



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 31, 2024

Elon Musk: Get Ready for “Temporary Hardship” Under Second Trump Administration

Liberal economists and mainstream commentators [expressed their horror](#) that the second Trump administration might inflict “hardship” on the country. In a town hall event on X last Friday, Elon Musk uttered the “H” word: “We have to reduce spending to live within our means. And, you know, that necessarily involves some temporary hardship, but it will ensure long-term prosperity.”

Musk continued, “There is so much government waste that it’s kind of like being in a room full of targets, like you can’t miss — you fire in any direction you’re going to hit a target.”



AP Images
Elon Musk

What frightens liberals is that Musk has the ear of Donald Trump, and he himself has a long history of applying waste-cutting strategies to his own companies, including X. The house-cleaning and job-cutting Musk undertook after he bought Twitter in May 2022 is legendary. And Trump has offered him the new position of “Secretary of Cost Cutting” in his second term.

How Dare He?

Brett Arends, a Wall Street commentator who got his education at liberal universities Oxford and Cambridge, said it was “childish” and “moronic” to think anyone, including Musk, would even dare think of cutting or abolishing the Departments of Transportation, Agriculture, Justice, or Homeland Security.

Bob Elliott, chief investment officer at Unlimited Funds investment group, said the idea of cutting the suggested \$2 trillion from the present \$7 trillion annual budget is “totally implausible,” pointing out that it would mean scrapping all transportation, education, housing, and environmental programs.

Twenty-three Nobel Prize-winning economists posted a letter supporting Kamala Harris’ economic platform over Trump’s suggested cuts:

While each of us has different views on the particulars of various economic policies, we believe that, overall, Harris’s economic agenda will improve our nation’s health, investment, sustainability, resilience, employment opportunities, and fairness and be vastly superior to the counterproductive economic agenda of Donald Trump.

His policies, including high tariffs even on goods from our friends and allies and regressive tax cuts for corporations and individuals, will lead to higher prices, larger deficits, and greater inequality.

Among the most important determinants of economic success are the rule of law and economic and political certainty, and Trump threatens all of these.



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What Trump proposes is basically “top down” budget cutting. He’ll snip away at low-hanging fruit such as the IRS, the ATF, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and the Department of Education.

A Better Approach

An even better approach would be a “bottom up” method, using to Article I, Section Eight of the U.S. Constitution and the 10th Amendment as starting points.

Article I, Section Eight reads:

- The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;
- To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;
- To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;
- To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;
- To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;
- To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;
- To establish Post Offices and post Roads;
- To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;
- To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;
- To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;
- To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;
- To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;
- To provide and maintain a Navy;
- To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;
- To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;
- To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;
- To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding



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ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings; And To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

To ensure that the federal government doesn't stray from these limited powers, the 10th Amendment was added:

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

That is the gold standard to be applied when finding what current functions of the federal government should be cut.

At present, there are 15 Executive Branch agencies, with hundreds of sub-agencies below them. Go to [USA.gov](https://www.usa.gov) to see for yourself what Musk means when he says that it's like being in a room full of targets. Firing in any direction, you can't miss.

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