

Committee on House Administration
Member Day
March 4, 2025
Testimony of Congressman John “Johnny O” Olszewski (MD-02)

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to address an urgent and timely issue: the dedicated public servants who comprise our federal workforce, and the all-out assault on them by President Trump and Elon Musk.

These days, it seems far too easy to demonize these workers from afar for political gain. However, for those of us privileged enough to work here in the Capitol—particularly the distinguished Members of this Committee on House Administration—know better. Every single day, we see public servants working hard behind the scenes so that we can perform our Constitutional duties on behalf of our constituents. I’m referring to people like:

- The audio/video engineers from the House Recording Studio who came in early this morning to ensure this hearing could be broadcast to the public;
- The Capitol Police officers and civilian employees who protect us while we deliberate;
- The world class carpenters, masons, and other skilled tradespeople who maintain these historic buildings;
- The cybersecurity professionals who work around the clock to protect our data and systems from adversarial threats;
- The attorneys, parliamentarians, and clerks who facilitate the legislative process on the House Floor, just to name a few.

These public servants—along with countless others—are fortunate to be part of the small group of federal workers with Constitutional protections shielding them from the indiscriminate purge being unleashed by President Trump and Elon Musk on the Executive Branch. However, the 3 million **other** federal civilian employees in the Executive Branch now find themselves scared, confused, and abandoned by the very country they have served for years—often decades. To me, and I hope to you, this is an incredible betrayal.

Maryland is home to more than 140,000 federal civilian employees, including more than 22,000 of my own constituents. These are real people with real families to support and real bills to pay. Just as importantly, they provide critical services to Americans: ensuring we’re safe when we fly, ensuring our food is safe to eat, and processing Social Security checks and tax refunds. Americans are in for a rude awakening when there is virtually nobody left to perform these and other vital services.

My guest at tonight’s Presidential Joint Address is my constituent, Katie Stahl. Katie is a biologist who was recently fired from her position with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She

was hired during President Trump's first term to help farmers in Maryland. She was fired in Trump's second term because she was in a probationary status — and was only in probation status because of her exceptional work at the agency. In other words, Katie was fired for being good at her job. She received no notice. No severance. Not even the documentation she needed to apply for unemployment. This is WRONG.

Before coming to Congress, I served as Baltimore County Executive, where I led efforts to find efficiencies and cut wasteful spending. I welcome that discussion here too, but I also recognize that our employees are our most valuable resource — and the best way to identify cuts and efficiencies at any level of government. What President Trump and Elon Musk are doing is not about efficiency. Their actions prove to me that they do not understand that good employees are our best resource.

These mass firings are indiscriminate, arbitrary, and cruel, and they weaken our nation.

It is my sincere hope that all members of this Committee — Republicans and Democrats alike — will join me in condoning these actions and in pushing back against them.

Thank you, once again, for allowing me to testify today.