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NEWS

Former VA cybersecurity official warns DOGE access threatens sensitive data

BY LAUREN IRWIN - 02/25/25 3:29 PM ET

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Elon Musk acknowledges the crowd after being interviewed at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Md., on Feb. 20, 2025.

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Jonathan Kamens, who previously led cybersecurity for the VA's website, warned that financial and health data could be compromised through DOGE's actions.

"Given how the government has been functioning for the last month, I don't think the people at VA … are going to be able to replace me," Kamens told The Associated Press. "The security posture of the site is going to degrade."

"And eventually I think there will be a security incident resulting from the lack of adequate security oversight," he added.

Kamens oversaw cybersecurity for the site but was fired last month as part of DOGE's restructuring of the federal government. DOGE is slashing thousands of federal jobs to cut back on spending.

He told the AP that he's concerned DOGE, led by Elon Musk, will start "digging around inside private VA databases that contain people's private information."

"I don't think they should have access," he said. "These are people who have never been background-checked."

The VA on Monday fired another round of individuals. About 1,400 people dismissed were considered "non-mission critical" probationary employees that served less than two years, the department said.

It's the second round of firings after 1,000 people were dismissed earlier this month. Both moves have angered Democratic lawmakers and veterans groups.

The VA employs nearly 480,000 people and provides care for 9 million veterans.

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