social Security payments arrive on time, inspect our food and water to keep it safe, care for our veterans, crack down on corporate fraud, and track deadly outbreaks like the bird flu. Cutting these jobs does not make government leaner. It makes America weaker and it makes life harder for everyday people.

Look at what happens when the government is stripped down to the bone. In Ohio, Social Security field offices are on the verge of collapse. Recently, a field office in my district had to close its doors due to severe staffing shortages. The Social Security workforce has shrunk in the last 2 decades, but at the same time, its workload has increased by 25 percent. We have asked Social Security workers to do more with less, and they have somehow managed because public servants are not the enemy. They are the people keeping this country running, and this assault on them is an assault on all of us.

So, Governor Reynolds, thank you for joining us today. I want to ask you a series of "yes" or "no" questions. In 2023, did you sign a bill to gut the state auditor's ability to hold you and the state government accountable? Yes or no.

Governor REYNOLDS. A bill was signed to restrict—to address—

Ms. BROWN. I take that as a yes.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Ms. BROWN. Iowa law has a provision to hold lawbreakers in government accountable for sexual harassment, but your administration has paid out millions of dollars in settlements for harassment. This has cost the taxpayers in your state. Is that rightsized government? Yes or no.

Governor REYNOLDS. Changes have been made to address that, but previous, that was a previous——

Ms. BROWN. Reclaiming my time. Mr. Chair, I seek to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record this *Iowa Public Radio* article entitled, “Iowa Will Pay \$4.15 Million in Finance Authority Sex Harassment Settlements,” into the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. BROWN. Now, during my colleague’s question line, you stated that every program should be looked at. However, you signed a school voucher bill that sends \$100 million of taxpayer dollars intended for public schools to private schools without any independent oversight of how this money is spent. Yes or no, is this protecting against waste, fraud, and abuse?

Governor REYNOLDS. They are held accountable.

Ms. BROWN. I will take that as a no.

Governor REYNOLDS. They are held accountable.

Ms. BROWN. Last question. Iowa has 10,000 Federal workers. Which Federal jobs do you think are redundant? Is it the staff providing care to veterans at the VA facilities in Des Moines and Iowa City, the USDA experts supporting your state’s farmers, or the Social Security staff ensuring payments reach seniors?

Let us be clear about what is happening here. This is not about rightsizing the Federal Government. It is about gutting it, and it is about weakening our government’s ability to serve the American people. You want shorter wait times for Social Security, faster disaster responses, safer food and medicine. Then why attack the very workers who make it happen? The House Democrats are fighting to protect and modernize the Federal workforce, hire and retain talent, and give Federal workers the resources they need to serve the American people. That is what we are doing, and with that, Mr. Chairman, I thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Palmer from Alabama.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the witnesses for being here, and I want to get to a more constructive dialog. First of all, in regard to DOGE, as I have pointed out to some of my colleagues, this is not the first time that the Federal Government has engaged in an effort like this. One time in particular was during the Clinton Administration. It was called the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, and it was led by Al Gore. I ran a think tank at the time. I was invited to come to Washington to meet with some of the folks working on this, but after 7 years of this effort, they reduced the civilian employee population by over 426,000. They closed 250 Federal offices. They reduced the Federal registry by 700,000 pages and about 16,000 pages of regulations. And I understand, Governor Reynolds, that Iowa has launched a reorganization effort. Is the objective there to make government more efficient, more effective, and more responsive to the people of Iowa?

Governor REYNOLDS. More efficient, more effective, more responsive, more accountable. It has brought transparency to the process. We are better at what we are doing. I would say that, you know, the employees appreciate the environment that we are working in

today. They appreciate the culture of innovation that we are creating in the state, and they love being a part of it.

Mr. PALMER. Now, did you bring in any outside experts, as the Clinton Administration did, in that effort for reinventing government back in the 1990's?

Governor REYNOLDS. I brought in one consultant to help really do the comparisons in other states so we could see where we were an outlier, where did we align, what had we maybe missed. So, we used the consultant from that perspective and just to help us with some of the administration, but otherwise, we did it all internally.

Mr. PALMER. I worked for a couple of international engineering companies, and one of the companies I worked for went through a process like this and they brought in outside consultants because people on the outside can see things those of us on the inside miss.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. PALMER. So, it is important that you bring in really the best that you can. In that regard, I really think that we are in another reinventing government phase and, in particular, with education. There is a big debate right now going on about the number of H-1B visas that we need to have because we are having to import so many technically trained workers. I do not know if Iowa is experiencing some of this, but you probably have some folks who are educated overseas that are now working in engineering technically trained jobs. Would that be correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. PALMER. I think the fact that we are having, Mr. Chairman, to bring so many people in who are engineers and scientists is an indictment of the current education system. We are not able to produce the number of technically trained people that we need to be competitive in our economy, but also in regard to our national security because we are in an arms race for artificial intelligence with China, and we are going to have to have a technically trained workforce. So, one of the things that I have suggested in this effort in regard to the Department of Education is that we not completely dismantle it, Governor Reynolds, but maybe reimagine it as the Department of Workforce Development and block grant the money to the states with a heavy emphasis on STEM. Would you like to respond to that?

Governor REYNOLDS. I would be very much in favor of that. In fact, we have put a proposal together that we will be submitting to the Department of Education. It gives states the flexibility. We already have a waiver process in place that we could utilize until they could actually get some of that realignment done, but like I said, hold us accountable. We will meet those expectations, and we can do it at a lower cost.

Mr. PALMER. We are going through, I think, an historic phase. There is an historic opportunity here, and I think about disruptive innovation, and I was talking to some folks today about this. And some of you may not be old enough to remember this when Toyota introduced the Corolla into the automobile market in the United States in the 1970's. It forced U.S. automobile manufacturers not only to rethink what they were producing, but they literally retooled to do that.

Governor REYNOLDS. Right.

Mr. PALMER. I think we are in that phase now where we are rethinking how government is run, and a lot of the innovation is coming from the state level, such as from Iowa, but I think that we are going to have to go through this phase. And it is disruptive, there is no question about it, but it is for our own good, long term. And we need to be thinking 25, 30, 40 years down the road about how we do this because we are at a point in competition with China that if we do not do this right, we are going to be in a really bad place.

So, Mr. Schatz, you have been very involved in evaluating the complexity and size of government. How would you respond to that, that we are in this disruptive innovation phase?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, I think it is essential. What has been going on has not been working. That is why we have a \$36 trillion debt, have not balanced the budget more than 5 times in 50 years. So, the changes that need to be made need to be made quickly, before it gets worse, so.

Mr. PALMER. And thoughtfully.

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes, and thoughtfully. By the way, all the discussion about individual agencies, what about the impact on taxpayers of this massive debt and the future of this country when the deficit goes up \$2 trillion a year every year for the next 10 years, and the interest on the debt doubles and it is already bigger than the defense budget and everything else except Social Security? No organization can survive like that, so each discussion really should be discussed with that overall view.

Mr. PALMER. Well, I thank the witnesses for the questions. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Stansbury from New Mexico.

Ms. STANSBURY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Governor, welcome. To our witnesses, thank you for being here today. I have really appreciated your commentary. It has been real, it has been substantive, and I support much of the efficiency work that is being done at the states.

But I have to say, once again, welcome to the latest episode of the GOP Oversight Committee where my colleagues at the beginning of this hearing once again voted to block a good government motion to carry out our most basic constitutional duty. They voted against a motion this morning, just a few moments ago, to bring Elon Musk in front of this Committee to discuss what he is doing to supposedly rightsize the government as they are claiming in this hearing. And I have to say to my colleagues, with all due respect, why are you shielding Elon Musk from coming in front of this Committee if that is what your intent is with this hearing and the work that you want to do? Why is the GOP and the White House shielding an unelected, unvetted, unqualified private citizen and billionaire who is literally dismantling our agencies while we sit here and is literally breaking the law?

Maybe it is because while we are sitting here, he and his team are working across town here in Washington, DC, entering Federal agencies and Federal buildings, hacking their data systems, firing Federal employees, intimidating them, trying to force them to

leave, shutting down vital programs, closing the Department of Education, the CIA, the DOJ, and threatening our domestic and international security, and downloading the private and sensitive data of Americans at the Department of Treasury. So, what the hell is going on? How can you sit here and defend this? They are literally breaking the law, the Constitution, appropriations law, Federal labor laws, and dozens of statutory laws that Congress has passed. And meanwhile, my friends across the aisle are sitting here today saying that we are hyperventilating, that we are just clutching our pearls. Are you serious? Are you that out of touch with the American people?

I mean, I guess that is what happens when you elect billionaires and put billionaires in charge of the Federal Government. Just let them eat cake. Is that your message to the American people, because last week, while you were at Trump's private resort in Florida and partying it up after the Inauguration, telling the media that funding freezes would not hurt real Americans, well, millions of real Americans were sent into total chaos, and our states had to go to the courts to shut down your Federal funding freeze. While Trump was golfing, the Medicaid systems were shut down and locked out. Hospitals and clinics were wondering if they were going to be able to keep their doors open. Food assistance and homeless programs across New Mexico were shut out of their grant programs that keep families literally fed and off the streets. Head Starts, preschools, and children's programs were wondering if they were going to be able to make payroll the next day or by the end of the week.

And while Elon Musk and a group of teenage software engineers were hacking your personal data at the Treasury Department, shutting down DOJ, the CIA, USAID, and ending diversity initiatives in the military, saying that the United States military could not honor Dr. Martin Luther King, our proud military personnel and veterans who put their lives on the line every day for this country were wondering if they were going to get their paychecks and veterans' benefits.

So, colleagues, we are not clutching our pearls or hyperventilating. We are defending the millions of Americans who are under attack, the Federal employees, the mothers, the fathers, the grandfathers being put out on leave, advocating for the people of color, the women, the members of our LGBTQ+, and, yes, our trans community, who are under fire right now under the guise of canceling DEI programs, under the guise of so-called undoing social engineering after years of progress in this country. We are defending the proud Federal servicemembers who defend our national security, who serve our communities, and keep our economy running, because I want to tell you something. The American people are terrified, and if you are that out of touch with your people, then you should talk to your constituents. We had a town hall 2 days ago, and 12,000 New Mexicans got on our call because the people are terrified in this country, and that is why we are fighting back. That is why we are trying to bring Elon Musk to this Committee, and that is why we are fighting against this agenda. And with that, I yield back.

Mr. PALMER. [Presiding.] The gentlelady yields. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Cloud, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you, witnesses, for being here, and I apologize that you have to sit here and listen to the same sort of ideological rants that lost our friends across the aisle the election in a public survey just a couple of months ago where the hearts and minds of the American people spoke very loud and clearly for what they wanted.

One of the things that has been puzzling about this whole conversation is the obsession on Elon Musk. When President Trump campaigned, he was very clear in what he wanted to do, and the talking is like this DOGE idea was some secret thing that just popped up on the radar in the last week when the actuality is it is something that President Trump said he was going to do. He said Elon Musk would be involved with it, and the American people spoke loud and clearly that this is what they want. And so, the only thing that is really surprising about what we have seen over the last 2 weeks is the fact that we have a President doing exactly what he said he would do.

And, you know, for us, the need to bring in and to rein in our Federal agencies could not be clearer than it has been. We have always known and have known quite for some time that the Federal bureaucracy has a tendency to grow. Ronald Reagan once said the closest thing to eternal life we have on earth is a Federal agency, and we have seen time and time again throughout our oversight capacities the attitude among much of our Federal agencies that they are here permanently and we as elected officials are here temporarily, and that they will do whatever they feel. And if they do not like the policies handed down by the elected executive, that they will ignore it, obfuscate, do everything they can even to shield data from us.

And so, it has been refreshing that many of the suspicions we have seen have become quite transparent as we brought transparency tools to the table over the last several weeks. But, you know, there is this idea in Washington that any time we have an agency who is underperforming, they will come before us, and the thing that they will always ask for is more money, more power to fix the problem oftentimes that they created. This is a paradigm that we have to change. It has been said that you cannot solve problems with the same kind of thinking you used when you created them, and so this is really what DOGE is about.

And to name a couple points, we can point to the CDC, which has tremendous mission creep since it was started. It was originally purposed to help control malaria, kind of to be a center for data and a hub of information to help people tackle those sort of things. It ended up expanding to the Communicable Disease Center and eventually became the Center for Disease Control, and now the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, which it has not done a good job at, as we have seen over the last few years through COVID. And now it is trying to embrace such things as climate change and alleged gun violence and systemic racism as Centers for Disease Control. Meanwhile, their basic core function of being able to collect and share data to help the American people, they epically failed at during COVID when a first-year Ph.D. student

from John Hopkins created a better tool than the CDC could provide.

We could also look at the Department of Education, which has gotten a lot of discussion lately and interest in looking at what is going on because our schools are failing our kids. That is just the status quo of where we are at in America. And what we can see here is education funding from the Federal Government has gone up, student performance has been flat, and compared to other nations has actually gone down. Meanwhile, employment of the education workforce has gone up, so we end up having less people actually teaching in the classroom and more people administrating it, and so we have created an education bureaucracy.

Now, Mr. Schatz, did I pronounce that right?

[Non-verbal response.]

Mr. CLOUD. You talked about the importance of understanding and looking at the intended results, are they happening, and that is one of the things that I think we are addressing in DOGE. Could you speak to the importance of making sure that we are addressing the intended results as opposed to just sending money at it, the example of the difference between helping students, perhaps, and helping school systems?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, the test scores and the higher costs are exactly what I was discussing earlier. If you are spending more on something, you are supposed to get results that match what you are spending the money on, otherwise you should not be spending it, whether it is in the Government or in the private sector. And again, as Congressman Khanna pointed out, I did grow up without a Department of Education, as did my whole generation. It was a little Office of Health, Education, and Welfare. States spent the money. We think they could do a great job. They are competitive with each other, and some programs obviously should be retained and some should be turned back down to where they can do a much better job and be closer to the people.

Mr. CLOUD. Governor Reynolds, I am curious because you have done a good job of streamlining the government, and I am curious about your ideas on how you hold government employees accountable, how you hold agencies accountable. What are the tools necessary to do so? One of the big challenges here is getting the information necessary in order to do that. You can think about the grants that are going out. We have seen USAID. I mean, the stuff that they were spending money on is crazy. We are finding out that our Federal Government is actually a money laundering scheme to help support leftist ideologies across the world and here at home. It is crazy, but yet, finding that accountability piece, we are able to hold the individuals who are sending these checks out, for example. How do you bring that kind of accountability?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, we have our state expenditures online, too, so our checkbook is online so taxpayers in Iowa can check and see what is going out from the state. But in addition to that, you remember I talked about, we reviewed 800 programs across my cabinet, and not a one of them had a KPI, any type of a metric, any type of expectation for outcomes, zero.

