

# Washington Should Take Efficiency Seriously

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The Capitol Hill building in Washington, D.C., in a file photo Samira Bouaou/The Epoch Times

OPINION

By Nancy Brinker

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## Commentary

*DOGE is saving billions and it's doing what voters asked for.*

As someone who has represented the United States abroad, first as ambassador to Hungary and later as U.S. chief of protocol, I've seen how American leadership is measured not just by strength or ideals, but by functionality. Our allies watch how we govern ourselves. And too often, what they've seen in recent decades is an increasingly bloated federal government, mired in duplication, inefficiency, and bureaucratic inertia.

That's why the work of the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, deserves serious consideration. Led by Elon Musk, DOGE has taken on a task that most administrations have promised but failed to achieve: modernizing how our federal government operates. It has consolidated overlapping offices, canceled wasteful contracts, sold underutilized properties, and implemented data-driven reforms, all aimed at reducing cost, improving performance, and saving taxpayer money.

Since it began in January, [DOGE](#) has either cut or reduced grants, leases, and contracts in over 176 departments or agencies. On its website the department reports saving \$160 billion. For comparison, that's more than the entire annual budget of the Department of Transportation. Even according to independent data and analysis, DOGE efforts have already generated billions in savings. This is not a theoretical exercise in reform. It is tangible, measurable, and aligned with what the American people have repeatedly said they want: a government that delivers more by doing less.

Polling backs this up. A February [Harvard CAPS/Harris poll](#) found that 72 percent of Americans support the existence of an agency focused solely on eliminating waste and inefficiency in government. A clear majority (60 percent) said they believe DOGE is helping to rein in unnecessary federal spending. That's not a left-wing or right-wing perspective; that's a mainstream one.

DOGE's creation may have sparked controversy, particularly among those uncomfortable with Musk's unconventional approach and public persona. But we shouldn't allow style to eclipse substance. If government is functioning more effectively and at a lower cost to taxpayers, then we must look seriously at how those outcomes are being achieved, and what lessons can be responsibly applied more broadly.

Having served in federal roles that demand strict compliance with law, protocol, and tradition, I know firsthand that reform must operate within the boundaries of our values. Rule of law and adherence to institutional norms are non-negotiable. Yet so, too, is the need for honest appraisal: Much of our federal bureaucracy has become outdated, sprawling, and resistant to change. Streamlining is not an assault on government. It is, in fact, an affirmation of it—an attempt to make public institutions worthy of public trust.

Of course, DOGE's approach is not without flaws. Musk himself has candidly admitted as much. Critics have questioned whether all reported savings are fully verified, and transparency around decision-making needs improvement. Oversight is not only appropriate—it's essential. But the existence of imperfections should not be a pretext

for dismissing a bold, productive effort to modernize government. We cannot let perfect be the enemy of progress.

It's a time-honored tradition in Washington for good ideas to wither under partisan suspicion. But government reform should not be the property of any one party. For decades, both Republicans and Democrats have campaigned on promises to cut waste, modernize services, and rein in unnecessary spending.

DOGE is doing what many in both parties have failed to do: take those promises seriously.

The real question is not whether DOGE is controversial—it is. The real question is whether it is effective. So far, the evidence suggests that it is. The challenge ahead is to preserve that momentum, institutionalize the best of what DOGE is doing, fix mistakes, and ensure it is guided by transparency, accountability, and legal rigor.

This moment presents a rare opportunity: the chance to reshape how government operates in a way that is more responsive to the people it serves. Instead of vilifying reformers, we should come together around a shared goal that transcends politics: building a government that works.

If DOGE continues to help us get there, it deserves not derision, but support.

*From [RealClearWire](#)*

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