

Social Security Administration (SSA)

Timeline of Attacks

- **February 5, 2025:** Michael Russo was [installed](#) as chief information officer at the SSA. Russo previously [served](#) as the Chief Technology Officer for the payment processing firm Shift4, which held equity in Elon Musk's SpaceX and provided services for Musk's StarLink.
- **February 5, 2025:** DOGE was [granted](#) read-only access to the Treasury Department's payments systems, which is responsible for disbursing Social Security checks and contains sensitive personal information, including social security numbers.
- **February 14, 2025:** The SSA's Office of Hearing Operations in White Plains, New York [was](#) part of a DOGE list of leases marked for termination or nonrenewal. The office [closed](#) at the end of its lease in May.
- **February 16, 2025:** Musk and the White House [spread misinformation](#) about Social Security, claiming "tens of millions of deceased people" were receiving Social Security payments.
- **February 18, 2025:** Leland Dudek [replaced](#) Michelle King as acting SSA commissioner when King stepped down after attempting to block DOGE's access to sensitive personal information. Dudek was previously [placed](#) on administrative leave for circumventing agency leadership to give information to DOGE. As commissioner, Dudek swiftly [announced](#) that DOGE would be given read-only access to DOGE's sensitive systems.
- **February 19, 2025:** DOGE [claimed](#) to have saved \$232 million at the SSA, largely through cancelling "IT development efforts." The *Intercept* later [reported](#) the true "savings" was only \$560,000.
- **February 21, 2025:** The Office of Analytics Review and Oversight [was](#) dissolved, with its operations being absorbed into other offices.
- **February 24, 2025:** DOGE [announced](#) that 10 Social Security Offices across the country will be closed.
- **February 25, 2025:** Dudek [announced](#) the closure of the Office of Transformation and the Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity. Approximately 190 employees were placed on administrative leave as a result of the closures.
- **February 28, 2025:** The SSA [announced](#) it would be cutting staffing levels by 7,000 employees, reducing total employment to around 50,000.
- **February 28, 2025:** DOGE [cancelled](#) IT contracts with Leidos Holdings and IT Concepts. Dudek also announced he was terminating 200 employees and 200 contractors.
- **March 6, 2025:** The *Washington Post* [reported](#) that Dudek admitted DOGE was responsible for the cuts he had implemented at the agency.
- **March 9, 2025:** DOGE [instituted](#) a \$1 spending limit on government credit cards. At the SSA, this [led](#) to offices "running out of paper, pens and printer toner."

- **March 10, 2025:** *Bloomberg* [reported](#) that Musk had installed venture capitalists Antonio Gracias and Scott Coulter as DOGE representatives at the SSA.
- **March 12, 2025:** The *Washington Post* [reported](#) on DOGE plans to end phone services for the SSA. Shortly after the report, DOGE amended its plans to end the ability for SSA recipients to change their banking information by phone, rather than ending phone service altogether. By mid-April, DOGE had completely [scrapped](#) the plans amid widespread backlash and increased wait times in person and over the phone.
- **March 19, 2025:** The *Associated Press* [obtained](#) an internal planning document that showed DOGE planned to close a total of 47 SSA offices.
- **March 20, 2025:** A federal judge temporarily [blocked](#) DOGE's access to the sensitive personal information housed in the SSA's systems.
- **March 28, 2025:** DOGE [began](#) plans to migrate the SSA's computer systems to a different programming language.
- **April 4, 2025:** DOGE [informed](#) the SSA that the agency must propose "more extensive" reduction in for plans beyond the 7,000 employees they cut.
- **April 4, 2025:** SSA data analyzed by the *Washington Post* [revealed](#) that 2,500 employees at field offices were leaving the agency after accepting DOGE's buyout offer.
- **April 10, 2025:** The SSA effectively [canceled](#) thousands of Social Security numbers legally obtained by immigrants by moving them to its database of dead people, [removing](#) their ability to receive benefits or work with legal documentation.
- **June 6, 2025:** After a months-long court battle, the Supreme Court [ruled](#) that DOGE can access sensitive social security data.
- **July 9, 2025:** The SSA [reassigned](#) approximately 1,000 field office staff to handle calls to the agency's phone line.
- **August 26, 2025:** A whistleblower at the SSA [revealed](#) that DOGE had uploaded Social Security data to the cloud in violation of a court order, putting sensitive data at immense risk.
- **January 20, 2026:** The Department of Justice [accused](#) two DOGE members of conspiring with groups seeking to overturn election results. The scheme allegedly hinged on the DOGE agents' access to Social Security data, which could be used to match state voter rolls. The individuals were referred for violations of the Hatch Act.

