

# Trump and Musk are trying to kill Social Security

While Trump pretends he wants to save Social Security, Elon Musk is strangling the program with bureaucratic red tape

By Jim Hightower, OtherWords Columnist

How ironic: The most inefficient bureaucracy in government turns out to be Donald Trump’s “Department of Government Efficiency.” That could be humorous, except that DOGE — a creature of the right-wing Project 2025 — has been devastating to millions of people. And it’s about to get worse. Elon Musk — the flighty überreich autocrat put in charge of “efficiency” by his buddy Trump — is now going after the Social Security deposits of 73 million senior citizens.

But wait, hasn’t Trump himself promised (loudly and often) that he would not ax this essential retirement program? Yes... but Elon is his “gotcha.”

Rather than an honest kill, Musk is strangling the program with bureaucratic red tape. Claiming to be cutting waste, he’s eliminating 7,000 people who administer the program, shouting, “Bureaucratic excess!”

Except, Social Security is actually a renowned model of government efficiency, spending *less than 1 percent* of its revenue on administration. So by whacking the people who do the work, Musk is actually whacking the



**Hightower**

people who are due to receive their earned benefits.

For example, he’s decreed that the public can no longer apply for benefits or resolve questions by phone. Instead, they must now travel in person to some distant Social Security office. But the staff there has also been decimated, so people who’ve come from afar are told to go back home and call for an appointment — a call that will often not be answered.

What’s at work here is a Musk-Trump ploy to wreck Social Security’s remarkable record of efficiency. Their intent is to make the service so bad that they can then let profiteering corporations privatize your retirement. Don’t let them.

*OtherWords columnist Jim Hightower is a radio commentator, writer, and public speaker. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.*

## Letters Policy

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The Devils Lake Journal welcomes letters to the editor and guest columns (preferably on local issues). The writer’s full name, signature, home address and telephone number must be included with the submission so we can verify it. Including letters with multiple signatures. Address and telephone number are not published in the paper. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for potential libelous content, good taste, grammar, punctuation, length and spelling. Due to space limitations, we request letters to be 300 words or less and guest columns 800 words or less. Submissions should be sent to the Devils Lake Journal by e-mail to loleson@cmpapers.com

Exception: During an election year cycle all submissions favoring one candidate over another, or one party over another must be a paid political advertisement.

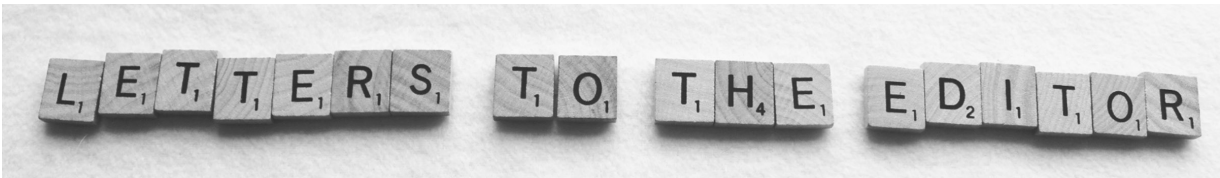


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Dear Editor,  
Earth Day 2025  
“What? It’s not my birthday!” This was a response that I received from a grocery store girl checking me out when I had said “Happy Earth Day” to her last year. She said “oh.... I think we did something for that when I was in 3rd grade.”

There didn’t seem to be any other connection to one of the most significant movements of our time. She is not in the minority of folks who are in the second, third, fourth or fifth decade of their lives. The ignorance and non-compliance is staggering.

How can it be forgotten???? People: We can’t ease up ! I speak for the generation responsible for its creation!

Originally established by a Wisconsin senator: Gaylor Nelson in 1970. “The objective was to organize a national demonstration of concern for the environment so large that it would shake up the political establishment and force this issue onto the national agenda” recalled Senator Nelson. “It was a gamble, but it worked.” [www.education-world.com](http://www.education-world.com)

This source goes on “At the time, Americans were slurping leaded gas through massive V8 sedans,” states Earth



**Franks-Erickson**

Day Network. “Industry belched out smoke and sludge with little fear of legal consequences or even bad press.” And there was a generation paying attention and noticing the affects on human health and the planet.

This is what the First Earth Day turned all around by a generation of young college kids who questioned and challenged the wrongs they saw in society and “actively” and passionately took action including caring for the planet.

Later in 1970 the Environmental Protection Agency was established, the Clean Air Act of 1970 was passed and within three years came the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act were all passed!

