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May 8, 2025

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer:

Committee Democrats are writing regarding serious concerns with the Administration's actions to undermine working people and incapacitate the Department of Labor (DOL or the Department) and its ability to protect the lives and rights of workers across America.

Upon taking office, President Trump rescinded Executive Order 11246 (EO 11246),¹ a foundational civil rights directive that protected federal contract workers—comprising approximately one-fifth of the entire U.S. labor force²—from unlawful discrimination by their employers on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin.³ In addition to stripping protections from millions of workers, President Trump has deputized Elon Musk, the world's richest man who operates with "autonomy 'almost no one can control,'"⁴ and his "Department" of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to ravage DOL and dismantle the enforcement of workers' rights and protections against law-breaking corporations and their wealthy executives.

¹ Exec. Order No. 14,173, 90 Fed. Reg. 8633, 8634 (Jan. 31, 2025) (rescinding Exec. Order No. 11246, 30 Fed. Reg. 12319, 12319 (Sept. 28, 1965)).

² NAT'L WOMEN'S LAW CTR, ATTACKS ON THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE: RISKS TO WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND FAMILIES 5 (Mar. 2025), https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Fed-Workforce-Attacks-Full-Report_2.pdf.

³ Exec. Order No. 11,246, 30 Fed. Reg. 12319, 12319 (Sept. 28, 1965) (banning discrimination in Federal employment based on race, creed, color, or national origin); Exec. Order No. 11,478, 34 Fed. Reg. 12985, 12985 (Aug. 12, 1969) (banning discrimination in Federal employment based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin); Exec. Order No. 13,672, 79 Fed. Reg. 42971, 42971 (July 23, 2014) (adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the listed of protected categories under EO 11,246).

⁴ Katie Hawkinson, *Musk Has Autonomy 'Almost No One Can Control' as He Oversees Unprecedented Overhaul of Federal Workforce*, THE INDEPENDENT (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/elon-musk-doge-trump-government-overhaul-b2692074.html>.

According to news reports, DOGE has gained access to some of the federal government's most far reaching and sensitive data systems, including many at the Department.⁵ At stake are the integrity of investigations into workplace health, mine safety, and child labor violations, including the identity of witnesses and workers who file complaints; the personal privacy of workers and families who receive medical and financial support from the black lung program and other workers' compensation programs; sensitive medical information of individuals who have been denied benefits by their group health plans; the confidentiality of whistleblowers under dozens of whistleblower protection laws; the trustworthiness of market-moving Bureau of Labor Statistics data; and confidential business information of countless companies, exposure of which could upend the nation's economy. Also, at risk are highly classified information about nuclear facilities and processes entrusted to DOL staff with security clearances for purposes of the *Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000*.⁶

Of particular concern is DOGE's unfettered access into DOL's system given that Mr. Musk's companies have been repeatedly investigated over dangerous working conditions. Tesla, Inc. (Tesla), for example, was recently assessed roughly \$50,000 in civil monetary penalties after a worker was electrocuted at the company's Gigafactory.⁷ Workers also report hazardous conditions at another one of his companies, SpaceX.⁸ It should also be noted that Tesla had been under investigation for workplace discrimination by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) within DOL until President Trump rescinded EO 11246.⁹ It is deeply troubling that, through DOGE, Mr. Musk is gaining significant power over the very regulators that have scrutinized or are actively investigating his companies, heightening the risk of corrupt interference in the enforcement of workers' rights and protections.

Beyond the glaring conflict of interest, Mr. Musk and his young and inexperienced team at DOGE¹⁰ are threatening the lives of all workers by recklessly terminating leases and shuttering offices of various DOL subagencies nationwide.¹¹ Closing field offices for agencies such as the

⁵ Lauren Kaori Gurley, *Judge Lets DOGE Access Sensitive Records at Labor Department*, WASH POST (Feb. 8, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/02/08/doge-labor-department/>.

⁶ Pub. L. No. 106-398, §§ 3601 *et. seq.* (2000).

