

Friends and neighbors,

A lot has happened these past two weeks. If you follow the news closely, the sheer volume of irresponsible, illegal, and downright dangerous conduct coming out of the Trump administration has felt overwhelming. I know it's exhausting to stay on top of. But while it may feel like we're powerless to stop this destructive rampage, at nearly every turn, Trump and his unelected billionaire donor puppetmaster have been thwarted.

On Wednesday, February 12th at 6:30PM, I'll be holding a Tele-Town Hall for 12th District residents. If you'd like to listen in or ask a question you can sign up here:

You can also watch on my website here: [Watsoncoleman.house.gov/live](https://Watsoncoleman.house.gov/live) and on facebook at [Facebook.com/repbonnie](https://Facebook.com/repbonnie)

Here is a recap of some of the more significant developments this week and how Democrats, advocates, and concerned citizens like you have fought back and won.

## Federal Funding Freeze

At the beginning of last week, Donald Trump's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) put out a memo ordering the government to "pause all activities related to obligation or disbursement of all Federal financial assistance." Translation: halting support for crucial programs that our communities rely on, like Medicaid, home heating assistance, food safety inspections, cancer research, disaster preparedness, and countless other critical initiatives.

The response was overwhelming. My Congressional colleagues and I [spoke out](#) in strong opposition to this measure. Activists made their voices heard across the country. Attorneys General across 22 states, including New Jersey Attorney General Matt Platkin, [sued the Trump Administration](#) and won a court order blocking the move from taking effect. That court order remains in effect today.

## Attacks on the 14th Amendment

One of the first executive orders Trump signed was an attempt to end birthright citizenship in the United States. The 14th Amendment to the Constitution is crystal clear regarding birthright citizenship: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside."

A federal judge, appointed by Ronald Reagan no less, found that the order was ["blatantly unconstitutional"](#) and immediately blocked the order from taking effect nationwide. This week, a [second federal judge](#) reaffirmed that decision.

## The Forcing out of Nonpartisan Civil Servants

Recently, nonpartisan civil servants across the federal government received an ominous email, supposedly giving them the choice to declare their resignation now and be paid through September of this year or pass up on the buyout and potentially be fired later. This is a cynical and dishonest ploy to try to scare and force out nonpartisan civil servants and experts who perform functions in the federal government. We're talking about nurses who care for veterans at VA health clinics, health inspectors who make sure our food is safe to eat, and researchers who study new ways to treat and prevent deadly diseases.

Just yesterday, this [was blocked in federal court](#) after a union representing over 800,000 federal civil servants sued to stop this illegal, hostile takeover of the public workforce.

My Office has received several calls from federal employees who reside in the district with questions about the buyout offer. They should be aware that Donald Trump does not have the legal authority to offer these buyouts, even if he did, Congress has not appropriated the money for a buyout, and the agreement itself prohibits any recourse if Donald Trump reneges on the offer after an employee signs it and resigns. Given Trump's history of not paying contractors and other people he's worked with, be forewarned.

## Opposing Pardons for Violent Criminals



One of the first things Trump did when he took office was issue sweeping pardons and commutations for everyone involved in the January 6th insurrection. Violent offenders who had been tried and convicted of assaulting police officers are now back out on the street. These are not people who got caught up in the crowd and were shuffled through an open door. These are people who pepper sprayed the Capitol police. Who beat them with American flagpoles, shattered windows and climbed over barricades in an attempt to keep Trump in power after he lost the election.

This week I introduced a [resolution](#), co-signed by 118 of my House Democratic colleagues, condemning in no uncertain terms this incredibly dangerous abuse of the pardon power, and the insult to the Capitol Police officers who put their lives on the line to defend us on January 6th.

One of those officers was Brian Sicknick, of South River. After sustaining injuries in the line of duty, he collapsed. He passed away several hours later. Officer Sicknick made the ultimate sacrifice, and I was honored to be joined by his brother, Ken, and mother, Gladys, at a [press conference](#) introducing the resolution of condemnation.

No matter how hard Trump and his criminal henchmen try, they cannot rewrite history. We will never forget what transpired on that tragic day.

## **Executive Order on Trans Prisoners**

Trump signed an executive order attempting to forcibly detransition transgender prisoners and move them from the facility where they are currently serving their time to facilities that house prisoners of the opposite gender. So, trans men would be moved to all-women prisons, and trans women moved to all male prisons.

