

Administrative issues at the Social Security Administration

Changes since January 2025

Center Budget and Policy Priorities - cbpp.org

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SSA operations have been under strain

Long waits, waves of calls, website crashes: Social Security is breaking down

A flood of cuts led by Elon Musk has sent the agency into chaos as a new commissioner prepares to take charge.

'Just a Mess': Staff Cuts, Rushed Changes and Anxiety at Social Security

President Trump promised not to touch Social Security, but as Elon Musk's team trims staff and plans cuts to phone services, the system is groaning under the pressure.

Social Security stops reporting call wait times and other metrics

The changes are the latest sign of the agency's struggle with website crashes, overloaded servers and long lines at field offices amid Trump cutbacks.

Social Security is directing employees who normally process benefits to answer phones instead

How Social Security has gotten worse under Trump

Customer service deteriorated by key measures as the agency enacted sweeping cuts in Trump's second term, internal data and interviews show.

Widows are waiting months for the benefits meant to help them after loss

Cuts to thousands of Social Security jobs led by Elon Musk's DOGE have created a backlog that leaves grieving families struggling to access survivor benefits.

'Suicide is only one option': Social Security staff newly assigned to phone duties raise concerns over training

Experts and SSA employees question wisdom of telling callers in crisis that suicide is an option.

Social Security is making a change that could disrupt service for millions of Americans

We're also identifying shocking levels of incompetence and probable fraud in the Social Security program for our seniors...

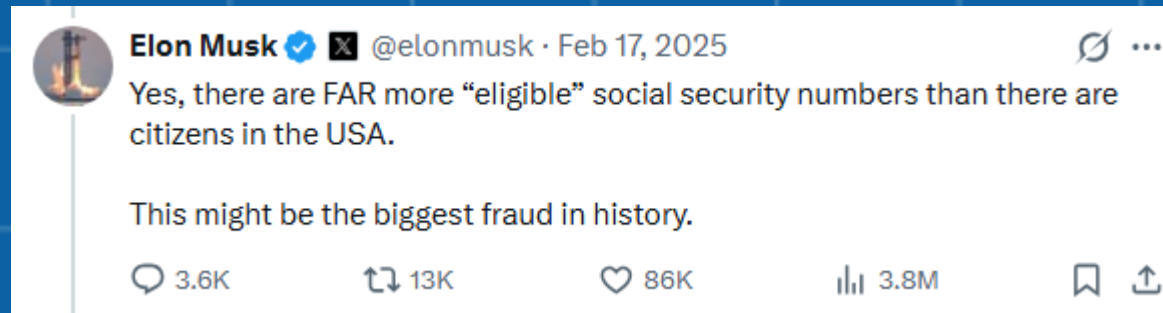
PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

March 5, 2025

You look at people who are 150 years old who are fraudulently collecting Social Security payments. You see our Social Security system — 40 percent of the people who are calling are actually committing fraud.

