

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1716 Trump, Musk and D.O.G.E. Need a Quick Reset

The Department of Government Efficiency, D.O.G.E. There have been moderate efforts to improve government operations in the past, but nothing close to this. The question is, are they going about it the right way? I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll dig into this issue, next on the Extra Point.

D.O.G.E. is about slimming down the federal payroll, as well as finding waste, abuse, and outright fraud in contracts and services paid for with American tax dollars.

Except for those on the far, far left who hate everything that Donald Trump says and does, pretty much everybody else agrees that our government is in desperate need of a major makeover.

The issue is how the job will be done. Do you use a chainsaw or a scalpel? Do you have mass terminations and when the dust clears, rehire only based on need? Or, take time to align talent to the organization's mission, then trimming as you see fit? Or, can you do it both ways, depending on circumstances?

President Trump made a campaign promise to fix government. He enlisted Elon Musk, a man with a track record of eliminating waste, to help him do it.

A few days ago, Musk sent an email to federal government workers, demanding that they list five things they had accomplished in the previous week. He wanted a reply by the next day. Failure to do so would be considered their resignation.

This was part of Musk's playbook when he took over Twitter. As the new owner there, he had every right to do so. In his capacity as an advisor to the president, Musk doesn't have the authority to take action on any employee.

Musk tweeted out that his email served the purpose to see if one, people are checking their email; and two, if fraud is being committed by getting paychecks from phony identities or

using the identities of dead people. You may have noticed that there were official calls by agencies for employees to not reply.

Further, if I'm the newly-confimed director of a federal department and I'm just in the early stages of building my team, this isn't helpful. Am I in charge or do they answer to Elon?

Then there is the issue of releasing information to the media about fraud and waste, before being absolutely certain that the numbers hold up to scrutiny. Claims that people over 120 years of age and some as old as 360 were receiving Social Security checks is an example. As it turned out, a software glitch in COBOL, a relatively ancient programming language, had generated the erroneous reports.

In the world of sports, these mistakes are called unforced errors. Your opponent didn't cause you to fumble the ball, you simply dropped it.

D.O.G.E. has a unique opportunity to really make a difference, but steady and verifiable progress needs to replace the current chaos.

Daily news conferences and outrage from your political opponents needs to give way to the quieter world of investigations and audits, and that takes time. Then, when you've got facts and figures that will stand up, you release them.

Sure, grab the low-hanging fruit when it's there. Just be sure that's what it is. Don't screw up and give strength to the arguments from your adversaries.

When Musk and D.O.G.E. take on Medicare and the Department of Defense, the numbers will be massive and the process slower. This is why we need a reset now, in order to avoid the circus atmosphere that exists today.

The political reality is another consideration. Republicans hold a three-seat edge in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(Con't.)

Trump has 15 months to show that D.O.G.E. was worth the effort. If he can't, it will be used against him and cost his party votes in the mid-term elections, and perhaps control of Congress.

In my opinion, D.O.G.E. should be used as a resource to dig up waste and bad actors, but they would work in concert with agency directors to release information. This creates a degree of order. The challenge is that neither Trump nor Musk are big on order.

They both thrive on chaos and media attention, so I'm not placing any bets that the president will put any restrictions on Elon.

Musk has the brightest of spotlights focused on him now, and he loves it. However, the richest person in the world has a lot to occupy his attention. If Trump puts a leash on him, will Musk just walk away? No doubt Trump has taken that into consideration.

I support Trump's effort to slim down the federal government. I simply believe the approach should be modified. Let's do the small reset now and let D.O.G.E. better handle the incredibly important job it was created to do.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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