So, my cabinet knows now that if they want to stand up a new program or they want to extend an existing program, then it needs

to have, first of all, a KPI. They need to have data that they are going to be reviewing. They need to review what the program had done, what were the metrics, what were the outcomes from the existing program to justify putting additional money into it. They had never put all the programs together, they themselves had not even taken a look at it, so that is how it just continues to grow and bloat and just be unmanageable. So, I had them rank the programs that they have. Now, to their defense, sometimes the legislature hangs a program on them. But we are working with the legislature, too, to just say, you know, this is not something that we believe can really move the needle and go in the direction that we believe the state can head, but it is a conversation with our legislators.

So, it is holding them accountable, making them report back to the chief executive on what they currently are doing and what they are doing going forward, but just simply putting key performance indicators as part of a program and then monitoring the outcome and basing decisions on data, which is never happening. And it takes the emotion out of the equation, and that is what we need to do. We need to look at programs, we need to look at the outcomes, and if they are not working, then we have to let them go and figure out an innovative and better way that we can get the results that we believe that we can accomplish.

Chairman COMER. [Presiding.] Very good. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair recognizes Mr. Garcia from California.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I wanted to start by thanking our witnesses for being here. Thank you for hosting this hearing as well, and I wanted to start by just starting with Dr. Resh. It is a very simple question.

[Poster]

Mr. GARCIA. You can see here an article from the *Washington Post*. Can you just quickly, if we can take one step back, just mention how much did Elon Musk donate to Republicans in the 2024 election?

Dr. RESH. To Republicans in?

Mr. GARCIA. To Republicans in the last election.

Dr. RESH. To Republicans overall, I do not know, well over \$250 million to the Trump Campaign.

Mr. GARCIA. Right, almost \$300 million, and, in fact, Mr. Musk was the single largest donor in the last cycle. I am not sure if you knew that or not, in this last election, and here is actually the article and the headline from the *Washington Post*: "Elon Musk Puts \$277 Million Into the Election. He is \$200 Billion Richer This Year"—\$200 billion richer this year. Now, we also know that just in the month, in the month after the election, Elon Musk's wealth increased by \$170 billion. It should also not be a surprise to anyone that Elon Musk himself holds \$20 billion in contracts with the Federal Government.

Now, the truth is, is that DOGE is not really about efficiency or reform. What Donald Trump and Elon Musk are actually engineering is the single largest wealth transfer in history. And to pay for the enormous tax cut that is about to come to this Congress in the months ahead, they need to slash spending by trillions of dollars. In fact, Elon Musk himself has said that he wants to slash \$2 trillion, \$1 trillion from the actual budget. Now, in Trump's first term,

we know that he already had a huge tax cut for the richest Americans and corporations. Now he wants to slash it by one-third more, but here is the truth. In order to actually get more funds for their tax cut program, they need to slash trillions, and where are they going to do that? Well, they have started: the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, veterans' benefits, USAID, and eventually Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Right now, as we know, Elon Musk, the richest man on the planet, is trying to destroy USAID with his DOGE team. Now, this is the agency, we know, that distributes foreign aid, but that is just step one of their plan. Now, of course, we know they are going after the Department of Education. And here is an article from the *Washington Post* as well: "Trump Preps Order to Dismantle the Department of Education as DOGE Probes data." Now, let me just begin by saying that their mission is to destroy Federal agencies like the Department of Ed to then save money and then transfer that wealth to Elon Musk, his companies, and their billionaire friends through a massive tax cut. Eliminating the Department of Ed would be catastrophic for children all over this country. I am a longtime educator. I spent 10 years in the classroom teaching and as an administrator.

The funding provided by the Department of Ed is critical to children with disabilities, student loans for colleges, and ensuring that students are protected across this country. The Department of Ed has \$160 billion to help kids pay for college, \$18 billion for low-income kids at K-12 schools, \$15 billion for kids with disabilities. And in most cases, most schools are reliant on the Department of Ed to ensure that students with disabilities or that have additional needs get the education that they deserve. And now all of that is on the line because billionaires and corporations in this country need and want a larger tax cut. So, let us be crystal clear about what Elon Musk is actually doing right now. It is a wealth transfer to himself and his billionaire friends.

I also just want to note that just recently and yesterday, in fact, the *New York Times* reported that now they are accessing the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This can be catastrophic to people across this country. And so, this Committee, rightly so, has asked and demanded that Elon Musk testify under oath in front of this Committee. We know that the law is on this side. We know that what he is doing is unconstitutional, and we demand that he come here and provide answers not just to us, but to the American public. And with that, I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Crane from Arizona.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, would it be possible to get some therapy dogs in here for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle?

Chairman COMER. We could ask Mr. Raskin's shrink to—

Mr. CRANE. I am worried about their mental stability. You know, I think it is funny, Mr. Chairman, when I hear my colleagues on the other side of the aisle whining and complaining Elon Musk.

Mr. GARCIA. I mean, those are insults, to be clear.

Mr. CRANE. Excuse me. It is my time. Thanks. Elon Musk and, you know, how much money he donated to President Trump. Yet

I do not recall the same outrage when, you know, billionaires on their side of the aisle, like Mark Zuckerberg, George Soros, you know, or any of the other ones, they were donating massive sums of money to their side of the aisle.

Mr. Resh, I want to start with you, real quick. I read something you stated in your testimony. You said, "Rather than a bloated bureaucracy, we face a workforce stretched too thin, forced to oversee an increasingly complex web of outsourced operation with limited personnel and resources." Is that correct? Did you say that in your testimony, sir?

Dr. RESH. Yes, sir.

Mr. CRANE. I would like to read you a list of priorities over at USAID right now. One of the agencies that Elon Musk, who has triggered my colleagues on the left so much, the Agency for International Development, which had a budget of over \$40 billion in Fiscal Year 2023. This is not an exhaustive list, it is a very small list—but \$1.5 million to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in Serbia's workplaces and business communities; \$2.5 million for electric vehicles in Vietnam; \$2 million for sex changes and LGBT activism in Guatemala; \$6 million to fund tourism in Egypt; hundreds of thousands of dollars for a nonprofit linked to designated terror organizations even after an inspector general launched an investigation. Do you still stand by your comments, sir?

Dr. RESH. Yes, my comments were in regards to the ability of administrators to adequately oversee the funds that Congress has appropriated to them for these programs.

Mr. CRANE. Yes. So, you do not think this is a bloated workforce when we are spending money overseas like that? Sir, are you aware that we are over \$36 trillion in debt, Mr. Resh?

Dr. RESH. Yes, I certainly am.

Mr. CRANE. OK. So, you still stand by your comments that this is not a bloated Federal workforce?

Dr. RESH. The Federal workforce represents 4 percent of the entire budget for every—

Mr. CRANE. Sir, do you know what the annual deficit is every year?

Dr. RESH. Please?

Mr. CRANE. It is over \$2 trillion.

Dr. RESH. I understand that.

Mr. CRANE. OK. So, you still stand by your comments that it is not a bloated workforce?

Dr. RESH. Two trillion dollars is not reflective of the workforce that is the Federal employee.

Mr. CRANE. Oh, it is not? We are not spending money on the workforce? OK, copy.

Dr. RESH. Of your entire budget, 4 percent. If you cut the entire workforce, 4 percent would be reflected.

Mr. CRANE. Do you know why often we use private companies and contractors in the Federal Government, sir? Because you can actually fire them. It is a lot easier to fire them if they are not performing. Sir, have you ever ran a large organization or a small business?

Dr. RESH. No, I have not.

Mr. CRANE. I just find it interesting that we bring in a Governor of one of the united states who has actually run a state to talk about all the cuts, the elimination of fraud, waste, and abuse, and how she has got her state high performing and made a bunch of changes so that they actually have a surplus. And my Democrat colleagues bring in a professor who has never run a large organization, never run a small business, and, therefore, has really no idea what it is like to deal with the consequences of out-of-control spending and inefficiencies.

Does that strike anybody else in the room as odd? What about you, Mr. Schatz? Who are you going to take advice from on efficiency, somebody who has actually run a large organization or business or maybe a state? And I am not trying to throw shade at Dr. Resh and his profession. There have been a lot of professors in my life that have brought me a lot of value. But when we are talking about trying to add efficiencies to the largest government in the history of the world that is operating at \$36 trillion national debt, \$2 trillion annual deficit, Mr. Schatz, who are you going to take counsel and advice from?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, I think anyone who has an idea about how to cut spending should be welcome, and that could include academics. It can include nonprofit groups, Governors. So, the point is to get the job done, not to keep talking about it.

Mr. CRANE. That is right, and the last thing I will say is, because my Democrat colleagues are losing their mind with Elon Musk, do not forget that Elon Musk campaigned with the President. The American people were very excited about Elon Musk using all of the tools and experience that he has and that he has used in the private sector to come in and streamline this Federal Government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Mr. Frost from Florida.

Mr. FROST. Thank you. Governor Reynolds, thank you so much for being here today. I have been to Iowa. I have spent a lot of time in Iowa. It is a beautiful state, so thank you for being here.

Medicaid covers almost 700,000 Iowans, over a third of Iowa's children. In 2013, I believe, Iowa expanded Medicaid. I have a few questions for you. If Medicaid funding were to disappear, what would that mean for the people of Iowa?

Governor REYNOLDS. I do not think it will disappear. Simply looking at a system and seeing if we can enhance it and make it better does not—

Mr. FROST. That is not my question, though, Governor. My question is, if it were to disappear, what would that mean for your—

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, I do not think that is the intent of anybody, but we need to do it better, and we need to help it to be successful.

Mr. FROST. If it were to disappear, Governor, what would that mean for the people?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, I cannot speculate on that because I do not believe that that would happen.

Mr. FROST. So, you as the Governor of your state cannot say what it would mean to lose Medicaid for your people?

Governor REYNOLDS. I—

Mr. FROST. OK. We will move on. How would people across Iowa react to rural and community health centers having to suddenly close?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, as I talked about in my opening remarks, we are actually working on maternal health and working on healthcare in rural Iowa, and that means, again, looking at regions. I took, you know, 32 fragmented substance abuse and mental health regions and unified them into seven behavioral health regions, and we are putting—

Mr. FROST. That is great to hear, Governor, yes.

Governor REYNOLDS. [continuing]. In place a hub-and-spoke model which they will be a part of. But again, it is duplication that you want to lose.

Mr. FROST. That is great to hear, Governor. I am sure you are doing great work. I want to focus on the questions that I have. I have limited time. I am sorry, Governor.

Governor REYNOLDS. OK.

Mr. FROST. I am sure you are doing great work on this. My question is about rural and community health centers.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. FROST. Community health centers receive a huge amount of Federal funding, including programs that help Iowans afford medication, prescription drugs. What would that mean for the people?

Governor REYNOLDS. And they are a part of our solution, and we are taking that into account, but we do not want duplication of services so that we can get those dollars on the ground.

Mr. FROST. That is good to hear. Community health centers are part of the solution. That is good to hear. I am going to move on, Governor, I am going to move on. That is good to hear.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. FROST. Some Republicans on this Committee are calling Trump's careless assault on essential Federal services, including his freezing of Medicaid payment system, rightsizing. What is the right size for healthcare?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, that is going to vary from state to state, so, you know, I mean, my—

Mr. FROST. Would you be OK with Elon Musk or Trump rightsizing Medicaid in Iowa?

Governor REYNOLDS. I do not think we should be afraid of having the private sector step in and take a look at how we are providing these services. We can learn from them.

Mr. FROST. Not just taking a look, Governor.

Governor REYNOLDS. It is bold.

Mr. FROST. Decisions are being made.

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, they are looking at the system and making recommendations, and we should not be—

Mr. FROST. So, freezing the Medicaid payment system?

Governor REYNOLDS. We should not be afraid of that, so I think that—

Mr. FROST. No, Governor, no one is afraid. Governor, sorry, I am going to reclaim my time.

Governor REYNOLDS. OK. Thank you.

Mr. FROST. No one is afraid of, you know, taking a look at what is going on, but what we are afraid of is our services, the things

that people depend on, being ripped away from us. I am worried about Iowans losing the Medicaid that they voted to expand. Seven hundred thousand Iowans are on Medicaid.

Governor REYNOLDS. But that is why we made the changes that we made. That is why we realigned. We eliminated the duplication, and by doing that, it put more money into the program to actually meet the needs of our constituents.

Mr. FROST. Well, let us talk about what you did because we were just talking about what you did. You came to office. You made some changes to help with efficiency. I respect that, but there is something that was brought up, even by the Chair, that I want to bring up that shows the difference between what you did and what is happening right now at the Federal Government. You worked with the legislature and passed legislation in your state legislature to make the broadest changes you wanted to make. And that is not what is going on right now when we talk about DOGE and everything else. You even mentioned at the beginning of this hearing, you were so proud to say that you did this all without massive lay-offs, without forcing a large percentage of your workforce to leave because you saw them as valuable. I respect that, Governor. I respect you for that. That is not what is going on here at the Federal level, but let us move on to FEMA really quickly.

Trump has said that he wants FEMA to go away. He would like to see the states take care of the disasters on their own. I come from Florida. We work very closely with FEMA. Do you think most Iowans would agree with President Trump that FEMA should suddenly stop existing?

Governor REYNOLDS. I do not think he is eliminating, and I think that what I had understood was he was thinking that maybe it should go back to the states, which that is something I think you should take a look at.

Mr. FROST. No, Governor. Sorry, Governor, I will reclaim. The President was very clear on this. He believes that the agency, FEMA, should be completely eliminated. Do you agree with that, or do you not agree with that? I mean, it is OK to disagree sometimes, you know.

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, I am not afraid to disagree. I am just thinking, you know, there is—

Mr. FROST. So, do you disagree with FEMA, with the assessment of FEMA?

Governor REYNOLDS. It is bureaucratic. It is a nightmare to work with. They can only do one thing at a time. I have impacted individuals, there are huge issues, and we can have a whole another hearing on that.

Mr. FROST. There are issues with FEMA, maybe, but do you agree with him that we should eliminate it? Governor, sorry, I am going to reclaim my time. Do you agree with him that we should eliminate FEMA? Yes or no.

Governor REYNOLDS. I think we need to take a look. We can maybe take a look at it and how those services are delivered.

Mr. FROST. Take a look at it, but you do not think we should eliminate it.

Governor REYNOLDS. I think we should take a look at it and see how those services are delivered.

Mr. FROST. OK. But it sounds like you do not think—we should not get rid of it, which I agree with. In the past 10 years, your state has been granted FEMA support 10 times. President Trump in 2018 denied you a claim after flooding and horrible weather patterns that happened in Iowa. You said you were extremely disappointed and that the people of Iowa needed FEMA's help. That was your quote and, so, thank you. I am glad you are here to talk about the things you did in Iowa. I hope President Trump can look at the way you did things and working with your legislature the way it is supposed to work to make the changes instead of letting a wealthy billionaire donor go in and make the changes himself. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Chairwoman Greene from the state of Georgia.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My Democrat colleagues are reacting with manufactured outrage over Elon Musk and the DOGE team going in and cleaning up the Federal Government. They are saying the American people did not vote for this, but I would like to correct that record. On July 13, when President Trump was shot in Butler, Pennsylvania, Elon Musk got behind President Trump and he endorsed him. And then, on August 19 of 2024—this is before the election—Elon Musk posted on his own account, “I am willing to serve,” and that right there says “DOGE.” This was not something that was created after the election. It is no surprise to the American people.