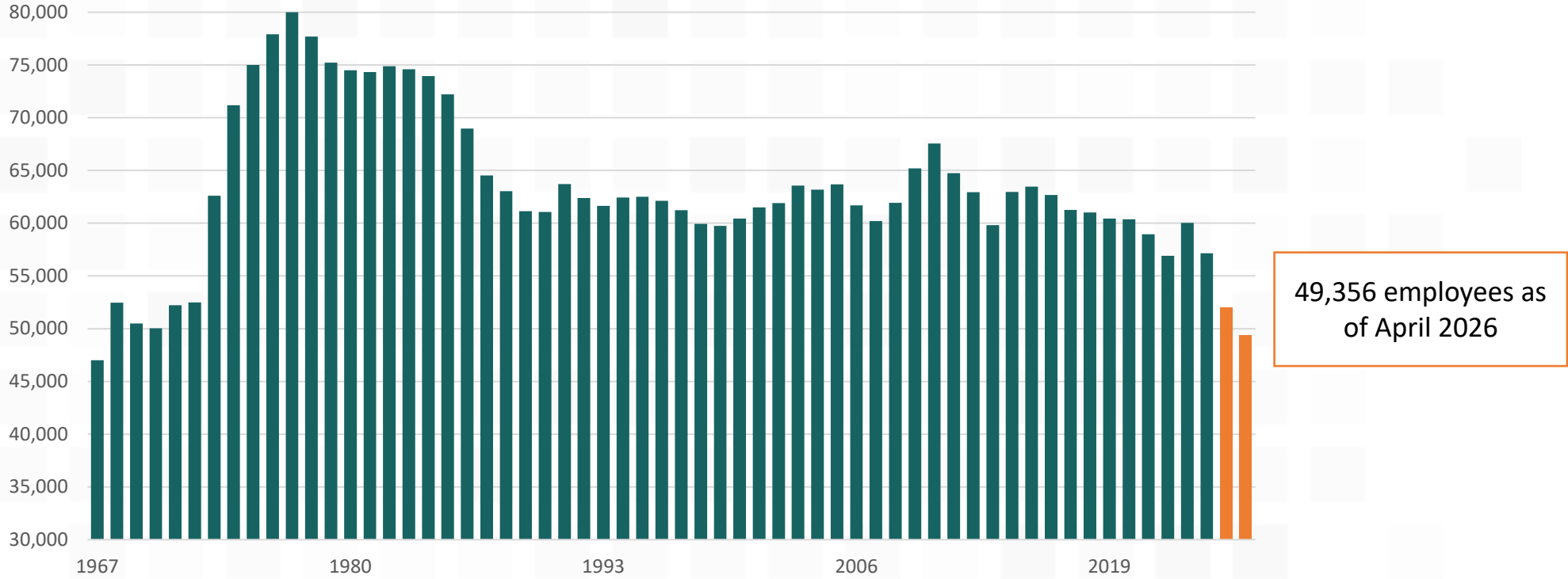
VICE PRESIDENT J.D. VANCE

April 3, 2025



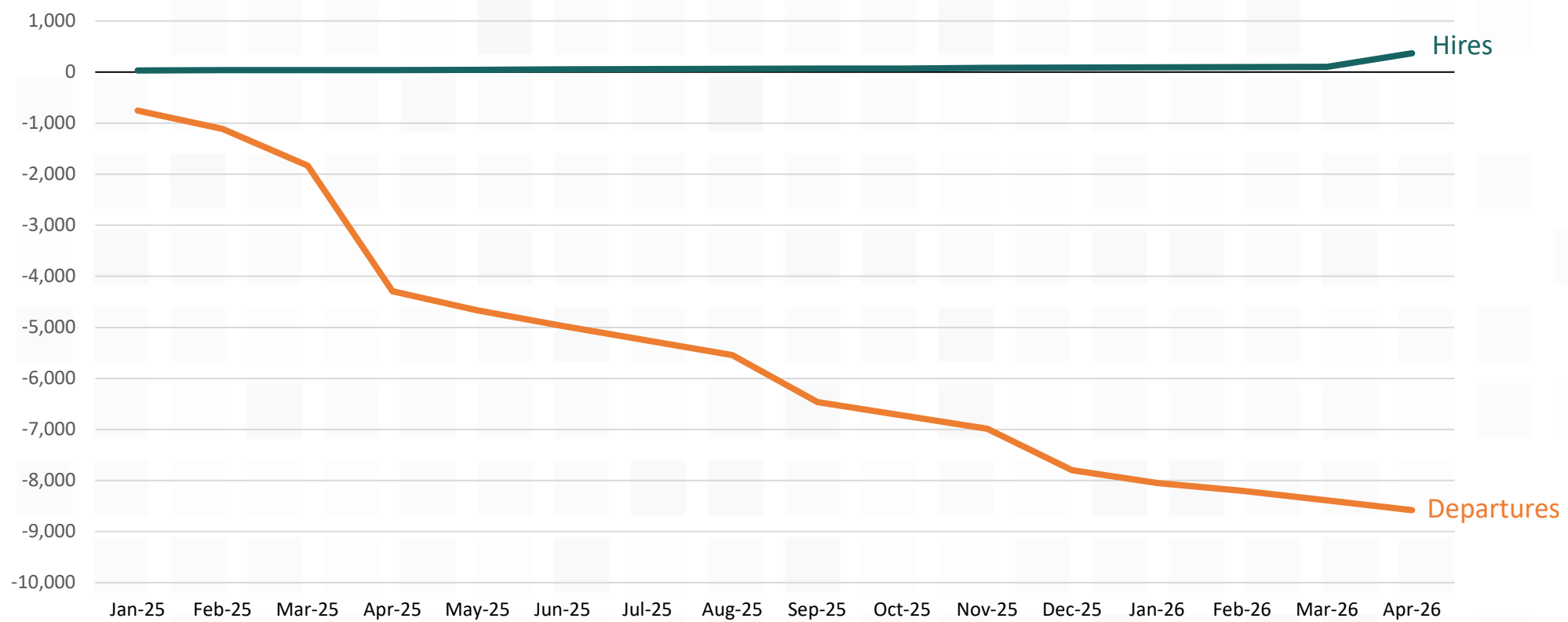
The Trump Administration engineered a rapid decline in SSA staffing

SSA Employees, 1967-2026



SSA has operated under a virtual hiring freeze

Cumulative SSA Hires and Departures Since January 2025



Source: OPM EHRI Dynamics

Staffing losses understate the scale of disruption

- 42 states and DC have seen SSA staff losses greater than 10 percent since January 2025
- 3,800 fewer customer service staff who assist visitors to SSA field offices and callers to SSA's national 800 number.
- Thousands of SSA staff are (temporarily?) serving in reassigned positions
- An over 50% drop in career, non-partisan Senior Executive Service (SES)
- Largest (13%) one-year loss of administrative law judges (ALJs) on record; fewest ALJs employed by SSA in at least 20 years.

How is SSA performing with reduced staff?

- Can be difficult to assess from the outside
- Goal is to improve, not merely maintain, performance
- Will need *significant* productivity enhancements to make up for loss of staff, staff supports, and shuffle
 - *Reduction in staffing could create budgetary space for technology investments but what is the timeline for those improvements to bolster performance?*
 - *Announced an expanded centralized role in disability determination, as well as use of new tools and data*
- Otherwise, should expect to see either a decline in customer service and agency performance or — harder to see/measure — drop in quality
- How will staffing disruptions affect the implementation of new initiatives, the agency's overall capacity, and its public perception?

Thank You

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