



## The Daily Dish

# Dear DOGE, a Cautionary Tale

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The Musk-Ramaswamy Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has received enormous attention. Yet its basic mission - bring the voice of America to the attention of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) - has been tried before. It's one of the finest moments in the history of federal budgeting and an Eakinomics all-time favorite.

The Obama Administration started an initiative called "We the People" that allowed mere mortal citizens to ask why the federal government took a particular position, or what position it would take on an issue. It received one very straightforward position from a dude named J.D. (perhaps a future vice president?):

*Those who sign here petition the United States government to secure funding and resources, and begin construction on a Death Star by 2016.*

*By focusing our defense resources into a space-superiority platform and weapon system such as a Death Star, the government can spur job creation in the fields of construction, engineering, space exploration, and more, and strengthen our national defense.*

A perfectly reasonable request. (Historical footnote: The petition has received 34,000 out of a desired 25,000 signatures.)

OMB didn't just say, "Oh, you're right, J.D. We should have thought of that." Instead, it fired back:

***This Isn't the Petition Response You're Looking For***

*By Paul Shawcross*

*The Administration shares your desire for job creation and a strong national defense, but a Death Star isn't on the horizon. Here are a few reasons:*

- The construction of the Death Star **has been estimated** to cost more than \$850,000,000,000,000,000. We're working hard to reduce the deficit, not expand it.*
- The Administration does not support blowing up planets.*
- Why would we spend countless taxpayer dollars on a Death Star with a fundamental flaw that can be exploited by a one-man starship?*

For DOGE, the basic lesson is simple. OMB knows its kumquats and may not say yes. (The entire exchange is [here](#).)