As a matter of fact, the Department of Government Efficiency was a key part of President Trump's campaign, and President Trump campaigned over and over again on DOGE and Elon Musk helping him. As a matter of fact, here, right here, on *Rolling Stone*, which is very far left, by the way, Trump says he would give Elon Musk a top role in his Administration. Again, this was on August 20, 2024, well before the election. This was no surprise to the American people.

The American people love DOGE so much. They love the concept of saving the Federal Government, saving Americans, and putting America First, cutting the waste and the spending, cutting down the size of the Federal Government. They love it so much they voted for President Trump and elected him with an overwhelming victory. He won the popular vote, 312 Electoral College votes. It is the Democrats that are the ones that are still lost on their message, and their message is a failure, and the American people spoke out about it.

As the national debt approaches \$36.5 trillion, our children and our grandchildren's futures are being sacrificed at the altar of wasteful government spending and corruption. With my new Subcommittee on DOGE, this Congress, we are going to dig deep on the wasteful spending and corrupt bureaucracies that have plagued our Nation for far too long. We will make recommendations to address these problems, and we will make sure the American people know exactly what is being done with their hard-earned tax dollars. After all, this is what they voted for.

Governor Reynolds, in Iowa, the state legislature passed a bill in 2023 that lowered the number of cabinet-level departments from 37

down to just 16. So, I would like to ask you, did this make the Iowa Government more efficient, or less efficient?

Governor REYNOLDS. More efficient.

Ms. GREENE. I am not surprised. Is the Iowa government still able to provide all the services your constituents require of you?

Governor REYNOLDS. We are actually doing a better job of it and putting more money into the programs or returning it back to the taxpayers.

Ms. GREENE. Amazing. It sounds like DOGE has already worked in Iowa. Has your state lost money or saved money since reorganizing its government?

Governor REYNOLDS. Two-hundred-and-seventeen million dollars, surpassing our 4-year projection in the first 18 months, and that is conservative. We are going to continue to see savings, and that is how I am going to continue to reduce the tax burden on our taxpayers.

Ms. GREENE. That is incredible. That is what all of America wants. So, how do you think the Federal Government can translate what Iowa has done to the national level you have already achieved in your state? How can we replicate that?

Governor REYNOLDS. You are doing it. By bringing the private sector in, having them take a look at the inefficiencies in government, look at the systems, look at the duplication, look at the unaccountability. There is no transparency, there are no metrics, there is no data that they can point to. We are standing up Iowa DOGE. We want to be a partner in that because I think it is really important that the Federal Government and the state government and the local governments work together to really implement transformational change. This is an incredible opportunity.

I have so much respect for President Trump to put this initiative forward. He received an undeniable mandate in this last election, as did we. We now have super majorities in both the House and the Senate, the Governor's office, and an entire Republican delegation that we have sent out to Washington D.C. We did just what President Trump does. We told Iowans what we were going to do, and we followed through with it, and that is what Americans expect, and that is why 77 million people said that President Trump is who we want to restore America's greatness.

Ms. GREENE. I absolutely agree with you, Governor Reynolds, thank you. Mr. Schatz, in all your years at your organization, can you give some of the most egregious examples of government spending you have seen? And I know that it is hard to come up with a few because there are a lot.

Mr. SCHATZ. I talked earlier about broadband programs. It is not necessarily a wasteful expenditure, meaning something is not trying to be. There are 133 broadband programs in 15 agencies. There are people that are still not connected, I am sure also in Iowa; \$42 billion for the BEAD program, not a penny has been spent. We want people to be connected to the internet. It is critical for our future, but unless those programs are consolidated and someone figures out which ones are working best, we are not going to achieve that objective. It seems simple, but again, the problem here has been, as it usually is, something is not working, spend more money, create another program, do not take the time to look at how it is

working. And that is what DOGE and your subcommittee is going to do, and we are happy to help any way we can, by the way.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Schatz. And you are right, under the Biden Administration, they actually canceled contracts with Starlink, which are far less expensive, and then never built out the infrastructure for broadband, true failure for the American people, giant waste of money. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Ms. Lee from Pennsylvania.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am afraid that we are witnessing the biggest con in real time. Our Federal Government is being fleeced by a handful of billionaires at the expense of everyday people. They are what we call unelected billionaire oligarchs, and they are not trying to rightsize the government. They are not trying to make things more efficient or improve services. They want to eliminate their competition and grow their private coffers. The collective net worth of the President's Cabinet is over \$460 billion. That is unprecedented in our country's history, even counting the days of the robber barons or when the only folks who could serve in government were land-owning wealthy White men. This is not just government by the top 1 percent. It is government by the top .0001 percent.

And these are not just disinterested outsiders who are benevolent volunteers coming in to help us situate our government, right? These are people who have conflict of interests. They have financial stakes. They are even tied to litigation against the very agencies that they have been tasked to lead. Musk alone has nearly 100 government contracts across 17 Federal agencies that total \$3 billion. By all accounts, Musk is now running rampant through our Federal agencies, accountable to no one, and doing what he pleases with Federal systems and data with no transparency and no oversight. It is still unclear if he has security clearance or if he has passed a background check. He certainly has not filed any financial disclosures.

This is absolutely outrageous, and Americans are rightfully mad. This is the Committee on Oversight, one of the most important committees, particularly in this era. Yet, Republicans did not bring Elon Musk, the private citizen given access to all other private citizens' data, and the one leading all of this chaos, and just this morning, they blocked our efforts to bring him in. Musk has a bunch of 20-something-year-old child cronies accessing highly sensitive information and technology at the Office of Personnel Management, the General Services Administration, and the Department of Treasury. They also have not been invited to testify before us today. So, I think we need to ask ourselves, why does an unelected billionaire need access to Americans' Social Security numbers and the \$6 trillion payment system, and if this operation is so legit, why is there no transparency? Why are we pretending this is about rightsizing? The only logical answer is greed and corruption.

Dr. Resh, do you agree that there is a corruption risk with this level of unaccountable access, and that Musk could use this data to gain an advantage over his competitors?

Dr. RESH. Whenever there is no security clearance, there is a corruption risk. Whenever there is entanglements in terms of being a contractor or a contracted entity and a regulated entity but with access to data or unfettered access to protected government data, there is a risk of corruption.

Ms. LEE. Thank you so much. Beyond Musk and the rest of the Cabinet appointees, just look at the powerful tech CEOs who had front row seats to Trump's inauguration and also have financial stakes with the very agencies that Trump is now looking to fundamentally overhaul. Nearly every executive action taken so far has been designed to make corruption easier. In the first week alone, Trump fired 17 Inspectors General across 18 agencies. These are nonpartisan watchdogs, and this includes the one from the Treasury Department, who could have served as guardrail against Musk's efforts. The hiring freeze, stopping Federal spending and trying to strong-arm Federal workers to leave their jobs are all actions designed to make our government fail and move things over to the private sector, further fattening the bank accounts of these billionaires, these unelected billionaires.

They will consistently tell you that private is better, but meanwhile, the poverty gap keeps growing, and they keep laying off people. While Americans' wages remain low, their multimillion-dollar bonuses keep getting bigger. Republicans are pushing these cost cuts so they can pay for their tax cuts. Working-class Americans will not be benefiting from those tax cuts, but Musk, these tech billionaires, and Trump's wealthy cabinet officials, they certainly will. Meanwhile, working-class Americans will be paying the price in jobs and lack of regulations and in the loss of government services like Medicare and Social Security, instead of the Federal Government designed to serve all the people. Trump is doing everything he can to turn the government into a tool to serve just one group: the rich oligarchs he calls his friends. Thank you for your time. I thank you. Thanks to the panel, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Timmons from South Carolina.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank the witnesses for being here today. I do my best to work across the aisle whenever possible, and I think that that is how this place is supposed to work. I try to earn the respect and the trust of all of my colleagues. I am sickened by the way that the left is categorizing and lying about what Elon Musk is doing in the Federal Government. I am going to say what is true, and then I am going to debunk their ridiculous lies.

No. 1, President Trump hired Elon Musk. He is a Federal employee. He does not make enough to trigger financial disclosures. Those are the rules. If you do not like them, file a bill to change them. He has hired people to seek out waste, fraud, and abuse throughout all government agencies. He leads a team within the Administration that has smaller teams across all of government. Their job is to bring sanity to this process. They do not have to be Senate confirmed because they do not make enough money and they are not in positions of control. They are in advisory positions. Their objective is to give a menu of options to the President, to the Secretary of Treasury, to Secretary of Defense, to all the different

agency heads, who are Senate confirmed, of ways to conserve taxpayer dollars. That is what this election was about.

We got \$36 trillion in debt. We run a \$2 trillion annual deficit. This is unsustainable, and the American people have spoken. So, what are he and his teams doing? They are creating systems to track sources and uses. We have not done that. When a government agency goes to the Treasury and says, we want this money, there is no system through which they actually can say, all right, Congress, appropriate it, authorize it, and what do you use it for, and then track all that. So, what are they doing? They are creating systems to make sure that the money is going where it is supposed to go, and guess what? The Democrats are losing their mind. He is also creating systems to ensure accountability. All of this is going to be public. All of this is going to be public, and he has proven that he can turn around businesses that are failing, and he has offered his time to try to save this country.

So, I guess, first, just ridiculous lies that are being told. Elon Musk does not have access to Americans' personally identifiable information at Treasury. He just does not. You have career bureaucrats that are mad that they are losing their jobs because they are no longer useful in the future of this government because they have gotten us in a situation. I had dinner with Treasury Secretary Bessent, and he assured us that all that the DOGE employees at Treasury were doing was checking sources and uses to make sure that money authorized and appropriated by Congress is being spent on what it is supposed to be spent on. The fact that we have not done that yet and it is 2025 is insane. So, while people call my office and say, Elon Musk has my records, that is a lie. It is a lie from the flailing bureaucracy that is no longer useful because technology can solve all these problems.

Ms. STANSBURY. Will the gentleman yield for a clarifying question?

Mr. TIMMONS. Sure, go ahead.

Ms. STANSBURY. Can you help us understand, based on what you are explaining here then, why nearly 2 million Federal workers received an email from OPM with Elon Musk's letterhead, "a fork in a road," you know?

Mr. TIMMONS. OK. I am sorry, I am sorry, I am sorry. I am debunking the fact that people are calling my office saying that he has access to—

Ms. STANSBURY. But you just said that—

Mr. TIMMONS. Hold on, that he has access to their tax records, which he does not. The Treasury Secretary said that you do not know better than the Treasury Secretary, and angry bureaucrats do not know better than the Treasury Secretary. That is our system of government. We won the election.

Ms. STANSBURY. Elon Musk is being—

Mr. TIMMONS. The politically appointed and Senate confirmed Treasury Secretary says you are wrong, so until you get actual data—

Ms. STANSBURY. Elon Musk is bragging about it on his Twitter, you all. Go on his Twitter. Literally, go on Elon Musk's Twitter, you guys.

Mr. TIMMONS. All right. So, I have an article here in *Politico*. I am reclaiming my time. Thank you. This is an article in *Politico* that was written after the dinner that we had Monday night with the Treasury Secretary, where he confirmed to the House Financial Services Committee that Elon Musk does not have access to American taxpayers' personal data. So, I am going to say it one more time, everybody that is calling my office, everybody that is flipping out, the media that is lying about this. The DOGE employees do not have access to American citizens' personally identifiable information. Their only goal is to track sources and uses and make sure that the money that we are spending is going where it says it is supposed to go.

This is shocking it has not been done yet, but they are doing it now, and this is just the beginning. Again, I would say buckle up, because this is going to keep going, and we are going to save this country, and we are going to get out of this ridiculous financial situation we are in. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Ms. Crockett.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. It is the faux outrage for me. It is as faux as faux news that I am hearing because somehow you guys, and when I say, "you guys," I am referring to my Republican colleagues, pretend as if you are the heroes of the story, but let me remind you who set the house on fire. It was you all. So, let me go ahead and handle these receipts because I know that I always have to have proof, even though I guess our education system is failing us because it seems like facts do not seem to faze people that vote for you all, but I am going to do it anyway.

So, when we talk about debt, I would ask for unanimous consent to enter into a record this article that says, "Donald Trump Built a National Debt So Big Even Before the Pandemic, That It Will Weight Down the Economy for Years."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much. In fact, it talked about the fact that he ran up our debt almost \$8 trillion, it was estimated to be \$7.8 trillion at that time, and that it is actually the third-biggest increase ever under any Presidential administration. So, I do not understand how you all are going to play the heroes.

I also want to just kind of be clear about some basic level-setting of civics because it seems like civics is evading us. And listen, Governor, I actually appreciate you. I know that in today's times, for whatever reason, if you got a "D" or "R" in front of your name, it has to be all hostile. Listen, I am a former business owner. If I was not sitting in this seat, I would still have my law firm, but, you know, we have rules, right? So, I am not allowed to practice law. I am not allowed to do a lot of other things because ethics decides that that is not really a good thing, to make sure that the American people can trust that I do not have any divided interest.

In fact, we do that for people that run our Treasury, typically. So, I am curious to know if you have an elected treasurer in your state, and you do, actually.

Governor REYNOLDS. We do.

Ms. CROCKETT. I know you do because I looked him up, and I am curious to know. So, it is my guess that he is the one that actually controls all of the Treasury systems that you have, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Some of the investments.

Ms. CROCKETT. He controls some of the investments, but also moneys that need to be disseminated by the state, that is done by him, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Department of Management in the Treasurer's Office.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. In the Treasurer's Office.

Governor REYNOLDS. Two separate agencies.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. But you have an agency that does that, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. And as you are having this agency do that, these are people that have some sort of ethics that they have to follow, I am sure.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. I am going out on a limb because I do not know how anything works in Iowa. I am just being honest with you.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes. Yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. Here is the deal. I want the American people to understand that Democrats are not against efficiency. In fact, the last time that this country actually ran to the extent that there was a balanced budget, and actually there was a surplus, it was a Democrat in the White House. His name was President Clinton. So, we are not against this. What we are against is this idea that we will evade the Constitution. Or we will evade our own constitutional—in fact, it is not even an evasion. At this point, it feels as if you all have just decided that you all are going to castrate your constitutional duty and hand it over to someone who is unelected. It does not matter how many cheerleaders he had on the field campaigning for him. That does not mean that he gets to go in and sit atop any of our agencies, and the fact that we had a vote today and we asked to bring him in because we have a constitutional duty. We all took our oath, and maybe some of you all just do not take it seriously, but I take it seriously when I take an oath to do a job, and my job is to look out and make sure that we do not have any kings or queens in this country.

