

March 2, 2025

Leland Dudek  
Acting Commissioner  
Social Security Administration  
6401 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Commissioner Dudek:

I write to seek clarification regarding the circumstances under which you were named as Acting Social Security Commissioner, and troubling reports indicating that – days before President Trump named you this position – you were “placed on administrative leave pending an investigation into your sharing unauthorized access to information with representatives of Musk’s U.S. DOGE Service.”<sup>1</sup>

The circumstances of your appointment raise questions about the truthfulness of President Trump’s assertion that “Social Security will not be touched [by DOGE].”<sup>2</sup> Even before you were named as Acting Commissioner, DOGE operatives had been installed in powerful positions at the Social Security Administration (SSA).<sup>3</sup> They have launched an attack on the agency, closing at least 10 local offices, firing scores of personnel,<sup>4</sup> and gaining access to SSA internal systems. These systems contain extremely sensitive personal information belonging to millions of Americans who receive Social Security benefits, and, if DOGE officials interfere – either purposefully or accidentally – with their function, it could result in delays or disruptions to Americans’ Social Security benefits.

This level of access for individuals not employed by SSA is unprecedented and alarming, and reports indicate that you played a key role in providing this access.<sup>5</sup> According to public reports, former Acting Commissioner Michelle King, a career civil servant, resigned on February 16th after refusing to allow Elon Musk’s DOGE team full access to the agency’s systems.<sup>6</sup> Like Ms.

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<sup>1</sup> Washington Post, “New Social Security chief was being investigated when Musk team tapped him,” Lisa Rein, February 22, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/02/22/social-security-trump-doge-musk/>.

<sup>2</sup> ProPublica, “Anxiety Mounts Among Social Security Recipients as DOGE Troops Settle In,” Eli Hager, February 22, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/doge-social-security-elon-musk-trump-closures-benefits>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Wall Street Journal, “The Newly Elevated Acting Head of Social Security Covertly Helped DOGE,” Ken Thomas, February 20, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/social-security-commissioner-leland-dudek-doge-343d3f5e>.

<sup>6</sup> Associated Press, “Social Security head steps down over DOGE access of recipient information, AP sources say,” Fatima Hussein, February 17, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/social-security-elon-musk-doge-164c91f8477d5e7833af7f6de4bbde57>.

King, you are a career civil servant at SSA.<sup>7</sup> However, unlike Ms. King, you appear to have facilitated DOGE officials' access to the system. According to a report by the Wall Street Journal, you "had been sharing information with nonagency personnel beginning in December, before Trump's inauguration, and ... pressured [career staff] to help DOGE representatives."<sup>8</sup> Leaders at SSA were reportedly so concerned about your behavior that they placed you on administrative leave pending an investigation into your efforts on DOGE's behalf. You even appear to have corroborated reports of your misbehavior, writing in a now-deleted LinkedIn post:

I confess. I helped DOGE understand SSA. I mailed myself publically [sic] accessible documents and explained them [sic] DOGE. I confess. I moved contractor money around to add data science resources to my anti-fraud team to examine Direct Deposit Fraud. I confess. I bullied agency executives, shared executive contact information, and circumvented the chain of command to connect DOGE with the people who get stuff done.<sup>9</sup>

And to make matters worse, a new report last Wednesday revealed that you "requested in a meeting on Tuesday that managers present [you] a plan for a 50 percent reduction in staff, a mass firing that could affect tens of thousands of employees across the country."<sup>10</sup> This would have a significant impact on the program, almost certainly lead to limits on SSA services, such as the closure of field offices and increased wait times for seniors, people with disabilities, and others who need assistance with SSA benefits and information.

This is a deeply troubling set of facts, revealing that you may have acted against agency policy – or even illegally – to facilitate DOGE's efforts to access SSA systems, and that President Trump then rewarded you by naming you Acting Commissioner, and are now producing orders to lay off thousands of SSA employees that are responsible for providing SSA services and assistance to millions of Americans. To better understand the threat posed by DOGE to Americans who have entrusted SSA with their most sensitive information, I request that you answer the following questions:

1. What access to SSA systems does DOGE currently have?
  - a. Which DOGE-affiliated individuals have access to SSA data?
  - b. What personal data belonging to beneficiaries have these individuals accessed?
2. What role did you play in the decision to give DOGE-affiliated or others that access?
  - a. Please describe the nature and timing of any conversations between you and Trump transition or DOGE-affiliated individuals regarding access to SSA data and information.

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<sup>7</sup> CNN, "How a mid-level staffer rose to oversee the Social Security Administration within days," Tami Luhby, February 22, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/22/politics/leland-dudek-acting-social-security-head-doge/index.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Wall Street Journal, "The Newly Elevated Acting Head of Social Security Covertly Helped DOGE," Ken Thomas, February 20, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/social-security-commissioner-leland-dudek-doge-343d3f5e>.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> The American Prospect, "Social Security Administration Could Cut Half Its Workforce," David Dayen, February 26, 2025, <https://prospect.org/health/social-security-administration-could-cut-half-its-workforce/>.

3. What were the circumstances under which you were name Acting SSA Commissioner?
  - a. When did you learn of this appointment?
  - b. With whom in the Administration did you discuss this appointment?
  - c. What were the reasons for former Acting Commissioner Michelle King's departure from the agency?
  - d. Did you have any discussions with Trump Administration officials regarding Ms. King's departure prior to its announcement? If so, please describe the nature of these conversations.
4. Were you placed on administrative leave at the agency prior to your appointment as Acting Commissioner? If so, when and why were you placed on leave?
5. Were you the subject of any internal SSA investigation prior to being name Acting Commissioner?
  - a. If so, why were you investigated?
  - b. What is the status of this investigation?
  - c. If the investigation is not ongoing, what was its outcome, and when did end?
6. Did you request in a February meeting that SSA managers present you with a plan for a major reduction in SSA staff?
  - a. If so, why did you make this request?
  - b. Were you acting under direction or orders from President Trump or other Trump Administration officials?
  - c. If these cuts are enacted, how will you ensure that seniors, individuals with disabilities, and other SSA beneficiaries do not face reductions in services, increased wait times for services, or other limits to obtaining benefits from or information about the SSA program?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Given the urgent nature of this inquiry, I ask that you provide answers to my questions no later than March 10, 2025.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator