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U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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March 23, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary,

As the Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee, I stand ready to work with you and the Department of Defense on matters related to efficiency, innovation, acquisition reform, and strengthening the U.S. industrial base. It is my hope that we can improve the lines of communication and coordination between the Department of Defense and the committee on these, and other important issues that affect our national security.

However, the lack of transparency on Mr. Elon Musk's and the Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) review of the policies and programs of the Department of Defense, or on the recommendations or decisions being made by the DOGE, are of great concern. Transparency regarding DOGE's work, as well the policies, programs, and activities of the Department of Defense, are necessary for congressional oversight as well as coordination on areas of agreement.

Recently, it was reported that you met with Mr. Musk at the Pentagon on March 21, 2025, and that, in the meeting, you and Mr. Musk discussed innovation, efficiency, and smarter production as it relates to the Department of Defense. It was also reported that you met with Mr. Musk in his personal capacity rather than his role with the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). However, it is difficult to separate Mr. Musk's work at DOGE from his business interests, and their confluence could present conflicts of interest.

In the interests of congressional oversight and transparency, I request answers to the following questions regarding your March 21, 2025, meeting with Mr. Musk:

1. What specifically was briefed to Mr. Musk and what specific programs, policies, and activities were discussed during the meeting at the Pentagon?

2. Did the conversation at this meeting include any classified matters? If so, what topics were covered and what was the specific classification or classifications of the information provided?
3. How has the Department addressed the potential for conflicts of interest for Mr. Musk, to include how the actions taken are in line with the commitment President Trump made that Mr. Musk will not be involved in matters in which he or any of his companies have a business interest?
4. Will you be hosting similar meetings with senior officials from other U.S. companies with business interests in Department of Defense matters, who may also have ideas for innovation, efficiency, and smarter production?

I appreciate your attention to these questions and look forward to working with you on the important issues that affect our national security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Adam Smith". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Adam Smith
Ranking Member