But it seems like you all have decided that it is going to be Mr. King and his queen, and you all can pick which one is which. But either way, I want to also talk about, Governor, I am curious to know if you know these, the answers to these questions. Which party controls the White House?

Governor REYNOLDS. Republican.

Ms. CROCKETT. Which party controls the Senate?

Governor REYNOLDS. Republican.

Ms. CROCKETT. Which party controls the House?

Governor REYNOLDS. Republican.

Ms. CROCKETT. Is that about what the makeup is in Iowa?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. And that has allowed you to be able to get your agenda across, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. And you have not had to bring in somebody to basically usurp any types of norms because you worked through the process, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, I did executive orders, 280 agreements—

Ms. CROCKETT. Yes or no. Yes or no.

Governor REYNOLDS. And then went to the legislature as well. It was all of the above. All of the above. All of the above.

Ms. CROCKETT. I am going to reclaim my time because I only got so much time left. I also want to point out that you specifically talked about that you recently had three national declarations for disasters, and I want to enter into the record, a unanimous consent, “Trump Moves to Abolish FEMA, Shift Disaster Response to States.”

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. CROCKETT. And my final unanimous consent, I would ask, says that, “Mike Johnson’s Budget Plan is at Risk of Collapse,” even though we know that you all control all three levers of government. So, if this is what you all want to do, then go ahead and clean it up and fix it, and just go through the process, and honestly, there is—

Ms. BOEBERT. Order.

Ms. CROCKETT [continuing]. Nothing that we will be able to say about it.

Ms. BOEBERT. Order.

Ms. CROCKETT. And with that, I will yield.

Chairman COMER. OK. Thank you. The gentlelady’s time has expired. The Chair recognizes Ms. Boebert from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The outrage here has been absolutely unhinged. As we have seen in the media, we are seeing *Politico*, who is laying folks off, and as they are being defunded of American tax dollars, they can no longer sustain themselves. And so, the outrage is just going to continue from those who are no longer going to be able to support their businesses from American taxpayers. And we simply want accountability. We want oversight. This is the Oversight Committee and, unfortunately, Congress has done a crap job of oversight and accountability over quite some time, I would say decades, and that is why we have this new commission that is created, and Americans are grateful for it. President Trump campaigned on having this DOGE commission to have oversight and accountability, and it is our responsibility to codify what happens.

I am pleased with the expedited efforts that have taken place to really get this out in the open and expose to the American people what their money is actually being sent to, and let us just be honest with the American people. Unelected bureaucrats have been funneling their hard-earned taxpayer dollars to ridiculous and even malicious causes. DOGE is doing the hard work to uncover the truth and make our government work for the people rather than funding policies that are actively hurting them. For example, Dr. Resh, in your testimony you state that the recommendations from the Department of Government Efficiency will exacerbate public health crises. How is that the case when DOGE is advocating to defund EcoHealth Alliance which was involved in the research in

the Wuhan Lab that created coronavirus, that created this global pandemic that killed people and ended the livelihoods of many others?

Dr. RESH. My statement was in reference to across-the-board firings without specific technology.

Ms. BOEBERT. I think government employees have been given the option. They can have an——

Dr. RESH. And those that will be given the option will be more competitive on a private market basis than those that stay, so then you will be losing your best public employees as opposed to——

Ms. BOEBERT. Were our best public employees at the Wuhan lab of virology? Were those our best employees? Is that where our funding was going, to the best and the brightest who started a global pandemic?

Dr. RESH. I am saying when you make a 20-percent across the cut without any discrimination as——

Ms. BOEBERT. I think there has been a lot of inefficiencies, and I am excited to see where this goes and the exposure of that, and, Dr. Resh, the last Administration weaponized NGOs to aid and abet illegal aliens across and within the interior of the United States. We saw millions of taxpayer dollars being funneled to NGOs that were spent on plane and bus tickets, hotel rooms, and even to coach illegal aliens on how to illegally stay in the country. Heck, we have a Congresswoman who is currently coaching illegal aliens on how to stay in the country, what terms to use, even if they are untruthful. Now, Dr. Resh, how does transporting millions of unvetted illegal aliens into our country make America safer, and how does stopping the funding of those NGOs harm America?

Dr. RESH. That is tangential and irrelevant to my——

Ms. BOEBERT. Oh, it is not irrelevant. Let us go through the list of relevancy, shall we? When we have open borders allowing millions of illegal aliens coming into our country unvetted, then the relevancy is in terms of Laken Riley, Jocelyn Nungaray, Rachel Morin, Ruby Garcia, Lizbeth Medina, and I could go on and on and on with the American citizens who were killed at the hands of illegal aliens. So, I think it is pretty relevant to say we need to look into these NGOs and what they are doing with these unvetted illegal aliens coming into our country and remaining into our country. Would you agree? Does that bring some relevancy to the topic, sir?

Dr. RESH. Not to workforce cuts across the American public service.

Ms. BOEBERT. But we are also talking about the funding that is going out. We are cutting spending at an executive level, and I hope that we codify all of that here within these chambers to ensure that it does not go out again.

Now, in your testimony, you also mentioned that DOGE proposals reflect an agenda to dismantle professional government. According to you, this is fundamentally at odds with the principles of democratic governance. In November, President Trump won by a decisive mandate, promising to maximize governmental efficiency and productivity. And how are our actions, these actions, fulfilling the President's campaign promises fundamentally at odds with the principles of democratic governance? And while my time is running

out, I want you to answer that, sir, but we hear about unelected folks. Democrats did not even get a chance to vote for their own Presidential candidate in their primary, so do not talk to me about unelected people actually being involved in the decisions in this country. But I would like to hear how that is at odds, sir.

Dr. RESH. I have no response to that.

Ms. BOEBERT. Well, that is kind of—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, the gentlelady's time—

Ms. BOEBERT. I yield. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Casar. We are going to recognize Mr. Casar, then Mr. Jordan, and then at the request of the witnesses, we are going to take a brief bathroom break. So, the Chair recognizes Mr. Casar for 5 minutes, and then after him it will be Jordan and then a brief 10-minute break.

Mr. CASAR. Chairman, I do not know why Republican Members even show up to this Committee or to Congress when it is clear who is really in charge of the Federal Government right now, and that is Elon Musk. And at the beginning of this hearing, when we asked our Republican colleagues if we could bring Mr. Musk to this Committee, Republicans ran cover for him. They want him hiding in the White House, tweeting, and they voted unanimously that they did not want to hear from Elon Musk.

Supposedly, this Committee is supposed to be about rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse, and I agree, so let us talk about waste, fraud, and abuse. The biggest fraud in U.S. Government right now is Elon Musk pretending to care about efficiency when what he cares about is taking your taxpayer dollars, taking your Medicare, taking your Medicaid, taking your Social Security, and enriching himself and his billionaire buddies with it. The biggest abuse in the U.S. Government right now is Elon Musk getting \$154 billion richer since the election just a few months ago, while consolidating unprecedented power over your money and your government. Mr. Musk invested \$227 million in Trump's election and is making billions off of it. That is waste. That is fraud. That is abuse.

And speaking of waste, another waste is my House Republican colleagues showing up because they waste their time. They will not speak out about any of these abuses against working people and taxpayers. This is the Oversight Committee, and there are 17 independent Inspectors General. They are watchdogs. They are the oversight arm of the Federal Government, and Trump and Musk illegally fired 17 of them, including a watchdog that was investigating one of Musk's companies. And what I have heard from House Republicans is either silence or defending that kind of behavior. You guys know that it is embarrassing and it is wrong, and that is why you voted to not have Musk here before us.

Elon Musk is not doing anything to make government more efficient for working people. He is using his position to more efficiently raid your taxpayer dollars to enrich himself and his friends. I am told that this hearing is about rightsizing government, so I propose that we start rightsizing our Federal Government by firing the most dangerous man in it, and that is Elon Musk. To protect our taxpayers, we should fire Elon Musk. To keep American Social Security numbers private, fire Elon Musk. To protect Medicare and Medicaid, fire Elon Musk. To save schools and our jobs, fire Elon

Musk. And to protect the idea that American people have a government for the people and by the people and not for the ultrarich and by the ultrarich, we must fire Elon Musk.

Attacking working families is nothing new for him. Mr. Musk's biggest factory sits in my district, and the first thing I did after I was elected to Congress was to call for an OSHA investigation into the injuries and deaths of workers building that very factory. Those were investigations to be launched by the Department of Labor where later today, we are hearing that Musk's minions are going to go and maybe start shutting down parts of that key agency that is built to oversee big corporations and defend the interests of workers. Musk's companies, like Tesla, have been sued and found liable for many labor violations. Screwing over working people is just part of the game for him. He has been found liable for improperly giving non-safety training to construction workers and withholding wages. OSHA fined Tesla for exposing workers to hazardous chemicals without proper training and monitoring. OSHA opened up investigation into deaths of workers at a Tesla Gigafactory in 2024. SpaceX, another one of Musk's companies, was found responsible for the deaths of one of their workers, Lonnie LeBlanc, due to head trauma that he got on the job.

So, now Musk has seemingly unlimited power to take advantage not just of his own employees, not just of American consumers, but of all Americans: unlimited power to Americans' data, unlimited power to choke off funding meant for Americans and the programs that people count on. Enough is enough. But thankfully our country is not one of Musk's companies. Our country is ours. A billionaire whose career is built on the abuse and exploitation of workers should not have unlimited power in this country. He should be before this Committee, and when he comes before this Committee, if somebody wants to do the right thing, all you got to do is turn on your mic and say, fire Elon Musk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Before I recognize Mr. Jordan, Ms. Boebert, did you have a—

Ms. BOEBERT. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have a document I would like to submit for the record.

Chairman COMER. Proceed.

Ms. BOEBERT. So, this is a press release from the White House: "At USAID, waste and abuse runs deep," and just some examples: \$2.5 million for electric vehicles in Vietnam; \$47,000 for a transgender opera in Colombia; \$32,000 for transgender comic books in Peru; \$2 million for sex changes and LGBT activism in Guatemala; \$6 million to fund tourism in Egypt.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman? This becomes a statement and not just a—

Ms. BOEBERT. And these are just some of the many, many examples, and I would like to submit that to the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. BOEBERT. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee for 5 minutes.

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you, Chairman. Mr. Schatz, is the Federal Government too big?

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes, the expenditures certainly are, which makes the entity itself too big.

Mr. JORDAN. Seven trillion dollars in annual spending, 400 agencies and subagencies, 1,000 boards and commissions. I think anyone, maybe even the people on the other side of the aisle, I think anyone would say, almost everyone would say, that is too big. And when you have big government, does big government have a tendency to spend taxpayer money on stupid things?

Mr. SCHATZ. That is part of the reason that we are here, and it is one of the things that Citizens Against Government Waste has been documenting for many, many years.

Mr. JORDAN. You have been highlighting this for, like, a hundred years. I mean, I have known you, yes, for a long time.

Mr. SCHATZ. Organizations—

Mr. JORDAN. God bless you for persisting.

Mr. SCHATZ. Organization, 41 years. I have been there 39.

Mr. JORDAN. Yes. And when you spend money, when you are the person spending money on something stupid, you just assume, you would just kind of hope that people do not really notice that, right? If you are in the government and you are spending—what did Ms. Boebert just say, \$32,000 for a transgender comic in Peru, \$16 million in gender development offices—you are spending money on stuff like that, you just kind of hope that people probably do not notice that. Is that probably fair to say? That is kind of human nature, I would think.

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, that is part of the problem is that the taxpayers do not know exactly how the money is being spent because there is not the transparency that, for example, Iowa, Ohio, Arizona, and other states have. We should be able to push a button and find out how your tax dollars are being spent.

Mr. JORDAN. And so, it is understandable why everyone on the left, all the proponents of Big Government, all the supporters of Big Government, all the people getting the taxpayer money from Big Government, it is understandable why they are attacking Elon Musk because he is pointing out the stupid things that government spends money on. Is that fair to say?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, he is not making it up, and, in fact, many of the recommendations he has made have been made for years.

Mr. JORDAN. Great point. He is not making it up. He is citing every single thing.

Mr. SCHATZ. Right.

Mr. JORDAN. I am sorry.

Mr. SCHATZ. No, it is there. I mean, look, the Department of Education has been something that was recommended by President Reagan to be eliminated and many others since then. U.S. Digital Service—DOGE found U.S. Digital Service was duplicating the private sector. Same with 18F at GSA. So, he has already helped save money by doing that.

Mr. JORDAN. So, Democrats, instead of saying, yes, we should probably not spend \$32,000 for a transgender comic in Peru. Yes, it is probably not a wise expenditure of taxpayer money to have Sesame Street played in Baghdad, Iraq. On all that list, instead of saying we should figure out how we stop that, they are saying, no, no, no, we got to stop the guy who is pointing out the stupid things

that government is spending taxpayer money, the money that people in the 4th District, that I represent, their money on these kind of stupid things.

Now, it is being reported that there is something even maybe worse going on. It has been reported today that media outlets were paid millions of dollars by USAID. Now, the media outlets are saying this is for subscriptions to their publication, but I find that interesting, and one of the particulars that is pointed out, the FDA paid *Politico* \$517,000 for 37 subscriptions. That seems kind of high to me. Does that seem that way to you, Mr. Schatz?

Mr. SCHATZ. Doing the math quickly, that seems excessive, yes.

Mr. JORDAN. Yes. That seems a lot for now. Maybe there is some explanation here, you know. Maybe *Politico* is so darn important that it costs that much and taxpayer money should be spent, but I find that interesting, particularly \$517,000 for 37 subscriptions, when it is the government paying the press. Does that in some way maybe jeopardize the free press that we are supposed to have in our great country?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, it is certainly something that taxpayers probably did not know until today. I did not know that.

Mr. JORDAN. Did not know until today, and it is also government paying the press that kind of money. Thirty-seven subscriptions will give you half a million dollars. Might *Politico* write favorable things about the particular administration that is paying that money? I do not know. I am not saying that happened, but you can sure look at some of the things that has been reported by some of the press, particularly *Politico*, and you cannot help but ask that question.

Governor REYNOLDS, I got, like, 50 seconds. You came all the way from the great state of Iowa. I will give you a chance to comment on any of the things I raised there, but I do think this is amazing. The guy who is pointing out the stupid things the government spends money on, that is who gets attacked versus, no, let us fix the stupid things and not spend money on them. I just do not get that, and I think the American people have common sense, and that is how they look at it. My guess is, I know lots of good people in Iowa, they have lots of common sense, that is probably how they look at it.

