

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

February 13, 2025

## VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

I am alarmed by reports concerning the State Department's plan to use taxpayer dollars to potentially purchase \$400 million in armored Tesla Cybertrucks later this year.<sup>1</sup> While there are conflicting reports regarding when this decision was made and the late night, unexplained removal of the word "Tesla" from State Department procurement documents, this planned purchase highlights the profound conflicts of interest issues inherent in Elon Musk's continued service in the dual roles of Chief Executive Officer of Tesla, Inc., and head of the Department of Government Efficiency ("DOGE").<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to Senate Resolution 59 (118th Cong.) and Rule 1 of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations ("PSI" or "the Subcommittee"), I write to request information and records regarding the State Department's decision to make this purchase and the steps the Department has taken to address these significant conflicts of interest.

Mr. Musk's dual roles pose conflicts of interest so obvious that they hardly require explanation. Last week, I wrote to Mr. Musk's six companies to request information on the extent to which they may be benefiting from Mr. Musk's role at DOGE.<sup>3</sup> In the weeks since DOGE was established, it has run roughshod over the Constitution, dismantling agencies on a whim based on inaccurate information while gaining access to the government's most sensitive systems.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *State Dept. Plans \$400 Million Purchase of Armored Tesla Cybertrucks*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/12/us/politics/trump-tesla-musk-cybertruck.html>.

<sup>2</sup> *See State Dept. Suspends Plan to Buy Armored Teslas*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/13/us/politics/state-dept-armored-teslas.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Ranking Member Richard Blumenthal to Mr. Brandon Ehrhart, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of Tesla, Inc. (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025-02-05-Letter-from-Blumenthal-to-Tesla.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> *See, e.g., Treasury Dept. Gives Elon Musk's Team Access to Federal Payment System: Sources*, ABC NEWS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/treasury-dept-elon-musks-team-access-federal-payment/story?id=118380399>; *Elon Musk Makes Misleading Claim FEMA Spent \$59 Million On 'Luxury' Hotels For Migrants: The Biggest DOGE Hoaxes Spread On X*, FORBES (Feb. 12, 2025), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/conormurray/2025/02/10/elon-musk-pushes-false-claim-ex-usaid-chief-earned-23->

Unsurprisingly, many of the agencies Mr. Musk’s DOGE seeks to dismantle or weaken are the same ones that were previously investigating his myriad business interests.<sup>5</sup> Rather than take the steps that an administration interested in ethics might consider, the Trump Administration has instead stated that Mr. Musk himself is in charge of evaluating and managing his own conflicts of interest.<sup>6</sup>

As I noted in my previous letter to Tesla, Mr. Musk has installed many former (and, perhaps, current) employees of his companies throughout the federal government.<sup>7</sup> This includes the State Department, where a 19-year-old DOGE employee—a former employee of Mr. Musk at Neuralink known by the online moniker “Big Balls”—apparently has the qualifications to be a senior adviser with access to sensitive diplomatic information.<sup>8</sup> The entire situation would be laughable were it not so gravely harmful to the basic functioning of our government.

The State Department’s intent to purchase armored Cybertrucks suggests the conflicts of interest inherent in Mr. Musk’s installation of his cronies throughout the government are not being adequately managed and, in fact, are increasing by the minute. In the 15 months since it was released, the Cybertruck has been widely derided and subject to at least six separate recalls.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Tesla has reportedly had “disastrous” sales numbers for the Cybertruck.<sup>10</sup> It hardly seems like the type of reliable vehicle the State Department would choose for this contract absent a heavy thumb on the scale.

To assist the Subcommittee’s understanding of the State Department’s decision to consider purchasing \$400 million in Cybertrucks and what steps the State Department has taken to address Mr. Musk’s glaring conflicts of interest, please provide the following information to the Subcommittee by February 21, 2025:

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million-the-biggest-doge-hoaxes-spread-on-x/; *USAID staffers describe colleagues abandoned in violence in Congo as DOGE ends assistance programs*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Feb. 12, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-usaid-court-lawsuit-constitutional-crisis-2ee3374100720d093588e2234e8be601>.

<sup>5</sup> *Elon Musk’s Business Empire Scores Benefits Under Trump Shake-Up*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 11, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/11/us/politics/elon-musk-companies-conflicts.html>.

