

Could \$5,000 DOGE stimulus checks really happen? Here's what we know.

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Could President Trump issue DOGE stimulus checks? The idea of \$5,000 refunds from the ongoing drive to reduce federal spending has been floated.

But don't add that bonus to your account just yet. That's because DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency, ideally must meet its \$2 trillion savings goal to make the kickback feasible. And that accomplishment is something even Elon Musk, the unofficial leader of DOGE, said may not be doable back in January.

"@ElonMusk, let's do this! This is how we rebuild trust in our government," he said.

In discussing the possible dividend on CNN on Saturday, Fishback said, the potential for a check of up to \$5,000 would "incentivize Americans to report waste, fraud and abuse in their own community. Why? Because the more that DOGE saves, the bigger their check will be."



Elon Musk speaks next to President Donald Trump in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, D.C., February 11, 2025. © Kevin Lamarque, Reuters

How would \$5,000 stimulus checks happen? Who would get them?

Back in 2020, Congress passed – and President Trump signed – a **\$2 trillion bipartisan stimulus package** to address the economic struggles caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The package included \$1,200 checks to qualifying individuals and \$2,400 for most married couples filing jointly with an

extra \$500 for each qualifying child under age 17.

What has House Speaker Mike Johnson said about DOGE dividend checks?

Speaker of the House Mike Johnson did not seem to be on board with the DOGE dividend proposal when he spoke Thursday at the 2025 Conservative Political Action Conference.

He rolled his eyes and said, "*Politically, that would be great for us, you know, because everybody gets a check,*" Johnson said. "*But if you think about our core principles, right, fiscal responsibility is what we do as conservatives. That's our brand and we have a \$36 trillion federal debt. We have a giant deficit that we're contending with. I think we need to pay down the credit card, right?*"

What do economists say about \$5,000 stimulus checks?

Most who have spoken out so far don't think a DOGE dividend would be a good idea.

"*It would increase the deficit, it would increase immediate consumer spending, and that would have inflationary consequences which is something we don't want right now,*" Judge Glock, director of research at the Manhattan Institute, told Scripps News. The money would be better off spent going to offset the \$1 trillion annual budget deficit and to offset taxes, Glock said.

Another problem with stimulus checks: ***inflation***. If DOGE starts "*mailing out large checks to large numbers of people, wow, that's going to put a big boost to inflation because Trump's putting out tariffs and tariff means more expensive goods and services,*" Jay Zagorsky, a professor at Boston University's Questrom School of Business, told CBS News.

But Kevin Hassett, Trump's director of the National Economic Council, said Thursday during a press briefing that ***the checks wouldn't be inflationary*** because the government had already planned to spend the money.

"If we don't spend government money and we give it back to the people, if they spend it all, then you're even," he said, according to financial news site Investopedia. "But they're probably going to save a lot of it, in which case you're reducing inflation."

The issue may be moot because ***DOGE is unlikely to be able to reach its goal of \$2 trillion in savings***, Zagorsky said. *"I'm just not sure the savings are there,"* he said. Last week, Musk said DOGE had already saved taxpayers \$55 billion, but an error – listing the cancellation of an \$8 million contract as being an \$8 billion savings – suggested it had actually totaled savings of about \$16.5 billion.

DOGE won't achieve enough savings to issue checks "big enough" to create inflation, Elaine Kamarck, a senior fellow in governance studies at the Brookings Institution, told The Associated Press. She called the idea of a DOGE dividend "ridiculous." *"There's no money there, and certainly not enough money to make a big contribution to taxpayers,"* said Kamarck, who worked with Vice President Al Gore to cut government waste in the Clinton administration. *"The guy just says things,"* she added, referring to Musk.