Governor REYNOLDS. That is exactly how they look at it \$36 trillion in debt, \$2 trillion annually being added to the debt. Kevin and I have 11 grandchildren. I want them to have the same opportunity I did growing up, and I appreciate President Trump trying to rightsize the ship and get it back in line, and I do not hear any answers to the contrary. What are their answers except for leave everything the way it is, and that is not working, so thank you.

Mr. JORDAN. That is not what you did in Iowa. You did not leave everything the way it is.

Governor REYNOLDS. That is not what we did.

Mr. JORDAN. And you changed things, and taxpayers got more efficient government, which is exactly what we want. I yield back, thank you.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back.

Pursuant to the previous order, the Committee will recess for 5 minutes to accommodate a witness request. This Committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. All right. The Committee will come back to order, and Governor Reynolds has an unmovable conflict, and must leave at 2 p.m., that has just arisen. Without objection, the witness will be excused at that time, and the Committee will proceed.

Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Burlison from Missouri for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the witnesses for coming and for whoever is watching, but what you are witnessing is the dying scream of addicts who realize that tomorrow they are going into recovery because this town—Congress—has been addicted on spending opium, or other people's money, for a long time. And what you are witnessing today is this desperate cry of individuals who do not want to see fiscal responsibility. But we have gotten to this point and it is a point of we are getting close to where we are at a point of no return.

And so, the group called EPIC, which is the Economic Policy Innovation Center, said that we are nearing a fiscal cliff. We are nearing a point in which we are going to start going down a debt spiral. They say that that will occur under current policies if we do not cut any spending in the next 15 years. It gets worse. Fifteen years seems like a long ways out, but you have got to slow this freight train of spending down to have any impact 15 years from now. In addition, the Social Security is going to go bankrupt in 8 years, right, and then Medicare has another ticking time bomb in just 10 short years. So, look, the spending spree is over. We have got to return to some form of fiscal sanity or we will not have a country. This is not a Republican problem or a Democratic problem. This is a math problem, period.

And so, I would have expected Democratic colleagues to see and recognize that this is a serious problem, and let us all get behind this, and figure out a way to solve this problem. And the easy way to do that with the least harm is to figure out how to make government more efficient with the dollars that we are bringing in, right, and reduce that burden on the American people. As was said, we are at \$36 trillion in debt. Our interest is over a trillion dollars a year, which now eclipses all other spending. We are at 120 percent of debt to GDP, so it is absolutely unsustainable. We have never been at that level of debt. Actually, we are beyond the level of debt that we were just after World War II, and we had just finished fighting a World War. This puts us in a very critical situation where, if we are faced with any kind of global conflict, we have no money, we have no room to go.

And then, when it was talked about some of the opportunities for waste and bringing in outside consultants to identify and expose some things because, you know this town is a little bit incestuous. I mean, they generally do not think outside of the box. This town is one really good at doing one thing and that is saying why something cannot be done, right? So, it is good to have people outside of the box come in, like Mr. Musk. And I want to ask Governor

Reynolds, thank you for being here today. I understand in Iowa, you were DOGE before DOGE was cool, right? So, in Iowa, you rely on outside expertise to come in, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes, we did, because, otherwise, I mean, when you are in it, you see it one way and you get accustomed to what you are doing, and I think it is beneficial to have somebody from the outside come in and take a look at some of the practices and some of the initiatives, and how we are operating. So, it was actually beneficial. We hired a consultant to do the alignment, to help really manage it, but to also help us compare how we were doing business with other states. And we are standing up Iowa DOGE, and we are bringing this private sector in again for that very reason so they can look at some of the processes and how government operates, and give us recommendations on what we could do different.

Mr. BURLISON. Yes. Would you embrace if Elon Musk offered to you to come in with no pay, with a team of people with, you know, 200-level IQs, all with no pay?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes, we would.

Mr. BURLISON. Would you embrace that?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes, I would welcome that, especially, when we look at the legacy systems and the antiquated systems that government is working under to have somebody from the private sector, you know, that risks their own capital on an idea to come in and take a look at how we can make government better, I think would be a huge benefit for the taxpayers of Iowa.

Mr. BURLISON. I think DOGE immediately, just in the hiring, probably raised the average IQ of Federal workers here. Let me ask a last question of Mr. Schatz. I understand that the Citizens Against Government Waste publishes an annual report called "Prime Cuts," which makes recommendations. Could you tell us about some of the latest versions of this report and what kind of savings taxpayers, you know, might be able to find, what DOGE might be able to find?

Mr. SCHATZ. "Prime Cuts" comes out annually. We are working on the report for 2024, but 2023 is \$5.1 trillion over 5 years. It addresses things I have discussed already: technology, telecommunications, broadband consolidation, sale of Federal property, which saves \$15 billion over 5 years. Some of them make perfect sense and a lot of them are commonsense, and that is something that, I think, is also in short supply in Washington, DC.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, thank you. My time has expired.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Pressley from Massachusetts.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chair. By the hour, Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and his enablers advance their extremist, anti-equity, un-American agenda, dismantling decades of civil rights progress, upending livelihoods, incomes, and lives, and adversely affecting something they claim to care about, the GDP, because all data supports that diversity, equity, and inclusion is actually good business.

Governor Reynolds, my Republican colleagues invited you here today to promote what they see as a model of governance. Simply put, Republicans' vision of America is to be more like Iowa. Gov-

ernor Reynolds, let us learn more about the state. Do you know what percentage of Iowans are White and what percentage are Black?

Governor REYNOLDS. I do not know the exact percentages now, by far, larger percentage of White population.

Ms. PRESSLEY. That is correct. Iowa is 90 percent White—

Governor REYNOLDS. Ninety, yes.

Ms. PRESSLEY [continuing]. And only 4.5 percent Black, so that is drastically different from the national population. So, when Republicans suggest Iowa should be a national model, they are advocating for a government that does not reflect our country. So let us talk about what this model of governance actually means in practice. In Iowa, you signed state Senate Bill 2385 to eliminate more than 80 state boards and commissions, including those representing Black Iowans, Latinos, women, people with disabilities, and Asian-Pacific Islanders, communities that are marginalized and vulnerable and have fought for decades to have a seat at the table. Now, Republicans call this fiscal responsibility. I just call it erasure.

Governor Reynolds, the Iowa Legislative Services Agency conducted a nonpartisan analysis of that bill. Do you know how much money was saved when you eliminated those commissions?

Governor REYNOLDS. Actually, it was not about saving money. It was about putting more resources behind the Department of Human Rights so that we could actually provide them more resources for minority communities.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Reclaiming my time. Reclaiming my time. Let me help you with the math. Roughly \$112,000 in your state budget was saved, so that is .001 percent, barely a rounding error. So, honestly, given your current salary, Iowans would have saved more money just by eliminating your salary.

Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to enter the LSA Fiscal Note into the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. PRESSLEY. In addition to cutting boards and commissions, Iowa started closing government agencies. Now, this is the same thing that Elon Musk and Donald Trump are trying to do at the national level. Now, Governor Reynolds, let us be clear. I have no problem with Iowans, but I do with your leadership. So, let us look at the results, shall we? In Iowa, there have been skyrocketing maternal mortality rates.

Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record this article titled, "Iowa's Maternal Death Rates Rise as Birthing Units Close."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. PRESSLEY. In Iowa, students test scores have been declining.

Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record this article titled, "Iowa Scores in 50 State Education Rankings Declined from Years Past."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. PRESSLEY. In Iowa, more kids are going hungry. Is this the kind of government efficiency you all are talking about?

Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record this article titled, "Iowa's Food Pantries Hit Record High Numbers This Summer."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. PRESSLEY. So let us be clear about what Republicans are actually doing. You are making people poorer. You are making people hungrier, more vulnerable, and gutting their civil rights. These attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion, they were never about efficiency. They certainly were never about merit. It is just a deliberate, calculated attempt to erase marginalized communities from government, while eliminating essential services for workers, families, and the people that we are actually elected to protect. They want a country for and by millionaires that advances White supremacy, and that is the real agenda, and I will do everything I can to speak truth to power and to stand in the way of that. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlewoman yields back. We got to go to two Democrats now. The Chair recognizes Ms. Randall.

Ms. RANDALL. Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, and thank you for our panelists for taking the time to come before Committee and testify today.

I think we have heard a lot of frustration from my Democratic colleagues in this Committee today, and, you know, on my part. It is frustration that is reflected in the calls and the emails that we are getting from our neighbors, neighbors who are scared at the attempts to come after programs that keep them alive. A Republican colleague equated this work to recovering from addiction, and I think it is important to point out that many government programs are funding, with Medicaid dollars and others, addiction and recovery support that is literally saving people's lives. So, if we are going to spend time dismissing those important lifesaving programs, the important lives of the people we represent, I feel like we are doing a disservice to our neighbors.

I want to talk about some of my neighbors in the 6th congressional District, a district that I have mentioned before, includes many Federal workers, many Federal employees, 27,000 in the 6th congressional District, making up almost 8 percent of our workforce. And these employees are doing lots of different jobs, you know, making sure that we get our mail, providing healthcare service to veterans, and also ensuring that our national defense is well staffed and ready to protect our country when necessary.

I got an email from one such employee who works for Naval Base Kitsap, who had served for 6 years, 4 aboard the USS Jimmy Carter, carrying out missions critical to our national security. And after transitioning to the Federal Government, he finds himself subjected to daily harassment, despite the only goal being to provide for his family. He has not had a day off in 2 weeks because he is supporting the PSNS-IMF mission and is rated 70-percent disabled by the VA, but refuses to let that stop him from doing his job to protect our country. And when my colleagues say that the average IQ has vastly increased because we have let unelected Elon Musk and his cronies enter our government buildings, I am offended on behalf of my constituents, who are working tirelessly to ensure that our government programs are run to the best of

their abilities to make sure that our Country is safe and our neighbors are cared for.

I believe in government accountability. I represented the people of Washington for 6 years in the state legislature, where we have one of the most transparent budgeting operations, and we have a Triple A bond rating. We have good budgeting practices and good programs that invest in community. I believe that government can do both, can invest in our neighbors and be accountable, but we cannot be accountable when we fire all of our inspector generals and take away that watchdog authority.

Dr. Resh, our veterans have sacrificed so much for us, and a 2024 report by the VA inspector general noted that 86 percent of Veterans Health Administration facilities reported severe occupational staff shortages from medical officers, 82 percent had shortages for nurses, and yet we are seeing an unelected billionaire striving to immediately decrease 5 to 10 percent across-the-board cuts to our government's workforce, including the VA. What would happen to agencies and departments like the VA if 5 percent of their employees suddenly left their jobs?

Dr. RESH. Well, again, when you are making broad cuts indiscriminately, you are not choosing, per se, poor performers. You are just making blanket cuts. Again, it is going to create an environment of fear, an environment of uncertainty, and you are certainly not going to be attracting the best people to public service under those conditions. And so, what I would say to you is that what it will do is diminish the very capacity that you are looking for in government. It is almost as if by losing the best people that work for you, being a corporation, firing your accountants, and expecting profits.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady's time has expired. The Chair recognizes Mr. Fallon from Texas.

Mr. FALLON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, you hear a lot of interesting things when you sit on the Oversight Committee. DOGE, it is curious that it seems to me that that is like a dirty word for many Democrats. They recoil when they hear it—DOGE. Or if they say the word, "DOGE," it is at least a bitter taste in the mouth, very acidic. That is a DOGE. But what does it stand for? I will tell you what it does not stand for. It does not stand for oligarch, it does not stand for billionaire, it does not stand for unelected billionaire, it does not stand for Project 2025, and it sure as hell does not stand for Elon Musk. It is the Department of Government Efficiency. Who in their right mind would oppose our Federal Government operating with more—wait for it—efficiency? Who in their right mind believes that a 1.7 million strong civilian Federal workforce operates currently at maximum efficiency? Of course, it does not.

But I figured I would hear certain things, and our colleagues across the aisle did not disappoint. They went to the tact of venerating the flawless Federal worker without whom we would all see our lives disintegrate before our very eyes. How dare we even question these benevolent public servants? In far too many instances, Federal bureaucrats have become not the public servants, but they have evolved into public masters. Now, do some Federal workers do a fabulous job? Absolutely. Do some Federal Agencies provide crit-

ical services for Americans? Of course, but not all, and where there is not value being provided, we need to trim the excess, we need to eliminate waste, we need to expose the abuse, and we need to streamline efficiency.

Take, for instance, the Department of Education. When you say you want to eliminate the Department of Education, liberals' heads will explode, but it was formed in 1979, and when you look at the proficiency in math and reading from 1979 to current day, it is stagnant. It is a rounding error. It goes up a little, goes down a little bit. But when you look at adjusted for inflation, the spending per pupil on education, it was \$9,615 in 1979. It is now just under \$20,000, so, we spent double the money, but it is not reaching classroom performance. Block grants would be a far better way, rather than spending \$79 billion on a Department of Education at the Federal level. We went to the moon without a Department of Education. So, the growth in the Federal Government has been staggering. If you look at just the last 100 years, in 1929, the Federal Government spent \$3.6 billion. Adjusted for inflation, that is \$66 billion. Today, that number is \$7,300 billion, a 110 times in 100 years or 11,100 percent in a century. There are 400 executive branch agencies and subagencies and 1,000 Federal boards and commissions.

I think we should look to the states, and we have Governor Reynolds here. And Governor Reynolds, I commend you for taking the cabinet position numbers from 37 to 16 and eliminating 500 unfilled positions and then eliminating 83 state boards and commissions. How much is it projected to save your taxpayers, Governor?

Governor REYNOLDS. In the first 18 months, it saved \$217 million, and that exceeded what our original projections were for 4 years. So, I will continue to see savings as we move forward as we have really had visibility into the agencies, and look for opportunities to continue to make us better.

Mr. FALLON. Two hundred 17 million dollars, and having been in a state legislature for 8 years, that is real money at the state level, particularly in a state the size of Iowa. What is the feedback you are receiving? Is it Iowans? Not Iowaites, right? Iowans?

Governor REYNOLDS. Iowans, yes.

Mr. FALLON. Iowans, OK. What do Iowans tell you about this?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, they appreciate it. First of all, you know, I have an obligation to make government accountable to the taxpayers, and I want to continue to bring the taxpayer burden down on Iowans, and by keeping spending in check and making government more efficient, we are going to be able to do that. I started my comments today, when I took office, our individual income tax rate was 8.98 percent. Today, January 1, 2025, is 3.8 percent. So, when we saw 9-percent inflation under the Biden Administration, this was a way that I could help give back to Iowans some of their hardworking dollars so that they could offset some of the cost of gas and groceries that they were experiencing.

Mr. FALLON. Governor, what advice would you give the Federal Government as we try to streamline our services for the American taxpayer?

Governor REYNOLDS. Go for it. Everybody is going to tell you, you cannot do it. I have not heard any other suggestions on doing some-

thing different. In Iowa, it had been 40 years since we have taken a look at the structure of government. That is ridiculous. It was bloated. It had grown, and we could do things better, and this has been an opportunity. It changed the culture of our agencies, our cabinet, and most importantly, our employers. They feel like they are making a difference and they are making a difference in how they are serving Iowans.

