

traffic controllers, FBI agents, and everyone else upon whom our Nation depends to do their jobs well.

If this is what bringing business acumen to government function looks like, then it is pretty clear we need to prevent our government from becoming a dumpster fire like X or one of Trump's corrupt corporations.

We can't afford it, and the American people can't afford it.

Mr. Speaker, it is well past time that Congress removed Mr. Musk and his DOGI minions from our government and get down to doing the peoples' business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, once in a while we could cooperate with the President and those who are trying to do things to make our government run better ultimately for the benefit of the citizens of this country, the taxpayers.

So what we see with DOGE is that \$65 billion of savings have been found and many, many contracts that are illegitimate or unnecessary to the operations of the government or what people expect are being turned over and are being rescinded.

This includes the scandal that has been USAID. What started out as a good thing many years ago has been turned into something that is almost completely corrupt.

So let's take a look at some of the other items that DOGE has found: 104 DEI contracts eliminating \$1 billion in spending. I could go down a whole long list: \$168,000 for a Dr. Fauci exhibit and a \$45 million DEI scholarship in Burma.

What are we doing here when we have really difficult issues in our home districts and across the country as well as a \$2 trillion deficit?

So this isn't going to solve everything overnight, but it sure is a right step.

So why don't we have cooperation by Federal agencies that work for us but ultimately for the American people?

Here is the food chain: The people are on top. In a republic these are the voters who vote us in to carry out what they tell us they want done. Then we employ people at the different levels of different agencies to get that work done for us, which is ultimately the American people.

Why is that not being recognized here, that yes, we are supposed to hold them accountable, and yes, we are supposed to have oversight?

Ultimately, the oversight hearings don't work around here because it is 2 hours of running the clock out by the

bureaucracy. Now we have an administration that has the executive authority to do that oversight.

That is an important thing that keeps getting lost here. The administration has the executive authority to appoint people. That is what the entire administration is: people appointed by the executive branch, by the President. At the State level it is by a Governor. In a city it is by a mayor. It is not a foreign concept.

Certainly, it is something that the Democrats when they are in charge take advantage of. They appoint people to do things.

I didn't vote for Fauci, did I?

A whole lot of other people are wondering that too.

That is what gets done by the executive branch.

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Whether we are talking about Elon Musk, or whether we are talking about anybody in the President's Cabinet and the people that they appoint, yes, they are appointed positions. It is our job to rein them in and hold them in line to whatever their mission statement was, if they remember their mission statement, and to follow that.

The work that DOGE is doing is pretty darn good. Yes, there are some fits and starts here and there and some things that we need to modify and smooth out a little bit on some of the employment out there, but at least the people's tax dollars are finally being respected.

We want to keep going with this and work that out, but we would like to be able to work with the agencies and say: Where are the areas that we could do better in, and what personnel are extra to the process?

Certainly, when the government was shut down due to COVID and we saw which people are essential and which people are nonessential, that should have been pretty revealing right there. That is tough if you are on the non-essential list, but we have to remember that we hire people in government and we create the agencies to serve a task and a purpose for the people of the country. It is not a government jobs program. It is a get-a-job-done-for-the-people program.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA'S HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, one thing I point out here that came up last week in my home State of California as part of a considerable amount of savings we could do federally is to quit funding that high-speed rail project. It has been a boondoggle from day one.

Right at the end of the Biden administration, they put up nearly \$4 billion more at the end, so let's quickly review that. The original high-speed rail program was going to be \$33 billion to build the rail from San Francisco to L.A., and that has ballooned in the following years to \$130 billion.

It was supposed to be completed by 2020. All they have is about an 1,800-

foot-long bridge near Fresno done right now. They haven't laid any track. They have seized a lot of land. They have devastated a lot of agricultural land, parts of cities, important installations, et cetera, but they haven't laid any rail yet.

They are trying to first do the easy part between Merced, California, and an orchard somewhere outside of Bakersfield. They actually said at the time it is because they will have less resistance to building that portion. That is not going to help anybody in San Francisco or Los Angeles, where the population base is.

Basically, if it is timed versus Amtrak, I think you get from Merced to Bakersfield about 20 minutes faster, if they actually had a high-speed rail that ran all the way through on just this chunk of track. They don't, and they won't by at least 2033, 2035. To build out the whole thing will be a lot longer.

We had a conference meeting in Los Angeles at Union Station last week, and I was very pleased. This was called by our Secretary of Transportation, Sean Duffy, at the behest of the Trump administration. We had this opportunity to talk to the press, the people of California, and anybody who would listen about what such a boondoggle this high-speed rail project is. It demands \$4 billion of new money that we need to claw back and put toward something useful, such as fixing our highways, water infrastructure, or anything besides this boondoggle.

DEFENSE OF DEDICATED FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVANTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in defense of our dedicated Federal public servants in the face of the relentless attacks from President Trump and Elon Musk.

Hardworking families in my district and people across the country are beginning to see this initiative for what it really is: a sham perpetrated by President Trump and run by an unelected billionaire, the richest person in the world, who has no idea how our government operates or what our public servants do for our communities.

Trump and Musk's goal is to undermine people's faith in public services, gain access to sensitive government data, and ultimately give away trillions of dollars in tax cuts for the rich. We know their game, and we are not playing it.

Last week, I met with union leaders who are representing our Federal workforce, including the American Federation of Government Employees, National Nurses United, the National Association of Letter Carriers, the American Postal Workers Union, and the Western New York Area Labor Federation.

I am deeply grateful for their work to empower our Federal workforce: our air traffic controllers, veteran healthcare practitioners, Social Security benefit experts, and so many more who provide the services and assistance hardworking families in our communities deserve and need.

