

United States: Trump-Musk Coup Leads to Resistance in the Courts and in the Streets

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President Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk have been on a rampage, closing government agencies, firing thousands of workers, and pressuring two million federal employees to resign, actions that threaten the well-being of millions of Americans—children, the elderly, the disabled, federal workers, and others who depend on the federal government. Their actions constitute an on-going technocratic coup from the top and from within the government itself, what in Latin America is called an auto-golpe (a coup against one's own government) as Musk's techies, mostly young men employed by him, effectively take control by commandeering the state's computer systems. Trump's assault has left the country in a state of shock and confusion.

At the same time though, only a month into his second term as president, Trump has galvanized a resistance in both the courts and on the streets. The resistance, still small and inchoate, is beginning to take on the characteristic of a mass popular movement.

Lawsuits brought in the federal courts have at least temporarily stopped Trump from carrying out all of his executive orders. A federal court stopped Trump from freezing billions of dollars in grants and loans. Another stopped Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) from accessing Treasury Department records. Yet another court has blocked Trump's attempt to force federal employees into retirement. A court has also stopped him from ending birth-right citizenship. In some of these cases, Trump and Musk have failed to abide by court orders. Still the number of suits grows as students sue to stop DOGE's takeover of the Education Department and unions bring suits to protect federal workers' jobs.

Meanwhile tens of millions of Americans, 1,500 per minute, have been calling their representatives in Congress, completely overwhelming the congressional telephone system. They call to complain that their government jobs are threatened, that they have not received payments to their NGO, their company, or themselves, or calls simply to decry what Trump and Musk are doing to the country.

Out in the streets, tens of thousands protest Trump's executive orders in cities across the country. Organized by a pop-up movement called 50501, meaning 50 demonstrations in 50 cities on one day. The protests, many of them at the state capitals, took place in at least 40 states, both Republican and Democratic, varying in size from a handful, to hundreds, to thousands and taking up a wide variety of particular issues, but also the big issue of attempt to impose an authoritarian oligarchic government that ignores democratic institutions. In one of the demonstrations a woman carried a sign that read, "This is a coup: Clash, Don't Collaborate!"

In the largest demonstrations so far, thousands marched in Los Angeles to protest Trump's deporting of immigrants, blocking streets and briefly paralyzing a major freeway. In New York City, thousands, among them a number of non-binary children and adolescents, gathered in Union Square to protest Trump's attack on gender affirming care for trans children.

Some of these protests have been led by Democratic Party politicians, such as Senator Elizabeth Warren who headed up a group of legislators, federal employees, and common citizens demonstrating at the Treasury Department. Democratic lawmakers and government employees also led another in Washington, D.C. to protest the closing of USAID, the American aid and development agency.

Protestors of all ages, all genders, and all ethnicities carry signs reading: "Stop Musk." "Stop Project 2025" (the Republican program) "Stop the Coup" and "Stop Fascism." Others carried signs that said, "Christians, Love Thy Neighbor." In some demonstrations protestors flew the American flag, the LGBTQ rainbow flag, the Mexican flag and the Palestinian flag. Will this become a movement of millions?

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P.S.

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