Mr. FALLON. Amen. Thank you. And coming from Texas and looking at the growth of Texas and Florida, people vote with their feet, and they are moving to the states like, you know, Iowa, Tennessee, Texas, Florida because we are doing it the right way, and at the Federal level, Mr. Chairman, we can and we must do better. Thank you, Governor, and thank you, Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Subramanyam from Virginia.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, I have just been listening to the comments today during this hearing, and I hear these things like we want to trim the inefficiencies in government. We want to do the least amount of harm, is what someone said. We want to get rid of the low-performing employees. But that is not quite what is happening, is it, right? These are blanket cuts across the board that are indiscriminate. And let us be clear, this DOGE effort, it cannot be about just getting rid of waste, fraud, and abuse, because if you look at our Federal spending, civil servants are a drop in the bucket when it comes to our budget. The math does not work actually. In fact, civil servants actually save us a lot of money down the road. They prevent illnesses. They prevent a lot of bad things from happening that would cost us more money down the road. So, you know, yes, there are inefficiencies in government. Let us fix them. That is bipartisan. I have done that work myself, but, you know, if the kitchen cabinets in your house are broken, fix them. Do not burn the house down, right?

And I do not think this is about waste, fraud, and abuse. I think this is about revenge over civil servants who may have slighted the President. I think this is about control over the Federal agencies and Federal Government, ones who especially had actual oversight and did actual regulation of companies that were slighting consumers. And this is about stopping the protections of consumers, and it is about having civil servants with a certain ideology, and this is not legal and this is not constitutional. And I wish we had the DOGE folks in here today, but we do not. So, we just have the Governor of Iowa, and so I will just ask Governor Reynolds, when you made DOGE reforms in Iowa, did you freeze all spending while you were doing your review?

Governor REYNOLDS. No, we did not.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. And when you brought in those consultants, did you let those consultants take over your payment systems and give access to every person's personal health information to them?

Governor REYNOLDS. We did not.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. And do you think it is OK for outside consultants with no security clearance to handle classified documents?

Governor REYNOLDS. No.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. And do you think it is OK for outside consultants to handle sensitive data haphazardly that could cause cybersecurity breaches? I am just curious.

Governor REYNOLDS. You know, that has not been our experience in Iowa.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Yes, and we do not know who the people are. At least you knew who your consultants were, right? We even tried to go into the Treasury building and meet with them, we tried to go into USAID and meet with them, and we were turned away, us, Members of Congress. But the reason I know what is going on inside those buildings is because I have constituents who actually work in those buildings, and let me just tell you some of the stories I am hearing.

One at USDA said that they have frozen funding to control invasive species protections, which would cost us hundreds of millions of dollars if these pests get into our country and devastate crops and livestock in states like Iowa; or at one Agency, one of the DOGE employees came in and said just cut 50 percent of the employees indiscriminately, and then the DOGE employee actually started living inside the building. So, our Federal Agencies are now Airbnbs, apparently. And now we have nuclear scientists that are resigning. We have Ph.D.s. They are not dumb people. They may not have 200 IQs, but it does not seem like the DOGE people do either. But what they are doing is they are resigning because they do not want to put up with this anymore, and it is going to be hard to replace these folks. It is going to be a brain drain on our Federal Government.

This is not the rightsizing of government. This is the dumbsizing of government, and it has to stop, and Congress has oversight over this. This Committee has oversight over this, but what are we doing about it? We are talking to the Governor of Iowa. No offense. We are talking to think tanks. We are talking to folks that are not actually doing this work. Let us actually give the American people answers, let us give our constituents answers, and let us actually use Congress' powers to fight this or at least figure out how we can work together to fix what is wrong in government. I am down to do that. I know both sides of the aisle want to fix what is wrong in government. The American people deserve to know, though, what is going on right now, why it is happening, and how to fix this, but what is happening right now is way overstepping the bounds of executive power. It is overstepping Congress' power. We are getting rid of agencies that Congress authorized. We are going way over the line here, and this is unprecedented and needs to stop.

And so, we are going to continue to ask questions. We are going to continue to ask for hearings, and we are going to continue to ask for the people who are actually doing this because we want answers. I yield my time to the Ranking Member.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And I would just ask the gentleman from Virginia, and we want to add to that, we want Elon Musk to come here, since he is an unelected, unaccountable, major player in all of this, unlike the process in Iowa, which was transparent and accountable, in order to answer to this Committee in our legitimate oversight functions. Is that not correct?

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Absolutely. That is correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the gentleman.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes myself for the purpose of asking questions.

Governor REYNOLDS, again, thank you for being here. You are a role model for government efficiency, that is why we asked you to come in, and you have done a tremendous job explaining what you did in Iowa, as we work, at least on this side of the aisle, to sincerely try to reform government and reduce unnecessary spending in Washington. I understand you were asked a question that mischaracterized a bill you signed a couple years ago that addressed the Iowa State Auditor. Can you talk about why the legislature passed the bill?

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes. The bill was passed, again, to promote government efficiency, so it completely fell in line with the government efficiency and alignment bill that we were working on. And what it did, is it required that two government agencies to mediate conflicts rather than going to the court and racking up legal bills that the taxpayers have to pay for, so it did not limit the Auditors' access to necessary information. It was more about the process of when two agencies disagreed that they could actually mediate their conflicts instead of taking it through the courts racking up additional cost on taxpayers.

Chairman COMER. Right. Like you worked with your legislature to amend laws that needed change to complete your alignment, President Trump has said he will work with Congress where he needs to, but he will take executive action where he can. You did that too, correct?

Governor REYNOLDS. I did the same thing. When we started, I did it through 28E agreements. I had one Director acting for both Public Health and Human Services. We did it through a 28E or an MOU. We did a proof of concept, and then we took it through the legislature. I also did executive orders with the rules moratorium. We put that and initiated that with an executive order, and then when we took the next step, we actually took it through Congress when it needed a statute change to implement some of the ideas that we did, either through an executive order that I stood up or through a 28E. Then we brought in the Congress and utilized them to make the statute reflect for what we were doing.

Chairman COMER. Great. You eliminated a host of state agencies, commissions. It saved money and streamlined the state bureaucracy. I wonder, did you encounter opposition from entrenched interest when you did that?

Governor REYNOLDS. You know, we really did not, but I will say we did a lot of the homework on the front end, and these were commonsense changes.

Chairman COMER. Right.

Governor REYNOLDS. As I talked about, you cannot have different functions spread about across multiple agencies and expect to be efficient. So, we brought in the directors early, we brought in the leaders, we brought in the Chairs, we worked, reached out to stakeholders, but no. And the few incidents where there were some concerns that were raised, it never came to bear.

Chairman COMER. So, it sounds like people in Iowa were serious about reforming government.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes.

Chairman COMER. I do not get that feeling in Washington, DC, at least with half of the Congress. What sort of blowback did these proposals get when they were first announced?

Governor REYNOLDS. Well, again, I mean, we had not looked at the government structure for 40 years, so I do not think they were surprised. I had done a complete tax overhaul. Again, I started with the merger between Public Health and with Human Services, and so I had a great proof of concept. So, as we worked with the directors, we were also able to anticipate what some of the arguments might be, what some of the opposition would be, so we could do the research on the front end to be able to provide the answers to the individuals about why we were doing what we did, and it was very, very effective. But it is hard to argue that it does not make sense to not have licensing spread across 11 agencies or to put 100 troopers back on the road by putting your Motor Vehicle Enforcement Unit in with the Department of Public Safety. That is 100 troopers that we were able to put on the road.

Chairman COMER. Absolutely. Did some say that your proposals would disrupt government services and lead to other problems?

Governor REYNOLDS. A lot of it was the existing—maybe some of the agencies that we were moving off the cabinet—

Chairman COMER. The agencies, yes.

Governor REYNOLDS. It was the agencies, not the individuals, not Iowans, that had the most pushback.

Chairman COMER. I think that is who is leading a lot of the—

Governor REYNOLDS. It was the agencies.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Fear and criticism of Elon Musk. I think it is some of the Federal agencies and Federal employees who are about to be disrupted.

Governor REYNOLDS. Yes, yes. That saw kind of their territory being uprooted.

Chairman COMER. So, were their fears proven to be overblown? Was there damage, if any?

Governor REYNOLDS. There was not damage, and we have not had really any pushback whatsoever, and I keep saying this, but even the employees and the agencies, they love the culture that we are creating. There is actually more upward mobility within the agencies because we have broadened their scope on what they can impact, and they love that. They like being a part of that.

Chairman COMER. Were people in Iowa ever allowed to work from home for years after COVID?

Governor REYNOLDS. No, not for years.

Chairman COMER. OK. So, that is part of the problem. I think that is what set the ball rolling of fear and opposition among a lot of the Federal employees are so many in this town that that are still working from home because of COVID years later. So, they have been brought back to work. And now we are talking about bringing agencies in and letting them justify their existence and cutting agencies, and cutting wasteful spending, and eliminating duplicative services, and eliminating duplicative agencies, and it has just created all this fear and mass hysteria with my colleagues

across the aisle. But we are committed to work with this Administration to reduce and eliminate unnecessary spending and wasteful spending, and hopefully, we will be able to do that like you did in Iowa.

Governor REYNOLDS. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, Governor.

Governor REYNOLDS. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Ansari.

Ms. ANSARI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses for being here today. This is an unprecedented moment in our Nation's history. Donald Trump and an unelected billionaire, Elon Musk, are illegally dismantling our government, agency by agency, and illegally stealing your data, your money, and your services. I would love for Mr. Musk to come here and testify before this Committee so we can understand his qualifications to do this because last I checked, running a social media platform does not qualify you for understanding how the U.S. Government works and making sure that it can operate and serve the American people.

One of my Republican colleagues just went after the IQ of Federal workers. They want us to think that Federal workers are faceless, nameless bureaucrats, roaming in the halls of Washington, DC, when the reality is that over 85 percent of Federal employees live outside of Washington, DC, and they are your neighbors, your friends, and your families. More than 34,000 Federal employees live in Arizona, and about 7,000 live in my district. They make sure that your highways are running smoothly and safely so we can get to work on time. They make sure your grandparents get their Social Security checks on time so that they can afford food.

In my district, we have multiple VA health centers to make sure our veterans get access to basic healthcare. Maricopa County, one of the largest counties in the United States, has over 245,000 veterans who do not know if they are going to keep getting their benefits. That is absurd and disrespectful to so many Arizonans who put their lives on the line for this country. Because of the Musk funding freezes, I had constituents calling my office panicking about whether they would be able to get urgent surgeries. Renters on subsidies are distressed about whether or not they will get aid or get evicted and end up on the streets. Even after Trump realized how disastrous his misguided freezes were and reversed some of them, there are healthcare clinics in my district that are laying off staff and cutting critical programs, like STD prevention and substance abuse care, because they were labeled as DEI. Republicans want to take a vote about fentanyl later today, and yet they are cutting care to get people off of fentanyl.

I previously served as the vice mayor of Phoenix, Arizona, the fifth largest city in the country, and I can tell you firsthand how much Federal funding and agencies matter to a city like Phoenix. It literally keeps your grandparents and your children fed, your streets safe, your public safety and police and fire running, makes sure public transportation is operating, and that air conditioning is running during our extremely hot summers. While Trump and Musk are allegedly concerned about making our government more efficient, they want to lay off and dismantle the very people and departments who are keeping the country running. These loyal,

dedicated employees are doing more and more with less and have been for decades.

[Chart]

Ms. ANSARI. This graph shows the Federal workforce. It has remained at nearly the same level for 50 years, while the U.S. population has grown by 100 million people. The bottom line is that Donald Trump and Elon Musk are lying to you. They are lying to the American people under the guise of efficiency. They are dismantling every department. That is not efficiency. They are breaking down the government illegally, from USAID, that is vital for national security, to the Department of Education, to the Department of Labor, to the Environmental Protection Agency. They are going after your healthcare, your schools, your safety, your data, illegally and unvetted. And what is the ultimate aim for all of this? To distract the American people, to cut a little bit of money so that they can gift their billionaire buddies with massive tax cuts. Just watch them. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would you yield to the Ranking Member?

Ms. ANSARI. I yield back to the Ranking Member.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you. Just real quickly. And does Elon Musk bring some specialty or some expertise in terms of ameliorating, or cutting back, or pruning, or making qualitative judgments about the value of the programs you described that are being hurt right now? Does he bring some special expertise to that task?

Ms. ANSARI. He does not. He has not shown any interest in the issues that affect Phoenix or any other city that I have heard of.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And that would be quite different than the process that we saw unfold in the reform effort in Iowa, would it not?

Ms. ANSARI. What I heard from the Governor was very different than what I have seen thus far. There were no funding freezes. You know, programs were actually being evaluated. It sounds like what was happening in Iowa was actually about efficiency where this is about illegally dismantling our government and taking away from the American people.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Chairman COMER. Pursuant to the previous order, Governor Reynolds is excused, and, Governor, thank you so much for appearing here today.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. McGuire.

Mr. MCGUIRE. I would ask the Governor a question, but I understand you have to go, but I just cannot tell you how much our country is grateful to what you have done in Iowa, and I am so excited that you are going to continue that type of efficiency and work with DOGE and with President Trump's Administration. We have a great country and it needs to make sense, and I love what you said. We need the best practices and the right people. Thank you.

So, my questions, I will divert those questions a little bit, but first of all, I would say is that I do not think we can remind folks, especially folks on the other side, enough, is that through the grace of God, President Trump won a mandate on November 5. He won the popular vote, the Electoral College, and the American people have spoken. I do not understand why every time he puts in an executive order or makes a decision, it surprises folks because every

decision I am seeing is what he campaigned on, and that is what the American people voted for.

I would tell you this: there is a war on common sense, and it is really an effort for all of us to bring our country back to common sense. We have to have a meritocracy. We have to have the right people in the right place, or people get killed, and we do not have time to go over all the examples. I would say, as a small business owner, if the government was a business, the government would be out of business. We are spending more per day than we bring in per day, and that is not sustainable.

If the government were to build a car, first of all, it would cost overruns, it would cost a million dollars, and nobody in this room would buy it. It is amazing what the free market can do and how innovative it is. Elon Musk created this rocket for 10 times cheaper what it would cost the government to do the same thing. And I heard some folks on the other side talk about these young people involved in what is going on with our data, but I want to remind them that young people are very capable. You ought to research the ages of our founding fathers, like Thomas Jefferson, when they created this amazing country. Young people saved the world during World War II on the Normandy beaches from Nazism.

