

Anthony Furey: Canada Can Benefit From a DOGE

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The housing crisis in Canada is a major drain on our productivity and also an all-around downer that is leaving younger generations feeling like they don't have a future in this country, writes Anthony Furey. Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press



By Anthony Furey

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Commentary

The involvement of Elon Musk in the upcoming Trump administration has become one of the most intriguing developments to come out of the U.S. election.

Musk's role in the campaign was seen as an important component to Donald Trump's second win at the presidency earlier this month. The world's richest man put time, energy, and resources into identifying key areas and targeting voters needed to get the win, and then he went all-in on organizing and pulling the vote.

Now, all eyes are on the role Musk will play moving forward as Trump assumes the presidency. A week after the Nov. 5 election, the president-elect announced that Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy would be the co-leads of a new entity called the Department of Government Efficiency. It's widely known by its acronym DOGE, which is also a nod to the cryptocurrency Dogecoin.

Trump has said the purpose of DOGE will be to “slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures, and restructure Federal Agencies.” The mandate is slated to be completed by Independence Day 2026—giving Musk a year and a half to reform the massive American state.

Based on what Musk and Ramaswamy have said to date, they mean business. The Tesla founder has already revealed that he wants to reduce the number of federal agencies from 400 to 99, largely due to the duplication of regulations they produce.

In a Wall Street Journal op-ed published recently, the DOGE co-leads said that “most government enforcement decisions and discretionary expenditures aren't made by the democratically elected president or even his political appointees but by millions of unelected, unappointed civil servants within government agencies who view themselves as immune from firing thanks to civil-service protections.”

It remains unclear exactly how Musk and Ramaswamy—who are also unelected—will be able to enact their recommendations. So far, what's known is that DOGE will operate under the House Oversight Committee and that Trump transition team members are trying to

find lawful mechanisms to allow financial changes to be made without congressional approval.

As they work out the details though, Musk has managed to make finding efficiencies cool and trendy. A social media post from the Musk camp set out to recruit “super high-IQ small-government revolutionaries willing to work 80+ hours per week on unglamorous cost-cutting.” Musk says there will be zero pay for the work.

This is the sort of energy that a young Musk or Mark Zuckerberg brought to their early successes. It’s one thing to get bright young minds energized to work around the clock for their own start-ups and for personal gain, it’s another to do it for the good of the country.

If Musk succeeds in bringing together a merry band of government efficiency hackers, it’ll be a remarkable success and no doubt inspire other jurisdictions to do the same.

Hopefully, it’ll ignite something similar in Canada. We are just as much in need of an efficiency shake-up as they are in the United States.

There is a general malaise in Canada right now when it comes to the ability to grow the economy and get things done. If we embrace a “can-do” attitude we can get Canada working for everyone, and setting up a high-profile DOGE is one way to fire up that energy.

The motivation for a DOGE—in the United States or here in Canada—should not be a backward looking one that’s about litigating past decisions or punishing bureaucrats. It should be an optimistic, forward-looking one that’s about believing better is possible when it comes to generating results both in the public sector and private sector.

For example, the housing crisis in Canada is a major drain on our productivity and also an all-around downer that is leaving younger generations feeling like they don’t have a future in this country.

While there has been much discussion about accelerating housing growth and also bringing back a sense of balance to our immigration numbers, the housing crisis has only worsened. To bring DOGE-level

intensity to fixing the housing crisis is the type of boost that's sorely needed.

While the anticipation around DOGE is immense right now, the results are what's important. Let's hope, for the sake of progress, Musk is able to bring some positive change to the U.S. government. Then hopefully the good that comes from it can be replicated all over.

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