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POLITICS | POLICY

Judge Approves Limits on Sharing Treasury Data After Musk Allies Move In

Restrictions will remain in place for now while labor unions pursue lawsuit over access to payments information

By *Jan Wolfe* [Follow](#)

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Democratic lawmakers addressed hundreds at a rally outside the Treasury Department building in Washington, D.C., this week. PHOTO: MICHAEL NIGRO/ZUMA PRESS

WASHINGTON—A judge on Thursday signed off on a temporary agreement that limits the sharing of sensitive Treasury data amid a dispute over access granted to Elon Musk’s allies as he spearheads a sweeping review of government spending.

The agreement, brokered by U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly in Washington, allows two Musk allies who have been named Treasury employees to continue to access a payments system containing the personal and financial data of millions of Americans.

But it prohibits the two men, Tom Krause and Marko Elez, from sharing sensitive Treasury data with anyone outside the agency. She also limited Krause and Elez to “read-only” access, meaning they can read records but not alter them.

The agreement came after a lawsuit on Monday filed by a coalition of labor unions whose members are among the millions of people who receive payments from the federal government.

The deal doesn’t resolve the lawsuit, but rather was intended to “preserve the status quo” until Kollar-Kotelly can hear legal arguments, the judge said during a court hearing on Wednesday afternoon. She asked lawyers for both sides to hash out the standstill agreement, saying she would consider issuing a temporary restraining order if they were unable to agree on the wording of an interim order.

The agreement signed by Kollar-Kotelly, a Clinton appointee sitting in Washington, D.C., will remain in place until she can decide on whether the labor unions are entitled to an injunction.

The lawsuit, brought by the left-leaning nonprofit Public Citizen on behalf of the AFL-CIO and others, seeks a court order blocking Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency from accessing the Treasury payments portal, saying it would lead to the unlawful disclosure of social security numbers, home addresses and banking information.

President Trump tapped Musk, an outspoken supporter and the world’s richest man, to slash the federal bureaucracy. His DOGE task force was initially envisioned as an advisory committee, but a day-one Trump executive order instead made it a temporary entity within the Executive Office of the President.

Musk’s allies have moved swiftly to exert control over vast swaths of the U.S. government, including at Treasury and the U.S. Agency for International Development. They have demanded access to sensitive information at federal agencies and laid out plans to block spending they deem excessive.

The Musk allies affiliated with DOGE include Krause, a Silicon Valley technology executive, and Elez, an engineer who graduated college in 2021 and has since worked at two of Musk’s companies.

The moves have drawn swift challenges. During a Wednesday court hearing, Justice Department attorney Bradley Humphreys said Krause and Elez had been made special employees of the Treasury Department and given read-only access to the payment system, known as the Bureau of the Fiscal Service.

Humphreys told the judge that Krause and Elez hadn't shared any data they reviewed with anyone outside of Treasury, including Musk.

The AFL-CIO and other labor groups filed a separate lawsuit on Wednesday alleging DOGE is on the cusp of gaining unlawful access to Labor Department data, including "medical and benefits information about all federal workers with worker compensation."

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