

have rarely seen—first, his power by being the CEO of large companies, like SpaceX and Tesla and Starlink. Now, those companies have lots of lobbyists here on Capitol Hill. So that is a lot of power that Elon Musk has right there. And do you know? Here is something you might not know: He gets about \$8 million a day in Federal subsidies for his companies. I would say that is a conflict of interest. Yes, \$8 million a day is, roughly, \$2.5 billion over the course of a year.

So here is a man—the richest man in the world. So he has that massive personal wealth; he has that power—that power to run media campaigns or to hire lobbyists and hire lawyers. He has got his three companies, and they have that ability to do media campaigns and hire lobbyists and hire lawyers. So you have tremendous power there, but now he has been given the keys to Agency after Agency all across the U.S. Government.

What kind of a threat is that?

Well, it is huge—it is huge—because those databases contain the most private information on every American—the private healthcare records of people who are on Medicaid or Medicare, the financial records of every family who files a tax return. His minions are now the foxes in the henhouse—so his corporate wealth, his personal wealth and power, and now his team—controlling databases all across the government, including the payment systems as to what gets paid and what doesn't get paid.

I don't want this man to have my Social Security information or yours, my tax information or yours, my address or my bank account numbers or my records or yours.

Then he put the CFPB on the chopping block, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. He posted a message that said: "CFPB," rest in peace, "RIP."

Now, why does the richest man in the world want to get rid of an Agency that has delivered \$21 billion in checks back to consumers who were ripped off by illegal practices?

I would say that is something where one could say: Hey, the CFPB is a hero for working families, a hero for families in returning \$21 billion to families who were ripped off by illegal practices. And because they shut down those illegal practices, they probably saved consumers across this country and saved families across this country

some other enormous sum. Maybe it is five times that \$21 billion.

I know that, when I worked on payday loans in Oregon and we got rid of those 500-percent, 400-percent, 300-percent interest rates, millions—not millions—but tens of thousands of Oregonians who were victims of the 300-, 400-, 500-percent loan-sharking benefited enormously.

Well, who is the similar watchdog here for the Nation? It is the CFPB, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The rich hate it because they are the ones who have engaged in illegal practices to rip off consumers, and so they hate it that there is a watchdog.

So here is Trump and Musk getting rid of the watchdogs, getting rid of the inspectors general, and breaking the law while they do so. The law says you have to give 30 days' notice to dismiss an inspector general, and you have to do it for cause, because we need watchdogs to make sure that the executive branch is playing by the rules. He fired them. He fired the FBI agents who are specialists in executive branch behavior, watching to make sure they follow the law. He fired them and now the CFPB.

What else?

Well, I can tell you this: Musk and his minions could create a lot of damage with the access, and it is not just privacy to your records and my records. It could also be by accidentally screwing up the computer code because they don't fully understand the details on what they are playing with.

Let's be clear: Seniors living on fixed incomes cannot afford a single missed payment. They won't be able to buy their groceries or pay their rent or pay their mortgage.

This chaos unleashed by Trump and unleashed by Musk is illegal, unconstitutional, and just plain corrupt.

Here is another piece of the puzzle that should disturb you all: In budget resolutions, deficits cannot be maintained for more than 10 years. It is bad enough that Republicans want to increase the deficit over the 10-year period, but they have come up with a plan where they change the baseline so that they can actually project those deficits beyond 10 years—basically indefinitely into the future. That is not fiscal responsibility. Not only are they planning to run up the debt for 10 years, but they want to be able to run it up forever more, until you get a Congress that has the spine to change it.

Why does the party that has claimed fiscal responsibility want to change the baseline so they can run up debts far into the future? They have gotten off this game. They have sold this game—this scam—time after time. They sold it under Bush 1. They sold it under Bush 2. They sold it under Trump. They are going to do it again. They think they can get away with it again.

So that is our job, to shine the spotlight on it and say: No. The American people see what is happening and say, "No."

Say you want programs of healthcare, housing, education, support for childcare, and for nutrition. You want to help families thrive so they can move into the middle class or move beyond the middle class. American families, speak up, because it is very true that, in our Republic, the one thing that can move this Chamber is citizens back home telling us what they think about what is happening.

Families lose. Billionaires win. That is what is at stake in this budget resolution. The plan is simple: Slash programs for families. Give massive tax giveaways to megamillionaires and billionaires. Run up the deficit in the process, and let Elon Musk and the minions dismantle the Federal Agencies that protect families from getting ripped off and exploited.

This Republican budget is not a government of, by, and for the people. This Republican budget is a government of, by, and for the powerful. And Democrats will fight day and night against this diabolical plan to attack America's families.

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#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:26 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 10 a.m.

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#### CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate February 18, 2025:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

HOWARD LUTNICK, OF NEW YORK, TO BE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.