



The Daily Dish

DOGE

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The press is full of [stories](#) about the Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy “Department of Government Efficiency” – aka DOGE. The supposed mandate, per *The Wall Street Journal*, is “to lead an effort to cut spending, eliminate regulations and restructure federal agencies.”

Okay, let’s think about those in order. “Cut spending.” That’s not hard. Congress passes smaller appropriations bills, reforms entitlement spending, and President-elect Trump signs them. Done (except that it never happens). There is nothing DOGE adds to that process.

“Eliminate regulations.” As I recall, President Trump had dramatic success in controlling the regulatory state using the catchphrase “one in and two out” and employing regulatory budgets implemented by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to meet goals. DOGE has nothing to add to that.

“Restructure federal agencies.” Cabinet secretaries can reshape their agencies, and the president-elect will nominate each of them. Restructuring might also mean getting rid of some agencies, but that would require Congress – which created them to begin with – to legislate them out of existence. DOGE can’t do that. Oh, and by the way, the name notwithstanding, DOGE can’t be a “department” for that reason. And, not to put too fine a point on it, is creating yet another department a good way to tackle a bloated federal government?

There is a perspective from which DOGE might have some value added. *The Wall Street Journal* reports: “DOGE will operate outside of the federal government, Trump said, and will work with the White House Office of Management and Budget to implement its recommendations.” That is, DOGE is an outside commission with recommendations for OMB.

It is often not appreciated that the “M” in OMB represents a significant management function that spans the agencies of the federal government. And there was a time that OMB took seriously that role and sought to improve the efficiency of operations. For example, under George W. Bush, OMB used the Program Assessment Rating Tool ([PART](#)):

...to assess and improve program performance so that the Federal government can achieve better results. A PART review helps identify a program’s strengths and weaknesses to inform funding and management decisions aimed at making the program more effective. The PART therefore looks at all factors that affect and reflect program performance including program purpose and design; performance measurement, evaluations, and strategic planning; program management; and program results. Because the PART includes a consistent series of analytical questions, it allows programs to show improvements over time, and allows comparisons between similar programs.