⁷ Dave Jamieson, *Elon Musk's Tesla Fined \$50,000 Following Texas Worker's Death*, HUFF POST (Mar. 6, 2025), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/tesla-osh-death-musk_n_67c9d045e4b0404dff2ff1a8.

⁸ Marisa Taylor, *At SpaceX, Worker Injuries Soar in Elon Musk's Rush to Mars*, REUTERS (Nov. 10, 2023), <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/spacex-musk-safety/>.

⁹ Jonah Owen Lamb, *Tesla Discrimination Probe Killed as Trump Axes Watchdog Agency*, THE SAN FRANCISCO STANDARD (Feb. 6, 2025), <https://sfstandard.com/2025/02/06/trump-order-stops-tesla-discrimination-investigation/>.

¹⁰ Vittoria Elliot, *The Young, Inexperienced Engineers Aiding Elon Musk's Government Takeover*, WIRED (Feb. 2, 2025), <https://www.wired.com/story/elon-musk-government-young-engineers/>.

¹¹ Rebecca Rainey, *DOGE's \$455 Million in Labor Savings Carry Costs for US Workers*, BLOOMBERG LAW (Apr. 2, 2025), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/doges-455-million-in-labor-savings-carry-costs-for-us-workers>.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration,¹² the Mine Safety and Health Administration,¹³ and the Wage and Hour Division,¹⁴ will restrict the public's access to DOL's services, severely limit the geographic coverage of inspectors' and investigators' enforcement activities, and further strain an already resource-strapped Department.

The forthcoming harm to workers by widespread office closures will only be compounded by the Department's plans to decimate its already meager staff.¹⁵ The Department is historically understaffed compared to the breadth of its jurisdiction. For example, in 1948, when the U.S. workforce was one-seventh its current size, the Wage and Hour Division had 1,000 front-line investigators cracking down on wage theft and exploitive child labor.¹⁶ In 2024, the agency had approximately 650 investigators.¹⁷ The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has so few inspectors it would take 185 years for the agency to visit every workplace within its jurisdiction just once.¹⁸ The Department also lacks the staff necessary to secure the benefits workers earn through their jobs. The Employee Benefits Security Administration, which is charged with regulating the private sector health insurance and retirement plans of 153 million workers, retirees, and their families, has only one investigator for every 13,900 plans.¹⁹

The planned and ongoing attacks on certain subagencies signal that the Trump Administration intends to significantly impair the Department's capacity to support and safeguard America's workers. For instance, the Administration has sought to reduce staffing at the Women's Bureau, which has worked with states to provide technical assistance and grants to states implementing paid leave, among other grant programs that promote the interests of women in the workforce.²⁰ The Administration has also decimated the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB),

¹² Marcus Baram, *OSHA Office Closure in 'Cancer Alley' Raises Fears About Risks to Workers*, THE AMERICAN PROSPECT (Apr. 18, 2025), <https://prospect.org/labor/2025-04-18-osh-office-closure-cancer-alley-louisiana/>.

¹³ Liam Niemeyer, *Coal Miners Could Pay for Savings if Inspectors Lose Offices on DOGE List, Advocates Warn*, KENTUCKY LANTERN (Apr. 7, 2025), <https://kentuckylandern.com/2025/04/07/coal-miners-could-pay-for-savings-if-inspectors-lose-offices-on-doge-list-advocates-warn/>.

¹⁴ Max Kutner, *DOGE Office Closures Raise Wage Enforcement Worries*, LAW360 (Mar. 20, 2025), <https://www.law360.com/employment-authority/wage-hour/articles/2312314/doge-office-closures-raise-wage-enforcement-worries>.

¹⁵ Rebecca Rainey, *DOL Expands Exit Offers Agency-Wide, Warning of Future Layoffs*, BLOOM. LAW (Apr. 9, 2025), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/dol-expands-exit-offers-agency-wide-warning-of-future-layoffs>.