So, young people are quite capable, and if you have the bright young minds, I got to tell you, as a veteran, if you saved my life on the battlefield, I would not care if you call yourself a Democrat, Republican, Independent. I do not care if you are young or old, or pink or blue. We are all Americans, and we are in big trouble, and I think we are on the way to a sovereign debt crisis because we are spending so much. And I hear this talk, and we all know the government is not efficient. We, in corporate America, and the corporate world is talking about how people perform better face-to-face in an office environment, and so we want to bring people back to work. Yet folks on the other side are saying it is a terrible thing to bring people back to work. I got to tell you, people in my district have to go to work every day, and they do not understand why people who work in the government do not have to go back to work.

We also heard a testimony in this Committee about a week or so ago about a guy, it took him 3 years to fire. I talked to a very, very successful businessman at breakfast yesterday, and he said, if we have a guy who is not performing, we get rid of him in 3 minutes. We need to make the right decision. So, my first question, and I apologize if I pronounce your name wrong, Mr. Schatz?

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes, sir.

Mr. MCGUIRE. So, thank you for your work to find ways to make the government more efficient, but I wish I could have asked this to the Governor, but she had three Presidential disasters declared in her state. And what are some things that you think we could have done better, more efficient, if we would have returned that power to the actual states or to the governors when they have these disasters?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, I think President Trump initially talked about eliminating FEMA, but then he said he would like to reallocate that money back to the states. The first line in any kind of disaster is local officials. FEMA comes in late. It takes a while to get the money. There is a lot of red tape. I think it is an area that abso-

lutely needs to be examined. By the way, the other way to address this is to set up a Federal fund that Congress provides every year so that you do not have to have these special appropriations, supplemental appropriations, that then add on other funding for things that have nothing to do with the initial disaster, and a lot of states have these rainy day or reserve funds. I think that would address the different aspect of emergency spending, but it would also reduce the need to have FEMA run out there every time something happens.

Mr. MCGUIRE. That makes a lot of sense. When is the last time our government passed a budget for Congress?

Mr. SCHATZ. It has only been done 4 times, I believe, since 1974.

Mr. MCGUIRE. Would you agree at the rate that we are growing government, that we are in danger of a sovereign debt crisis?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, it is \$36 trillion now, going to grow by \$2 trillion annually over the next 10 years. And yes, everybody says, oh, when is it going to happen, but we are really robbing our children and grandchildren of their future when we keep doing this.

Mr. MCGUIRE. Yes. If we can make one best decision to fix this, what would you do?

Mr. SCHATZ. Oh, part of what this Committee is doing today is determine which programs are essential, which are functions that only the government should be doing and if the private sector can do it. President Reagan talked about the Yellow Pages test. Now, there are no more yellow pages, but pretty common sense to have a business answer or have the private sector do something, usually it is more efficient or at least match them, see which performs better.

Mr. MCGUIRE. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Bell.

Mr. BELL. Thank you. Today marks just over 2 weeks since the Trump Administration took office. In the last 16 days, we have witnessed an unprecedented, full-blown attack on Federal workers and the services they provide to people at home in our districts, a power grab by the DOGE and unelected officials, like Elon Musk, that have the ear of the President. So, to my colleagues, I am not surprised by the President's executive orders, but as a prosecutor, the rule of law matters.

I hear about telework and we need to get people back to work, but several of my colleagues and myself went to USAID, and the Administration had told them to telework and to stay home. So, I am a bit confused on the value of these arguments, or what have you. The President has instituted a hiring freeze, slapped Federal workplaces with hostile and counterproductive policy changes, took action to potentially purge large swaths of the Federal workforce, and weaponize career professionals by threatening involuntary reassignments. Trump also sent Federal employees an email offering them free pay and benefits until September 2025, if they agree to resign on by February 6. Dr. Resh, will this approach lead to the retention of our best and brightest Federal workers?

Dr. RESH. No, it will not. When they have blanket fires, again, the people who stay are likely to be the poorest performers. The ones that go under those conditions are likely to be those that are

more competitive on an occupational job market, and so, therefore, it will likely lead to brain drain as opposed to the retention of the best employees.

Mr. BELL. And let me ask you this. What would accepting this offer mean for Federal workers across the country, including the nearly 13,000 Federal workers in my district?

Dr. RESH. Well, first of all, I am not sure that accepting it is legal in terms of saying that if you do not do it by February 6, but if you do do it, that you will be put on administrative leave and paid through September 30. I believe the cap on any type of action like that is \$20,000. That would not meet the several months that most employees are using.

Mr. BELL. Trump also took the——

Dr. RESH. I mean, already making. Sorry. Sorry.

Mr. BELL. That is OK. Trump also took the unprecedented and illegal move of freezing trillions of dollars in Federal funding, throwing the entire country in the chaos. I spoke with Dr. Kendra Holmes, head of Affinia Healthcare, who feared that this would impact their ability to provide essential and critical care at their community health centers. I spoke with Dwayne Butler, the CEO of People's Health Centers in St. Louis, who said the action would have a significant adverse impact on not only healthcare centers, but so many other federally funded companies and programs. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education had to pause payments to daycare providers, and school districts in St. Louis County were concerned about their ability to feed and support their students. Dr. Resh, did the Administration's actions reflect standard operating procedure for rightsizing our government?

Dr. RESH. No, they do not. In fact, they increase inefficiencies. Many of our partners, whether they be private sector partners, universities, nonprofits, first of all, have to also pause their operations. They have uncertainty in the reliability of the Federal Government as a partner, and, yes, I think that is enough to get the picture.

Mr. BELL. Our Federal workers go to work every day dedicated to serving the American people. They are the reason that communities across the country receive critical Federal funds that support healthcare, safety, education, and infrastructure. They deliver congressionally mandated services and administer congressionally directed funds. The Trump Administration should be supporting them in their mission to deliver the best possible services to the American people, not making that mission impossible. We cannot and will not allow a takeover of our government or our democracy. Thank you, and I yield my time to the Ranking Member.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the gentleman for what he just said, and I know that my constituents, as well as his, who work for the Federal Government, appreciate it. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Gill from Texas.

Mr. GILL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for putting on this hearing. You know what? It is great to be on the side of the aisle after having won a massive mandate from the American people, President Trump, of course, winning not only the Electoral College, but the popular vote, delivering us a Majority in the House and in the Senate. It is kind of funny to me because we have seen such outrage over DOGE, as if this is something that is new.

Whenever I have been talking to my constituents in North Texas for months and months and months about President Trump coming to the White House and getting Elon Musk involved in cleaning up waste in our Federal Government, it seems to me that leftists are apoplectic, not because our tax dollars are being wasted on idiotic things, but because all of it is being exposed all of the sudden, which I think is certainly a beautiful thing. So much of this government waste has been operating in the shadows where the American people do not know about it and has been largely unaccounted for, and so many of these programs would not exist and will not exist now that they are being exposed.

I could give so many examples of wasteful spending, but I would like to name just a few and get you all's opinion on these. Just recently, the Department of Health and Human Services spent over \$400,000 studying whether lonely rats seek cocaine more often than happy rats do. Mr. Schatz, thank you for being here. I would like to ask you, do you think that that is a responsible use of taxpayer dollars?

Mr. SCHATZ. No, it is not, and those are the examples that get people interested in doing more about wasteful spending. They are silly, but it is where their money is going.

Mr. GILL. That is exactly right, and, Mr. Resh, let me ask you, do you think that it is responsible for the Federal Government to tax working-class American citizens to pay for studies that cost over \$400,000, asking whether lonely rats seek cocaine more often than happy rats do?

Dr. RESH. I have no position on that particular policy. I would need to know more.

Mr. GILL. You have no position on whether we should be——

Dr. RESH. I would need to know much more——

Mr. GILL [continuing]. Spending taxpayer dollars getting rats high on cocaine?

Dr. RESH. I know that addiction is an important problem, and if it leads to insights that lead to reductions in addiction, I am sure that it has a multiplying effect. If that is the case, you would have to see the indicator.

Mr. GILL. I agree. I am going to reclaim my time here. I agree that addiction is a very serious problem, but I doubt that the plumbers, and electricians, and working-class citizens of North Texas, that I represent, are going to be very happy whenever they find out that they are paying to get rats high. Let me give you another example. We have recently spent \$123,000 to teach youth in Kyrgyzstan how to go viral. Mr. Schatz, do you think that that is a good use of taxpayer dollars?

Mr. SCHATZ. No, I do not.

Mr. GILL. I do not either. What about you, Mr. Resh?

Dr. RESH. I have no position.

Mr. GILL. No position. OK. Got it. Let us do another one then. We have recently spent over \$3 million from the Department of State for girl-centered climate action. Mr. Schatz, is that an appropriate use of our tax dollars?

Mr. SCHATZ. I do not think so.

Mr. GILL. Mr. Resh?

Dr. RESH. No position.

Mr. GILL. No position. Got it. What about, you know, over the past 4 years, the United States has had a grotesque border crisis that was created by the Federal Government in the Biden administration. Nevertheless, we spent over \$2 million for border security in Paraguay. Mr. Schatz, let me ask you, do you think that that is an appropriate use, given the context of American taxpayer dollars?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, only if it impacted immigrants or whatever you want to call them, people coming to the United States illegally. That might have some merit, but it depends on the purpose.

Mr. GILL. I agree. What about you, Mr. Resh?

Dr. RESH. Again, it depends on the purpose and the outcome.

Mr. GILL. Got it. I think that that is incredibly enlightening. You know, over the past couple weeks really, we have seen all of the nonsensical areas that we found that our tax dollars have gone to. Our taxpayer dollars, we just found out today, are being sent to left-wing media outlets, like *Politico* and the *BBC*. We have known for a long time that our tax dollars are funding NPR and PBS. We have seen our tax dollars go to left-wing NGOs. And I think that the takeaway is that large portions of the left's institutional ecosystem are dependent upon taxpayer subsidies, and I think that that is a problem. I am thrilled DOGE is here because we are going to get rid of it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Ms. Simon.

Ms. SIMON. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and Ranking Member, and thank you, witnesses, for coming to speak with us today. I really appreciate the conversation, and like much of the testimony and conversations I am hoping to have and hear during my time in Oversight, I think that there are spaces where we should all agree government should be more efficient, absolutely. As someone who went through college and had to bring my baby to childcare, I get it. I understand. And I remember when that childcare was shut down, I could not go to class. I could not go to my night job. I get it. I am right there with so much of the conversation.

What is interesting, though, to me, is last week when I returned to my district, I went to go visit, like many Members, organizations that are providing work on the ground for almost vulnerable populations. I was prepared to offer a check that an organization, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, had earned through a grant process to extend housing to elderly Asian Americans in the East Bay. Again, these are the descendants of the folks who built the West, elderly folks seeking and needing low-income housing. Clearly, they are not going to get that money right now. Housing is on the line, as is child care, as is Medicaid, as is Medicare. After this meeting, I will go and visit the president of a children's hospital. He is in my office right now, and I went to go literally sit with the folks in the NICU last week. Care is in jeopardy. There is a heart transplant that is in jeopardy, a small child. I would like for us to look in the faces of that parent.

What is really interesting to me—I actually have a question for you, Dr. Resh. Like you, I have had this amazing benefit to study government budgeting. I have an M.P.A. with a focus on municipal and Federal finance. I have a lot to learn, as we all do. But in un-

derstanding where we are in this push by DOGE and our colleagues to look at government spending, which I agree we have got to figure it out, I am curious because this rip-off we are talking about. Again, halting essential services for people to live in communities—where there is waste, let us get rid of it—but by freezing basic services?

I want to ask you this. By weakening the country's social service structure within a week, causing chaos, would you agree with me that instead of going after the Department of Education, again, if you have a young woman in college and she is abused, the Department of Education has an infrastructure to investigate that rape. I can go on and on. They do. We get rid of the Department of Ed, what happens there? Instead of going after the Department of Ed and USAID, wouldn't it make a lot of sense for us to think about other areas that are right in our face?

Listen, the constituents of California's 12th District are paying over \$6 billion in tax dollars for DoD. That could pay for 35,000 registered nurses per year and salaries of 50,000 elementary school teachers. If we are serious, sir, about rightsizing our government, I would recommend that we start there in an institution, in a Department that has failed seven audits—seven audits—with an estimated multitrillion dollars of waste and abuse in contracts that go to private companies. I would love to know, Dr. Resh, your thoughts are on where we should start.

Dr. RESH. Congresswoman, thank you for the question. I would just like to note that throughout this testimony, I have been asked questions about a very, very insignificant proportion of our Federal budget, and that is domestic discretionary spending. If the Committee is serious about rightsizing government in terms of dollars, that very tiny proportion of our overall Federal budget has seemed to be the focus throughout this meeting. A \$14,000 grant to something through AID is nothing compared to the nondiscretionary funds. But if we were talking about the Department of Defense, it is not subject to some of the same scrutiny as well as these programs that offer social services, and so on down the line.

Ms. SIMON. Thank you to all the witnesses that came today and thank you, Dr. Resh, for your answer. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Jack from Georgia.

Mr. JACK. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for letting me get a little exercise this morning. I appreciate that. I want to start by saying, throughout this hearing, I have heard over and over and over again from our colleagues on the other side, Elon Musk's name invoked, and to me, it rings very similar to what I experienced over the last 9 years I have worked for President Trump. It seems like the Democrat playbook from 2015 through 2025 has been to singularly target one individual and over and over and over, repeat talking points against that individual, and some pre-political advice, in 2016, it did not work. In 2020, House Republicans gained seats. In 2022, we gained seats. In 2024, Donald Trump delivered one of the most impressive historic landslide victories we have ever seen, and it is because he offers solutions to the American people, and that is exactly what we, House Republicans, are doing.

I want to spend my time today engaging with Mr. Schatz, talking about a solution that I campaigned on, something that really resonated with the constituents across my district. And I will predicate by noting I am probably one of the few Members on this Committee who actually was a Federal employee. From 2017 to 2021, I served in the Executive Office of the President as the President's White House Political Director. And one of the things that I was tasked with while working for the President was helping move departments and agencies outside of Washington, DC, so that they could be headquartered in areas that are more reflective of the people they are targeting or designed to serve.

And, Mr. Schatz, in your testimony, I very much appreciated you noting that 17 of the 24 agencies only use an average of 25 percent of Agency headquarters office space, American taxpayers paying for office space that is not being used, and it is one of the things that I am very passionate about. In 2019, we relocated large agencies in the Department of the Interior to Colorado. We found a lot of success in doing so. So, I just would love to get your thoughts and comments on that. I think that is an innovative solution that this Congress can move forward and something President Trump campaigned on, and I am so proud the American people gave him the victory and affirmation for that.

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, thank you, Congressman, and we completely agree with that concept because it would enable the Federal Government to work more closely with state agencies that, in many cases, perform a lot of the same functions, and that is another form of duplication. That is not necessarily turning those functions over to the states, but it is determining where it might be more effective and more efficient, and deliver those services. And just briefly, the objective of an agency should be to deliver a service to someone, period, and then determine how that gets done and then determine how much it costs, and the reverse is true. It is spend the money, and if that does not work, spend more money, and do not take the time to figure out what works. This would be very helpful to reaching that conclusion.