Their ability to continue doing so is under immense threat. Union leaders on the front lines painted a picture in which our Federal workers are living in fear of wrongful firings, receiving intimidating emails that are causing mass confusion, and receiving unclear directives from an administration that has no interest in the rule of law.

These are workers who have dedicated their lives to public service. They help our parents and grandparents receive the Social Security that they have earned and rely on. They deliver world-class care to our veterans who have sacrificed so much for our freedoms. They keep our borders secure, our air and water clean, our airports and skies safe, and so much more. They deserve our gratitude, not to be subjected to this demeaning and cruel treatment, especially as they continue to deliver for hardworking families amid all of it.

Mr. Speaker, I have also spoken to constituents who have been impacted by these wrongful cuts. A young man named Jeff Plummer spoke to me hours before being wrongfully fired from the Internal Revenue Service. Jeff received exemplary reviews of his work within the IRS Small Business/Self-Employed Division, which helps small businesses to comply with tax requirements, helping our regional economy to thrive.

Due to the simple fact that he had worked for the IRS for less than 1 year, he was terminated. He is among 6,000 IRS employees who have been wrongfully fired, all in the middle of tax season.

Jeff and his fellow IRS employees are not alone. Our veterans are being directly harmed and discriminated against. They are experiencing real harm as the services they rely on are being decimated.

Service-disabled veterans are among the 8,500 Federal employees in my district alone being attacked and dismissed for being DEI hires. I spoke with one disabled veteran who bled for our country and continued to serve as a Federal employee for nearly two decades. He received a title change in the last year, which automatically put him on probationary status. He was fired last week with absolutely no justification.

These veterans feel demeaned and betrayed. It is unthinkable and shameful to treat our military heroes this way. It violates the sacred honor that we have to care for our veterans and provide the services and benefits that they have earned and that they deserve.

I have spoken to constituents myself. I have heard the palpable fear and anxiety that our Federal workers are feel-

ing, which makes it impossible to deliver the best quality care and services for taxpayers, from caring for veterans and seniors to protecting our environment.

As egg prices are skyrocketing due to bird flu ravaging our farms, Trump and Musk have cut FDA and USDA employees, putting the health and well-being of our communities on the line.

After we saw the first commercial airline crash in 16 years, there are FAA employees who are being fired. Their message each time: These employees weren't mission critical. Don't worry. You won't miss them.

Tell that to the senior whose medicine is contaminated due to the lack of oversight, or to the airline passenger facing major delays because of a severe shortage of air traffic controllers.

Meanwhile, unelected billionaire Elon Musk is celebrating on the world stage with a chain saw in his hand, bragging about the degrading treatment of our public servants, with no regard for the taxpayers who will suffer as a result because they cannot get the services that they rely on.

Why wouldn't he celebrate? President Trump has illegally given him the keys to our Treasury, sensitive government data, and control of our Federal workforce. We won't let him take a chain saw to our Federal workforce without a fight. That is why we are speaking up and speaking out and holding those accountable. We ask our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join in our fight.

BAN ON ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS FROM LOBBYISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, President Trump campaigned around the country to drain the swamp. Yet, one of the first things he did was to reverse President Biden's executive order that banned White House officials from accepting gifts from lobbyists.

Today, I am introducing the Drain the Swamp Act. It is pretty simple. It will ban any White House official from accepting gifts from lobbyists, and it will ban White House officials from becoming lobbyists during the Trump term.

I believe that this bill will have support not just from progressives, not just from Independents, but from the MAGA movement. That is why I am calling on my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to pass the Drain the Swamp Act and send it to President Trump's desk so that he can fulfill his promise.

DEPRIVATION OF MEDICARE TELEHEALTH SERVICES

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, the Trump administration is stripping millions of American seniors of their coverage of telehealth on March 31. That is right. Starting March 31, doctors' visits via videoconference or Zoom or

phone will no longer be covered for seniors on Medicare.

This is going to impact over 12 million Americans, and the crazy thing is that the inspectors general have found that there is only 0.2 percent of fraud in telehealth. Why are we taking telehealth away from millions of seniors who are homebound or who have difficulty leaving their homes? It is most devastating for rural Americans.

That is why I am introducing today the Telehealth Coverage Act. It will require Medicare to pay for telehealth services. Let us pass this act in a bipartisan way so that millions of American seniors aren't deprived of telehealth services because of the actions of the Trump administration.

CONGRATULATING JERRY GACHETT ON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SYKES) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of a dedicated and true public servant, Detective Jerry Gachett, who is retiring from the Akron Police Department.

I am honored to be standing here today talking about a man who has served the Akron community so humbly for over 31 years and who I am proud to call a friend.

Jerry was born in Alabama and raised in Akron, where he graduated from the John R. Buchtell High School in 1985. He then bravely served this country in the United States Army for 4 years.

For the last 31 years, Jerry has served our community as a member of the Akron Police Department. He has worked as a hostage negotiator. He worked in the financial crimes unit. Jerry also worked for 21 years as a juvenile detective, where he investigated crimes against children.

Throughout his distinguished career, Detective Gachett has played a pivotal role of securing justice with his investigations, leading to the imprisonment of hundreds of child predators, solidifying his reputation as a champion for the community's most vulnerable.

Jerry is one of the most caring and compassionate people I know. In fact, throughout his career, he has taken the care to truly get to know the victims and survivors who he has been sworn to protect and serve.

He has been to countless basketball games, baby showers and more, to celebrate the survivors who he cares so deeply for. He even walked one of the people he supported down the aisle at her wedding. In fact, my husband and I met Jerry when we hired him to secure our wedding when MAGA protesters threatened our very precious and sacred event.

Jerry has always put the people of our community first, and his deep desire to serve his community is an inspiration to all who have had the opportunity to experience his passion for