¹⁶ Janice Fine et al., *Strategic Enforcement and Co-enforcement of U.S. Labor Standards Are Needed to Protect Workers Through the Coronavirus Recession*, WASH. CTR. FOR EQUITABLE GROWTH (Jan. 14, 2021), <https://equitablegrowth.org/strategic-enforcement-and-co-enforcement-of-u-s-labor-standards-are-needed-to-protect-workers-through-the-coronavirus-recession/>.

¹⁷ Rebecca Rainey, *Labor Agency Won More Wage-Hour Penalties on Less Enforcement*, BLOOMBERG GOV. (Dec. 30, 2024), <https://www.bgov.com/next/news/SPAXD8T1UM0W>.

¹⁸ REBECCA L. REINDEL ET AL., AFL-CIO, *DEATH ON THE JOB: THE TOLL OF NEGLECT* 3 (34th ed. 2025), https://aflcio.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2512%20AFL-CIO%20DOTJ%202025%20N-BUG_FINAL.pdf.

¹⁹ *Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Employee Benefits Security Administration: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on H., Employ., Lab., & Pensions of the H. Comm. on Ed. & Lab.*, 118th Cong. 2 (2024) (statement of Ms. Lisa Gomez, Asst. Sec'y, Employee Benefits Security Admin.).

²⁰ U.S. DEP'T OF LAB., FY 2025 CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET JUSTIFICATION DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT 87 (2024), <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/general/budget/2025/CBJ-2025-V3-02.pdf>.

terminating at least 69 international programs aimed at combating child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.²¹ In addition, the Department has instructed the OFCCP—which is responsible for combatting discrimination by federal contractors and requires affirmative action with respect to hiring these individuals²²—to reduce its workforce by 90 percent and has already placed many employees on administrative leave.²³

Slashing DOL’s subagencies, field offices, and staff will not reduce waste, fraud, or abuse. Instead, it is an open invitation for employers to ignore workplace hazards, force miners to breathe toxic dust, staff children on overnight shifts at meatpacking plants or other dangerous jobsites, discriminate against workers, and steal workers’ wages without fear of any accountability.

If dismantling the Department’s enforcement capabilities were not enough, President Trump is demanding that federal agencies rescind numerous regulations that safeguard workers from corporate abuses.²⁴ A news report indicates that the Trump Administration is aiming to target multiple DOL regulations under this directive, including regulations to prevent miners from having their lungs shredded by crystalline silica dust and to guarantee paid sick leave for federal contract workers.²⁵ The White House is even directing agencies to repeal pro-worker regulations by circumventing the *Administrative Procedure Act*, which mandates public accountability through a “notice and comment” period.²⁶ Perhaps the most alarming regulatory directive is the Administration’s forthcoming plan to stop enforcing some regulations altogether.²⁷

To date, you and the Department have failed to respond to multiple congressional requests for information, including: a February 21, 2025, letter on DOGE’s access to agency databases;²⁸ a February 27, 2025, letter on the termination of DOL employees and cancellation of grants and contracts;²⁹ a March 6, 2025, letter on the closure of mine safety offices and rescission of job

²¹ Joseph Gedeon, *Trump Cuts 69 Global Programs Tackling Child Labor and Human Trafficking*, THE GUARDIAN (Mar. 27, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/mar/27/trump-cuts-child-labor-human-trafficking-programs>.

²² Off. of Fed. Contract Compliance Progs., *History of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs*, INTERNET ARCHIVE WAYBACK MACHINE, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250114185400/https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ofccp/about/history> (archiving page from Department of Labor website from Jan. 14, 2025).

²³ Rebecca Klar, *DOL Puts Contractor Watchdog Employees on Leave as Layoffs Loom*, BLOOMBERG LAW (Apr. 16, 2025), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/dol-puts-contractor-watchdog-employees-on-leave-as-layoffs-loom>.

²⁴ Exec. Order No. 14,219, 90 Fed. Reg. 10583, (Feb. 19, 2025).

