

Opening Statement of Erie Meyer
Hearing on “Unlocking Government Efficiency Through IT Modernization”
Before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information
Technology, and Government Innovation
April 29, 2025

Chairwoman Mace, Ranking Member Connolly, and Members of the Subcommittee—thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Erie Meyer. I’m a founder of the United States Digital Service, a former Chief Technologist at both the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and the Federal Trade Commission, and someone who has spent my career working to make technology serve the American people more fairly, and securely.

I’ve helped Veterans and students apply for assistance online, led efforts to root out fraud and abuse in the financial and tech sector, and brought technologists into government to solve problems that matter—like streamlining seniors’ access to benefits and protecting children’s data.

I want to start by saying that I believe deeply in the promise of this work. Done right, it can save money, reduce fraud, and make government work better for everyone. I’ve seen it happen.

But what’s happening right now under D.O.G.E. is not modernization. It’s chaos. And it’s chaos with a human cost.

When D.O.G.E. arrived at my agency, they didn’t modernize anything. Instead, they broke the consumer complaint system. As a result, 75 families facing imminent foreclosure were left in limbo. Servicemembers could no longer submit banking statements to report being illegally overcharged in interest. More than 16,000 consumer complaints were stuck in the system with no path forward. Even congressional offices—your offices—could no longer refer constituents to the CFPB for help.

And the damage is harming industry, too. For example, D.O.G.E. demanded "god-tier" access to confidential investigatory data about the consumer finance market—right as Elon Musk is preparing to launch "X Payments." D.O.G.E.’s plan also included breaking a simple rate spread calculator critical to processing mortgage loans. A federal worker was so alarmed by the latter action that they submitted testimony to a federal court that the plan would “halt or severely disrupt” mortgage lending across the country.

AI experts and security professionals —people who were working to protect kids online, stop fraud, and keep our systems safe—have been fired or driven out.

And while this is happening, DOGE is centralizing access to some of the most sensitive data the government holds—Social Security records, disability claims, even data tied to national

security—without a clear security plan, proper oversight, and I question the basic vetting of AI tools they're using to analyze it.

Let me be clear: this is not modernization. It's a heist.

The cheapest, fastest, and most effective way to modernize IT in the federal government is to get technical people into government, and then to empower the people who've taken an oath to serve. The most expensive, slowest, and least effective way is to lose all of your technical talent and sloppily outsource it once you realize what you have done.

When our parents log into their Social Security accounts, they want to know that the people who built that system are qualified professionals who take security seriously.

There are even rumors now that federal workers will be replaced by chatbots. I led research on chatbot performance in the banking sector. We found that some of the worst outcomes happened when people were trying to report fraud. Seniors got stuck in doom loops and wrote in saying things like, "I can't get a human on the phone." That's not modernization. That's abandonment.

D.O.G.E. is burning the house down and calling it a renovation. This path is making government less efficient, less secure, and less capable of protecting the people it's supposed to serve.

I urge this committee to look past the slogans and ask: Who benefits from these changes? Is the chaotic hatchet approach going to serve the public—or to serve private interests?

I'm here today because I still believe in what's possible. Because I've seen dedicated public servants use technology to save money and change lives. And because when modernization is done right, it makes government work better for everyone.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.