<sup>6</sup> *The person ruling on Elon Musk’s DOGE conflicts of interest is . . . Elon Musk*, FORTUNE (Feb. 6, 2025), <https://fortune.com/2025/02/06/elon-musk-conflicts-interest-doge-tesla-spacex/>.

<sup>7</sup> *See, e.g., The Young, Inexperienced Engineers Aiding Elon Musk’s Government Takeover*, WIRED (Feb. 2, 2025), <https://www.wired.com/story/elon-musk-government-young-engineers/>; *Unmasked: Musk’s Secret DOGE Goon Squad—Who Are All Under 26*, YAHOO NEWS (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.yahoo.com/news/doge-musketeers-secret-team-elon-221351736.html>; *Musk Associates Given Unfettered Access to Private Data of Government Employees*, POPULAR INFORMATION (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://popular.info/p/musk-associates-given-unfettered/>; Letter from Ranking Member Richard Blumenthal, *supra* note 3.

<sup>8</sup> *19-year-old Musk surrogate takes on roles at State Department and DHS*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/02/10/musk-doge-state-department-surrogate/>.

<sup>9</sup> *Tesla Issues Sixth Cybertruck Recall This Year*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 13, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/13/business/tesla-cybertruck-recall.html>; *Cybertruck’s Many Recalls Make It Worse Than 91 Percent of All 2024 Vehicles*, WIRED (Nov. 25, 2024), <https://www.wired.com/story/cybertrucks-many-recalls-make-it-worse-than-91-percent-of-all-2024-vehicles/>.

<sup>10</sup> *Tesla Cybertruck sales are disastrous*, ELECTREK (Jan. 2, 2025), <https://electrek.co/2025/01/02/tesla-cybertruck-sales-are-disastrous/>.

1. Are any current or former Tesla, SpaceX, X, xAI, The Boring Company, or Neuralink employees currently employed by the State Department?
2. Do any personnel who have performed services on behalf of DOGE currently have titles within the State Department?
3. For each individual identified in response to questions 1 and 2, please provide the individual's:
  - a. Full name and current title; and
  - b. First day of employment with the State Department.
4. Were any of the individuals identified in response to questions 1 and 2 involved in the decision to consider purchasing armored Tesla Cybertrucks? Please provide a detailed description of their involvement.
5. When was the decision to consider purchasing armored Tesla Cybertrucks made? Please provide a detailed description of the decision to consider purchasing armored Tesla Cybertrucks, including the names of all personnel involved and a detailed timeline of the process.
6. When was the decision to remove the word "Tesla" from State Department procurement forecasts about this potential purchase made? Please provide a detailed description of the decision to alter these procurement documents, including the names of all personnel involved and a detailed timeline of the process.

In addition, please provide the Subcommittee with the following records<sup>11</sup> by February 21, 2025, and any subsequently produced records responsive to these requests on a bi-weekly basis thereafter:

1. All records referring or relating to the process which led to the decision to consider awarding Tesla a contract for armored Cybertrucks and any bidding process which subsequently occurs, including but not limited to:
  - a. Any communications<sup>12</sup> regarding the decision to consider purchasing armored Tesla Cybertrucks;
  - b. Any communications regarding the bidding process;
  - c. Any Requests for Information (RFI) prepared in the pre-solicitation process for the contract;
  - d. All materials describing the technical characteristics and competition requirements associated with the contract's solicitation phase;
  - e. Any Requests for Proposal (RFP) created in conjunction with the bidding process; and

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<sup>11</sup> For purposes of this request, "records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), direct messages, chats, calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

<sup>12</sup> For purposes of this request, "communications" include any records, as defined above, transmitted in any way between two or more individuals or entities.

- f. Any internal reviews or analyses related to actual or potential conflicts of interest associated with awarding contracts to Tesla.
2. All communications between any State Department personnel<sup>13</sup> and Elon Musk or any other personnel affiliated with DOGE since January 20, 2025.

Please contact the Subcommittee should you have any questions about responding to these requests. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson  
Chairman

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<sup>13</sup> For purposes of this request, “personnel” includes an employee, consultant, volunteer, agent, or any other type of associate.