Our planet was a wasteful mess and today their are still millions of people who don’t know anything about caring

for our planet or they know but consider it an inconvenience to make any changes in their lifestyles. I worked at a place where I started a plastic bottle recycling program and at times at the end of the day I would check a few waste baskets by desks for plastic bottles and actually got a hostile reaction from a person who was still sitting at the desk and through gritted teeth said: “Oh that’s right !!!!!!!!! You’re doing that stuff !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

I’ve also heard “hey I’ve got some newspapers for you and a couple plastic bottles” like it was only a personal project of mine and no one elses. They never see that they can recycle the same way I do. City folks have curbside service for this so how hard can that be?

Excuses like: recycling takes too much time, it takes too much space, I have to drive to a recycling center to drop off my plastic and paper etc and I will add; it does much more than that, think about it! I invite you readers to google waste and recycling , how long does it take for trash to decompose, how we’re running out of landfill space no matter how far down we dig into Earth’s basement. Here are a few statistics from the “World Economic Forum”: Every HOUR 2.5 million plastic

bottles are thrown away in the United States, plastic bottles take up to 450 YEARS to degrade, 7 million TONS of aluminum are still not recycled and only 1/3 of 110 million glass bottles that are thrown away gets recycled.

Are you going to keep taking without replacing, recycling and/or restoring ?

Do you want a planet for our future or are you planning to move to Mars or Jupiter?

**From Charlotte Franks-Erickson, Sheyenne, ND**

*Verified letter - LAO Charlotte Franks-Erickson, (A native of Moorhead, Mn) moved to Sheyenne the summer of 1976. She currently lives on a farm a few miles out of Sheyenne with her husband where they raised their three children. She is a semi-retired teacher having been in education for nearly 35 years. She started as a classroom para and then went back to school at age 39 and got her teaching degree. She’s taught in three small schools with 15 years as a Kindergarten teacher, several as a middle school teacher and the last few as an Art teacher for pre-k – 8th grade. Currently she teaches Art K-8 at the Oberon school and works with their special events and publicity*

## Earth Day 2025 History, Etc.

Earth Day is now a global event, but its origins are somewhat humble. Prior to the 1960s, awareness of the link between public health and pollution was minimal. However, according to EarthDay.org, the 1962 publication of Silent Spring by American marine biologist, writer and conservationist Rachel Carson was a watershed moment for the environmental movement. The book did much to raise awareness of the effects of pollution on public health. Indeed, the publication of Carson’s book proved a pivotal step toward the eventual establishment of Earth Day in 1970, which EarthDay.org characterizes as the dawn of the modern environmental movement.

**A brief history of Earth Day**

Earth Day is celebrated each April and draws attention to a range of issues affecting the environment. Earth Day aims to raise awareness in the hope of inspiring change.

Earth Day is observed on April 22. According to National Geographic, the first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970. Wis-

consin senator Gaylord Nelson was inspired to begin a national celebration uniting the environmental movement after witnessing environmental activism in the 1960s. With the help of Denis Hayes, a graduate student at Harvard University, Nelson organized the first Earth Day. Twenty million people participated in events across the United States and strengthened support for environmental legislation like the Clean Air Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Earth Day was expanded to a global initiative in 1990 under guidance from Hayes. Nearly 200 million participants in more than 140 countries now join together in the name of protecting the planet. Awareness continues to be raised each year regarding renewable energy and climate change.

One of the hallmarks of Earth Day celebrations is the planting of trees. Researchers estimate roughly 15 billion trees are cut down each year across the globe. By planting a tree every Earth Day, people can make a difference. Trees absorb carbon



Earth Day button courtesy Charlotte Franks-Erickson.

dioxide and release oxygen and bolster ecosystems for wildlife. Shade trees can reduce reliance on fans and air conditioning systems.

The main message of Earth Day 2024 is the need to commit to ending reliance on plastics, says EarthDay.org. The goal is a 60 percent reduction in the production of all plastics by 2040. Plastics are bad for the environment a growing body of research indicates they have an adverse effect on the major systems of the body, including

immune, respiratory, digestive, and hormonal systems.

Everyone can do their part to promote the ideals behind Earth Day. For 54 years, millions of people have been advocating for change to benefit the planet and human and animal health, and that fight is ongoing.

**My experience of Earth Day 1970**

My first experience of activism: “I participated in the very first Earth Day - “Walk for

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