²⁵ Coral Davenport, *Inside Trump’s Plan to Halt Hundreds of Regulations*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 15, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/15/us/politics/trump-doge-regulations.html>.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ Letter from Representative Robert C. “Bobby” Scott to Mr. Louis Charlier (Feb. 21, 2025), https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/departement_of_labor_cio_oversight_letter.pdf.

²⁹ Letter from Representatives Robert C. “Bobby” Scott and Ilhan Omar to Mr. Vince Micone (Feb. 27, 2025), https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/scott_omar_letter_to_dol_re_staff_and_funding_cuts.pdf.

offers to safety inspectors;³⁰ and a March 12, 2025, bicameral letter on agency personnel and reorganization plans.³¹ Additionally, the only public accounting of DOGE's rampage through the federal government that purports to comprise a list of cancelled federal contracts, grants, and leases for office space is riddled with errors, miscalculations, and misrepresentations.³²

For the above-stated reasons, and in keeping with the Committee's oversight responsibility, we request your responses by no later than May 15, 2025, to the following:

1. Provide complete responses to the outstanding congressional oversight requests enumerated above.
2. Provide an unaltered and unredacted copy of DOL's agreement with the U.S. DOGE Service, as referenced in a recent news report,³³ that outlines protocols between the Department and DOGE employees, as well as the transfer of funds to DOGE for its services.
3. Has the Department received funding requests from the Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) for additional staff and resources to carry out its duties to root out waste, fraud, and abuse? If so, has the Department approved or denied additional funding for OIG?
4. Does the Department have plans to restructure and reorganize DOL? If so, provide the following information:
 - a. Explain the decision-making process and rationale for the reorganization of DOL, including how the roles and divisions being eliminated are decided.
 - b. Provide detailed analysis on the impact of the reorganization on the enforcement activity and services conducted by the Department, as required under federal statutes.
5. Provide all documents and communications, including downloads, copies, or screenshots of any messages on any digital communications platform, since January 20, 2025, related to the recission and non-enforcement of DOL regulations.

³⁰ Letter from Representatives Robert C. "Bobby" Scott and Ilhan Omar to Mr. Vince Micone (Mar. 6, 2025), https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/scott_omar_letter_to_dol_re_msha_staff_cuts.pdf.

³¹ Letter from Senator Patty Murray *et al.* to The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer (Mar. 12, 2025), https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/bicameral_oversight_letter_to_secretary_chavez-deremer_re_dol_staff_cuts.pdf.

³² Aatish Bhatia *et al.*, *DOGE's Only Public Ledger Is Riddled With Mistakes*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/21/upshot/doge-musk-trump-errors.html>; *see also* David A. Fahrenthold & Jeremy Singer-Vine, *DOGE Makes Its Latest Errors Harder to Find*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/13/us/politics/doge-errors-funding-grants-claims.html>.

³³ Leah Feiger & Tim Marchman, *US DOGE Service Agreement With Department of Labor Shows \$1.3 Million Fee—and Details Its Mission*, WIRED (Apr. 9, 2025), <https://www.wired.com/story/department-of-labor-doge-usds-payment/>.

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer

May 8, 2025

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We look forward to your timely and complete responses to this request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact the Committee's Democratic Labor Policy Staff at EWDoversight@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-3725.

Sincerely,



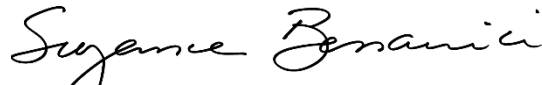
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Ranking Member



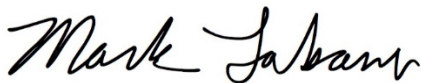
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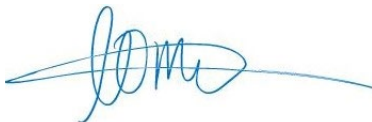
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GREG CASAR
Member of Congress



SUMMER L. LEE
Member of Congress



JOHN W. MANNION
Member of Congress

CC: The Hon. Tim Walberg, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Workforce