

REP. JOHNNY OLSZEWSKI: Elon Musk brought chaos. I'm one Democrat who knows how to fix government

DOGE cuts have failed to hit their target and polling says Americans disapprove

By Rep. Johnny Olszewski Fox News

The Trump administration has the right – perhaps even the obligation – to ensure that the government runs as efficiently as possible. Americans, likewise, are right to expect it.

I fully support the president's stated goals of rooting out waste, fraud and abuse. However, in dispatching [Elon Musk](#) and his DOGE team, he sent the proverbial bull into a china shop, wreaking havoc on a civil service that has worked effectively for the American people since 1883. There has been no method to Musk's madness and little to show for his efforts.

Musk recently conceded that his group has only identified \$160 billion in savings, far lower than his recently stated \$1 trillion target – which itself is half of DOGE's original goal of \$2 trillion.

Considering the damage being wrought for minimal impact, it is little surprise that a new [Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll](#) found the vast majority of

Americans disapprove of the way Musk is handling his job. Most also say they are concerned that Trump will do too much to reduce the size and role of our government. A lot of damage, unfortunately, is done. Tens of thousands of federal employees' lives have been shattered by DOGE and Musk, who mercifully announced he will be scaling his government role as profits at his electric car company plummet – slinking away from the mess he created.

[The administration's dangerous cuts](#) to mission-critical, common-sense jobs and programs like lifesaving medical research, veterans services and Federal Aviation Administration jobs jeopardize programs that Americans expect and deserve for their hard-earned tax dollars. They may very well also put real lives in jeopardy.

It need not be this way. We can make our government more efficient without the havoc we have seen under DOGE and Musk. In fact, I have already proven it is possible.

Prior to joining the [House of Representatives](#), I was the chief executive of Baltimore County – a \$5 billion government enterprise representing over 850,000 Marylanders.

In taking on that role, I inherited an antiquated bureaucracy that was firmly stuck in the 20th century. So, we did something about it, conducting a comprehensive efficiency review of both the county government and our [local school system](#) – the 25th largest in the United States.

We brought in trained experts who led a detailed and methodical audit of each county agency. We compared our data with that of similarly sized communities around the country. We conducted detailed site visits. We conducted extensive staff surveys. And we solicited input from the very public we served. The result: two reports – one for [Baltimore County](#) government and another for the [Baltimore County Public School System](#) – including more than 1,000 pages and hundreds of recommendations that identified as much as \$771 million in possible savings over a five-year period.

In practice, the solutions were as straightforward as making double-sided printing the new default to save on paper and ink. They were as common sense as pre-treating roads before winter storms; coupled with the installation of "smart" salt spreaders, we saved millions annually while also being better for the environment.

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Elon Musk, President [Donald Trump](#) and DOGE think savings come by taking a chainsaw to the federal government. We proved that a systematic, deliberate and caring approach is the better way to achieve real savings and to create meaningful and lasting efficiency – without compromising service quality.

The savings in Baltimore County were achieved by recognizing and relying on our most valuable resource: our employees. The review included over 300 interviews – conversations with not only top leadership, but also frontline employees – to ensure we took the advice of those actually doing the work. Efficiencies cannot be made without appropriate context, and they definitely can't be realized by ignoring those most qualified to identify what those opportunities might be.

Unfortunately, efforts by DOGE are collectively turning "efficiency" into a dirty phrase. It doesn't have to be this way. True government efficiency at the local, state and federal level is desperately needed. And it's absolutely possible.

Elon Musk is heading back to Tesla. If President Trump wants to learn how to do this right, my door is open.