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## Hands Off!’ protests sweep U.S. as Trump and Musk face backlash over cuts



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Thousands of Americans took to the streets on Saturday in coordinated “Hands Off!” protests targeting President Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk, denouncing sweeping policy shifts that demonstrators say threaten social programs, civil rights, and federal jobs.

More than 1,200 rallies were staged across all 50 states, organized by over 150 advocacy groups including labor unions, civil rights organizations, LGBTQ+ supporters, veterans, and election

integrity advocates. Key protest sites included the National Mall in Washington D.C., Boston Common in Massachusetts, and state capitols nationwide.

Protesters condemned the administration's reported mass layoffs of federal employees, closures of Social Security field offices, agency shutdowns, cuts to health programs, and rollbacks on protections for transgender and immigrant communities.

Musk, who now heads the new Department of Government Efficiency, has defended the downsizing efforts, claiming they save taxpayers billions. However, critics say the cost to working families is too high.

Speaking at the Washington rally, Paul Osadebe, a Department of Housing and Urban Development attorney and union steward, criticized the administration's disregard for working-class Americans.

"Billionaires and oligarchs value only profit and power," he said. "They don't care who they hurt to get what they want."

Demonstrators in Columbus, Ohio braved the rain with signs reading "Hands off our democracy," while in Florida, protests erupted near Trump's golf course in Jupiter. Archer Moran of Port St. Lucie voiced frustration over threats to Social Security: "The list of what they need to keep their

hands off of is too long.”

In response, the White House reiterated that President Trump intends to protect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, accusing Democrats of pushing to extend benefits to undocumented immigrants.

Though vocal and widespread, the current protest wave has yet to match the scale of the 2017 Women’s March or 2020’s Black Lives Matter demonstrations.