Mr. JACK. Well, in that vein, and as my esteemed colleague to my left, Mr. Gill, noted, all the money previously spent by USAID, I have to imagine the people of Texas's 26th congressional District or Georgia's 3d congressional District would not have made those decisions had they been employees at that Agency headquarters.

And in that vein, I just want to also note for the record, you would have to drive an hour from where we sit right now to reach a precinct that voted for President Trump. Yet, of course, we saw a landslide victory across our country. To me, you need a Federal workforce that is reflective of the balance that America is, and in this general area, we have got 90 percent–95 percent Democrat participation in elections. To me, that is from where our Federal workforce is coming. That is why we have so many problems that we have discussed here today.

I also want to note, Mr. Schatz, your leadership at Citizens Against Government Waste has led to trillions of dollars of savings for Americans. You have done an incredible service to your country, and I just want to close with a final question to you. Based on your wealth and knowledge and experience, what are the most promi-

ment patterns or locations that you find waste, fraud, and abuse in our Federal Government? Any advice to the Committee before I finish?

Mr. SCHATZ. Well, it runs across all agencies. And I would note on the Department of Defense, when the Grace Commission made its recommendations and found \$424.4 billion in savings, 25 percent of that was in the Department of Defense. As has been noted, they failed an audit. Joint Strike Fighter is pretty much of a mess. Less than half, about 55 percent, of them are available for use, so the procurement system needs a lot of reform. Information technology, 80 percent of the systems are legacy systems, and some of them, they are so old that you cannot find people to fix them or service them, and that is an investment, in our view, that is worth making. Upgrade those systems, and then people will be able to find out from the click of a button, you know, what is going on with their money, and that would be extremely helpful for transparency, accountability, and more efficiency.

Mr. JACK. Well, I am grateful for your testimony today. I hope every Committee Member reads all the innovative solutions that you have offered us. And likewise, I hope my colleagues join me in helping relocate our departments and agencies outside of Washington, DC. I yield back to our distinguished Chairman, Mr. Comer.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Min from California.

Mr. MIN. Mr. Schatz, Dr. Resh, thank you for testifying today. Now, this hearing is happening because of Republican concerns about the size of our government, but I would submit they are missing basic economics here and, particularly, the chapter on public goods. As a reminder, public goods are things that governments provide that we all benefit from. National defense, infrastructure, education, police, firefighting, air traffic control, all examples of public goods. And the most important thing to recognize is that these are all things that private markets typically do not provide on their own. So, when we are talking about making cuts to the FAA budget for air traffic controllers, understand that no one is going to fill that gap to make our skies safer. When we cut the budget for FDA and USDA inspections, no one is going to step up to come and ensure that our foods and drugs are safe. That is why the government provides these things.

Now, I realize it makes for a great talking point to talk about getting rid of waste in government, and I am sure there are many examples we can point to. I know my colleagues have pointed to some, if we look closely enough. Just as I am sure we can find lots of examples of waste and corruption in large private companies as well, but here is the thing. The reality is that what you are looking for is just not possible at the scale you are talking about.

Elon Musk and many of my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle have publicly stated that their intention is to cut \$2 trillion from the Federal budget. The problem is that this is just bad math, and, yes, I am Asian, and yes, I am pretty good at math, but you do not have to be very good at math to understand this.

[Chart]

Mr. MIN. The chart behind me illustrates very clearly the entire domestic discretionary budget that is the primary focus of today's hearing is only \$917 billion. You can cut everything—education, food safety, air traffic safety, wildfire prevention, affordable housing, the FBI, the DOJ—and you are still not even halfway to the amount that Elon Musk and the Republicans are trying to cut. You can fire every single person in the Federal Government. That is 4 percent of the Federal budget, a tiny fraction of what you are looking to cut right now. You can cut all military spending, \$805 billion. You are still not there.

So, let us be realistic and talk about what is really at stake here. When we are talking about \$2 trillion, we are talking about nondiscretionary spending, which is a fancy way of saying Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. These are earned benefits, the checks that my mom and dad rely on for their retirement, that your moms and dads and grandmas and grandpas rely on, that they spent their lifetimes paying into. And let us be clear: this is what Elon Musk and many of my Republican colleagues are targeting right now. They have made it very clear with their statements, such as when Nancy Mace in March 2023 called for a huge cut to Social Security saying, "Everything is on the table."

And so that brings me to my first question. Dr. Resh, I assume you are familiar with the United States Constitution?

Dr. RESH. Yes, sir.

Mr. MIN. Article I, Section 1 states, "All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in the Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives." Article I, Section 9 gives exclusive authority for appropriations to Congress. Are you aware of any provisions in the Constitution that allow the President of the United States to unilaterally take away Congress' legislative and appropriations authority?

Dr. RESH. I am not.

Mr. MIN. Are you aware of any provisions in the Constitution that allow a special governmental employee appointed by the President to take away Congress' powers?

Dr. RESH. I am not.

Mr. MIN. Are you aware of any references in the Constitution to efficiency?

Dr. RESH. I am not.

Mr. MIN. That is right because they do not exist. Because efficiency, while important, is not something that the founders thought was a constitutional priority. Founders were very aware that democracy was a messy and inefficient way of running a government. It would be far more efficient to have a monarch or dictator decide how to fund programs rather than have 435 members of the House and 100 senators debate and deliberate and vote about it. But this country was not founded as a monarchy, not founded as a dictatorship because we expressly decided that democratic representation, as inefficient as it might be, was more important than pure efficiency, and that is the point that my Republican colleagues need to recognize.

We can debate our views on Social Security and Medicare and government spending. In fact, it is critically important that we do that, but those debates belong here in Congress. And we should not

lose sight of the fact that Elon Musk, an unelected billionaire, is playing God with the Federal Government, deciding at whim which programs and agencies he wants to “delete” at the flip of a switch. Elmo has gained control over our Federal payment systems. He has universally declared that certain agencies we have created here in Congress are terminated. He has locked Federal employees out of their systems, and he is threatening to end Federal disbursements that he does not like. This is all illegal and grossly unconstitutional. The United States of America is not a monarchy, it is not a dictatorship, and Elon Musk is breaking the law repeatedly by taking Congress’ legislative authority.

So, to my Republican colleagues, I want to plead with you. This is not a partisan issue. It is your authority here in Congress that is being stolen by Elon Musk right now. If you do not speak up, you are going to permanently lose your legislative authority. We all swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, and that is what I am asking you all to do. We have an obligation to uphold the rule of law and defend the Constitution against this unprecedented assault. I yield to the Ranking Member.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I have 3 seconds, so thank you. I thank the gentleman for his observations and for his cogent points.

Mr. MIN. I also would like to request unanimous consent to enter into the record a *New York Times* article titled, “U.S. Agencies Fund and Fight with Elon Musk. A Trump Presidency Could Give Him More of Them”——

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. MIN [continuing]. Which describes how Elon Musk’s work “promised \$3 billion across nearly 100 different contracts last year with 17 Federal agencies.”

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered. We got it.

Mr. MIN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I also have a unanimous consent request, Mr. Chairman. I ask unanimous consent that the statements of the American Federation of Government Employees and National Active and Retired Federal Employees be entered into the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And I further ask unanimous consent that the article, “DOGE Aides Search Medicare Agency,” also be entered into the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the Chair.

Chairman COMER. The Chair organizes Ms. Tlaib.

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. Since we are entering items to the record, it is really important, as I do a lot of these question lines, to center it around my constituents and my residents, who very much feel like there is so much instability and chaos right now. So, if I may, I would like to submit a letter from the CEO and founder of Cody Rouge Action Alliance in the 12th congressional District in Michigan, just about the freezing of the funds and what it meant for her seniors and many of the community members that she supports. Many of them are retirees. Many of them rely heavily on this Agency to, again, supplement the high cost of living right now for many of our families. And so if I may, I would ask unanimous consent to, again, send this letter.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. TLAI. Thank you. You know, I want to cut through the B.S. because I am from Detroit, and we like to speak truth to power and be very honest. You know, the American people feel very much we are in a constitutional crisis. They cannot understand, you know, this billionaire. I do not even know really how to describe him. Of course he is the richest man in the world, and to think that he can just walk in to an agency that I can tell you for many of my families from Social Security and Medicare, I mean, it is literally part of how they survive in our country, and it is not just about the private information. It is about this person—the fact that they did not get to elect him. He is not held accountable to them, the community, the public, and so they are very much living in fear right now, and we are in a constitutional crisis.

One of the things that I continue to talk to our Ranking Member about and thinking about, even the folks that voted for the President and others, if I was to ask the American people, do you think Elon Musk cares about you? Do they think that he cares about your disabled child that relies on Department of Education services through the IDEA Act? Do you think he cares for any of our families right now, no matter how hard they work, they are still in survivor mode, not thriving in our country? The disconnect that his own lived experience will never ever be able to connect to that family in North Dakota, to the teacher in Detroit, to the child living and trying to survive through the education program, living with autism, and so much more. And so I am just curious. I mean, really, do you think Elon Musk cares about the American people, Mr. Schatz?

Mr. SCHATZ. I do not think that is the issue. I think the question is what is going to be done about the \$36 trillion debt and the \$2 trillion debt.

Ms. TLAI. Yes. So, you want to talk about the debt, but the Congress, they are in control. Why not go through the public process? If you want to make cuts, then vote to cut it. Why are you having this person do it? Are you giving him your power as an elected person representing 750,000 people? You represent the equal number of people as I do. I want to get a chance to vote on this, hear from my constituents, have it be done in a public process. You want to deal with it, you are in power. You have a trifecta—the White House, the Senate, and the House—but, no, you want to do it this way. The cruelty of it, the fact that even the American people, no matter in their political affiliation, I am telling you right now, feel like they have no control over the decisions being made. Why? Because Members of Congress have circumvented, said, hey, we are good, go ahead and do it for us, go ahead, even though they know it is going to impact farmers, veterans, disabled residents, folks living with disability, and so much more. These infrastructures that they do not understand support all of our families.

So, you can keep talking about the debt. They have control. They can deal with the debt if that is really what they want to do. Instead, they are just yielding their power to Elon Musk, who has, again, been unelected, and we can continue to say that. But one of the things, you can go around the country, is they do not want Elon Musk making that decision. They want their Member of Congress

that is elected making that decision, Mr. Schatz. That is the problem. And I will never, and Mr. Chair knows this, vote your district. Come here and vote your district. If your district wants you to cut these various programs, go cut the Department of Education, then go ahead and vote on it. Introduce a bill to cut the Department of Education. You are just literally giving it to this person. It does not make any sense.

Dr. Resh, do you think the American people think that Elon Musk cares about them?

Dr. RESH. I do not think the American people should really care what he thinks. They should have someone making decisions who has taken an oath to the Constitution.

Ms. TLAI. That is actually very important, isn't it? The Constitution gives Congress control over the spending, not the President and certainly not Elon Musk. And the American people need to understand why that balance of government is there. It is to protect all of us from these kinds of decisions that are hurting people now. And, Mr. Chair, just know this: this is the same man that continues to want to cut, cut, cut, but he has \$20 billion in Federal contracts. Can I get our money back because he is the richest man on earth, and he is still taking a handout from us, the public. \$20 billion, Mr. Chair. If it is really about that, and not about hurting these public infrastructures, which really are critical and important for, I guess, the most vulnerable. And really, you would be surprised how many people in your community and in your districts, no matter, again, political affiliation, will be harmed by these decisions that, again, overpass the congressional public process. It is our constitutional duty and responsibility to be able to authorize spending and cuts. We should be able to do it, not Elon Musk. With that, I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields. That concludes our questions. In closing, I want to thank our witnesses once again for their testimony today. I am now going to yield to the Ranking Member for some brief closing remarks.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the Chair, and I thank our witnesses. We have spent the entirety of this hearing under the rubric of rightsizing government as if we all know presumptively what the right size is, which, of course, nobody does. In fact, it is not even necessarily a sensical question. But we have ignored half of what should be involved in any enterprise, business, nonprofit, or government, and that is the revenue side of the picture. You cannot rightsize, whatever that means, government by only looking at expenditures and investments. You have got to look at how we finance it. Does anyone think that Elon Musk, in running Tesla, had a meeting when he took it over and said to his management crew, whatever we do, we are never again discussing or modifying the price of a Tesla, whatever it is today, it is frozen forever, and all company profits will be derived from expenditure cuts? Of course not.

I heard the Governor of Iowa say we ought to run government like a business. Well, then run it like a business, and that means there are two sides to the ledger, revenue as well as expenditure. I also heard the Governor of Iowa say that there is nothing wrong with looking at the enterprise and making recommendations. I

could not agree more, but that is not what Elon Musk and company are doing. They are taking a wrecking ball to the Federal Government. They are firing people. They are intruding in very sensitive data bases. They are threatening to close down entire departments and agencies of the Federal Government without any mandate, without any confirmation by the U.S. Senate, and without a howdy-do by the Congress of the United States. This Committee and Congress cannot be supine in the face of that threat. We must play our legitimate role, and if my colleagues on the other side can muster a majority to in fact shut down these agencies, then so be it, but it cannot be something delegated to an unelected billionaire oligarch from South Africa. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I must say, there has been a virus that has been spreading throughout the inside of Congress for the past 4 years. It is called Trump derangement syndrome, but it appears over the last week it has mutated now into Musk derangement syndrome. And all we have here is a business guy, an outsider, much like many outsiders and many business people on the local and state levels all over America that have been asked essentially to serve on a board to make recommendations, to make government more efficient. What a noble idea on the Federal level.

And we welcome Elon Musk. We welcome any individual in America who has ideas on making government more efficient. But I will say this publicly, to make government more efficient and to live within our means, which is what the American people voted for in November, we are going to have to make cuts. We are going to have to reduce the size of government, and that is not going to be an easy task. It is easy to spend money. Everybody is popular when they are spending unlimited amounts of money and doing check presentations, and things like that, but when it gets to making cuts, that is tough. That is what people in the private sector have to do every day. That is what people who work and pay taxes and struggle to make ends meet have to do every day. They have to make tough financial decisions.

Congress has been immune for that for a long time, but the day has come and the American people have spoken to where we are going to have to tighten our belts, and that is what, at least my side of the aisle, is committed to doing, and we are going to work with DOGE. We are going to work with the Trump Administration. We are going to work with all of his Cabinet secretaries. We are willing to work with Democrats across the aisle on sincere ideas to make government more efficient, to end duplicative services, to reduce wasteful spending. That is what we want to do. That is what this hearing was about. And I want to thank our witnesses who came here today to testify about that.

With that and without objection, all Members have 5 legislative days within which to submit materials and additional written questions for the witnesses, which will be forwarded to the witnesses.

If there is no further business, without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:44 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

