

# IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

## *DOGE Days are Here: Sen. Ernst Highlights That It's Time to Get Washington Back to Work*

Last week, Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA), the head of the newly formed Senate Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) caucus, unveiled a list of cost-saving options for the federal government totaling more than **\$2 trillion** in savings.

In a November 25<sup>th</sup> **letter** to DOGE co-directors Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, Ernst identified 22 areas of the government fraught with waste, fraud, and abuse, outlining broad actions to address these issues.

Her letter highlights an area ripe for DOGE attention: **the cost of federal workers not returning to the office.**



WORD ON THE STREET



*Ryan King, Via the [New York Post](#):*

- “Sen. Ernst’s report found that “**6 percent** of the federal workforce ‘report in-person on a full-time basis’ while almost **one-third** of federal workers are remote on a full-time basis.” This is “in a sharp turn-around from the pre-pandemic era in which only **3[percent]** teleworked daily.”
- “‘The nation’s capital is a ghost town, with government buildings averaging an occupancy rate of **12[percent]**,’ Ernst wrote in the blistering report. **‘If federal employees can’t be found at their desks, exactly where are they?’**”

- *“Ernst cited findings that some federal workers are cashing in on higher pay rates from localities where they are not actually working. ‘My audits are finding as many as **23[percent] to 68[percent]** of teleworking employees for some agencies are boosting their salaries by receiving incorrect locality pay,’ her report found. ‘Some employees live more than 2,000 miles away from their office and one ‘temporary’ teleworker collected higher locality pay for nearly a decade.”*

**Brady Knox. Via the [Washington Examiner](#):**

- *“In a statement to the Washington Examiner, Ernst expressed her optimism in the report helping the work of DOGE.... ‘We need to flip Washington on its head, **make bureaucrats show up to work like the rest of us**, and evaluate individual performance in the same way every business in America does.’”*
- *“Ernst’s report warned that telework led to slacking, with workers **reportedly caught in leisurely activities while working**.” The report read “Bureaucrats have been found in a bubble bath, on the golf course, running their own business, and even getting busted doing crime while on taxpayers’ time.”*
- *“**\$8 billion** is spent yearly maintaining and leasing government office buildings and **\$7.7 billion** on the energy to keep them running. The government owns **7,697** vacant buildings and another **2,265** partially empty buildings.”*

## THE BOTTOM LINE

The Biden Administration has condoned the practice of allowing federal workers to work from home since the pandemic ended. This inaction has generated complacency in the workforce while costing taxpayers billions in unnecessary maintenance and upkeep costs.

The House Budget Committee is proud to amplify Sen. Ernst’s message—with most Americans back at their desks, it’s time for Washington to do the same.