This was also struck down in court, after a judge ruled that the order violated the Constitution's prohibition against "cruel and unusual punishment."

## **Unelected Billionaire's Attempted Hostile Takeover**

At the beginning of this week, news broke that Elon Musk, an unelected and unconfirmed "presidential special advisor" and billionaire mega-donor, had gained access to the Treasury Department's secure payment system responsible for distributing over \$6 trillion annually. It includes sensitive and personal data, things like your social security number, for every US taxpayer. The information on this system is so sensitive that only a select group of people within the Treasury Department itself have previously had access to it. I don't feel comfortable with Elon or his interns accessing that information and neither do those of you who have called my office.

In response, I issued a [public statement](#) strongly opposing this clear breach of taxpayer's privacy. I also took to the House Floor to [condemn the move](#), and the complete inaction from Republicans in Congress, in no uncertain terms.



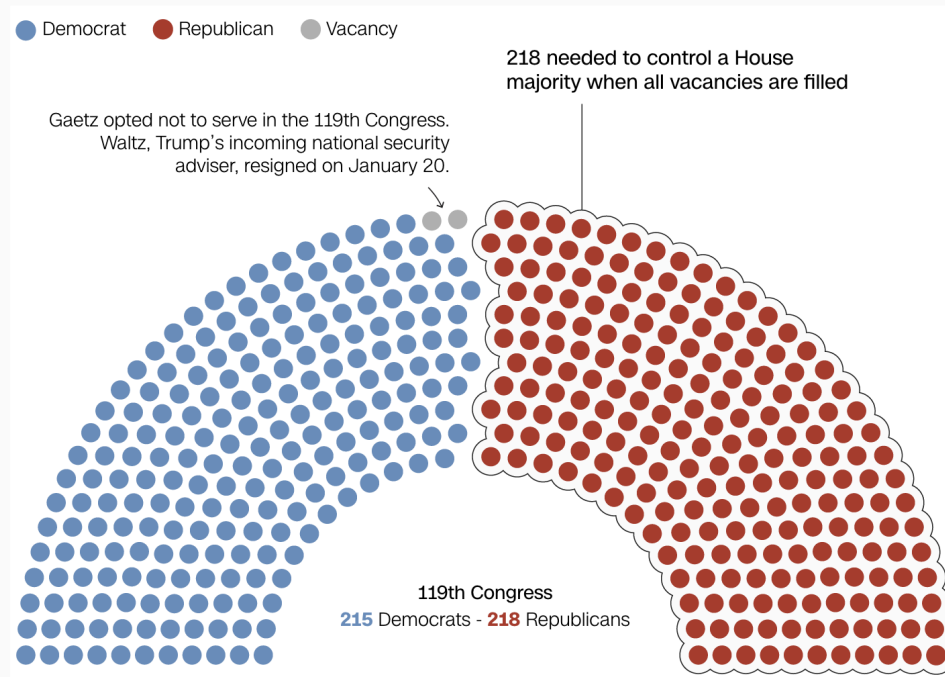
I also co-sponsored the [Taxpayer Data Protection Act](#), which would block anyone but a few select, highly qualified, nonpartisan civil servants at the Treasury Department from accessing this extremely sensitive data.

# *Taxpayer Data Protection Act*

**What else can we do?**

## Republicans face the tightest House margin in nearly a century

Republicans are looking at a close 218 to 215 majority at the outset of the new Congress after former GOP Reps. Matt Gaetz and Michael Waltz's resignations.



Note: Data is as of January 20, 2025.

Source: US House of Representatives  
Graphic: Annette Choi, CNN

As we approach the government shutdown deadline of March 14, House Republicans will be faced with passing a bill to fund the government. If they cannot do that by themselves — which they have not been able to do in their previous six attempts — they will come to Democrats for votes.

Democrats will work to keep the government funded, but only with legislative guarantees that the funding we approve will be used in the manner it has been authorized for and that unelected billionaire Republican mega-donors cannot waltz into federal agencies, plug in their laptops and peruse the private data of American taxpayers. The Constitution is unambiguous: Congress is a co-equal branch of government. We will not budge on these conditions.

This fight is not over; Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and their minions continue to threaten vulnerable Americans and the Constitution itself. They've shown little regard for the American way of life and have seemingly operated with a goal of chaos, confusion, and cruelty. But by coming together across racial, class and even party lines we can defend America from these attacks and work together to create a stronger, more fair country for everyone. I hope you'll join me in these efforts.

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