Impacts on Capacity

Shortly after DOGE-enthusiast Leland Dudek was installed as acting commissioner, SSA began eliminating parts of the agency. Within his first week, Dudek [dismantled](#) the Office of Analytics Review and Oversight (OARA), Office of Transformation, and the Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity.

Prior to its dissolution, OARA [was](#) responsible for "overseeing fraud detection and prevention efforts and addressing recommendations from external monitoring

authorities.” The Office of Transformation, which was [created](#) in 2023 to implement agency-wide improvements to modernize signature requirements and electronic document uploads, had 50 employees placed on administrative leave. The Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity was responsible for “investigating civil rights complaints, preventing harassment and ensuring accommodations for people with disabilities.” The office had 150 employees [placed](#) on administrative leave, with the majority believed to be headed for termination.

In addition to terminating SSA employees, DOGE also [ended](#) agreements with outside contractors Leidos Holdings Inc and IT Concepts, which were responsible for IT improvements. Dudek [said](#) he planned to eliminate contractors and full time employees at a 1:1 ratio.

In February, the agency announced its plans to reduce the workforce by 7,000 people. It's unclear exactly where these cuts were instituted, but the near 12% staffing cut has had far reaching [effects](#) on the agency's ability to serve beneficiaries. Field offices alone lost 2,500 employees to buyouts, with offices in Missouri, Nevada, and Minnesota losing 50% or more of their workforces.

Material Harms

Within a few weeks of DOGE's presence at the SSA, their objectives became pretty clear: eliminate physical office locations, terminate a significant chunk of employees, and replace these services with AI or call systems. The first target of this plan was the White Plains, New York hearing office. As a result of its closure, which was finalized at the end of May 2025, beneficiaries in the area were [forced](#) to travel anywhere from 24 to 135 miles to reach the next closest office. The office, which heard appeals for people that were denied Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income, had some 2,000 [pending](#) cases when its closure was announced.

DOGE eventually listed nearly 50 offices for lease termination or nonrenewal, though leadership denied that field offices were closing, [saying](#) “only underutilized hearing office space has been closed and [sic] without permanently closing field offices.” It's unclear how many of these proposed closures went through, but service was undoubtedly impacted. 119,000 people across the country [visit](#) the SSA's 1,200 offices *each day*. Slowdown of service at these offices have deadly consequences. In 2023, 30,000 beneficiaries died while [waiting](#) for the SSA to issue determinations on their disability payments. Cuts to personnel and the number of hearing locations will only lengthen this process.

While the administration eventually backed off most detrimental plans to end phone services, and then withdrew its narrowed plans to end the ability of beneficiaries to change banking information over the phone, DOGE's cuts still significantly hampered customer service efforts. The chaos with which DOGE announced planned cuts to services and offices led to a flood of phone calls to the agency's hotlines. But due to the

loss of personnel, the wait times were between 120 and 180 minutes. Inevitably, scores of people must have hung up before getting any assistance. It wasn't just the phone lines either. Despite the supposed technological prowess of DOGE's agents, the agency's website repeatedly crashed and issued inaccurate error messages to users regarding their payments. Eventually, the agency stopped reporting its wait times and other performance metrics.

Under DOGE's watch, the SSA also became a tool of the administration in political fights. In Maine, Acting Commissioner Dudek imposed a requirement that parents would need to register their children at physical SSA offices, rather than at the hospital. The move came amid Maine governor Janet Mills' feud over Trump's threats to pull federal education funding if the state didn't ban transgender women from competing in women's sports. A week after announcing the rule, Dudek revoked his action, saying it imposed an "undue burden" on Maine's population.

The SSA was also a tool in the administration's war on immigrants, with thousands of immigrants losing their legally obtained social security numbers after being added to the agency's Death Master File, effectively barring them from employment and benefits. According to *Wired*, DOGE also pooled data from the SSA with the Department of Homeland Security and other agencies to create a database that could track and surveil immigrants, making the agency complicit in the violent ICE and Border Patrol incursions into cities across the country.

Notable Names

Ousted Leadership

- **Michelle King:** Former acting commissioner of the SSA who resigned from her position after disputes with DOGE over access to sensitive information. King was a career civil servant who had worked at the SSA since 1994.
- **Tiffany Flick:** SSA chief of staff who resigned after Leland Dudek was made acting commissioner.
- **Charles Borges:** Chief data officer of the SSA who resigned involuntarily after filing a whistleblower complaint regarding DOGE's potential violation of federal statutes in its handling of sensitive information.

DOGE Agents

- **Akash Bobba**
- **Scott Coulter**
- **Marko Elez**
- **Luke Farritor**
- **Antonio Gracias**
- **Gautier Cole Killian**
- **Jon Koval**
- **Nikhil Rajpal**
- **Payton Rehling**
- **Ethan Shaotran**