

# Townhall

OPINION

## Patriots Are the Losers in the Trump v. Musk Feud



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Thursday I took a nap just before noon, and when I woke up, I found that Donald Trump and Elon Musk were engaged in a giant cage match to the death. The two avatars of America First are throwing punches. Democrats are delighted. When bad people cheer, stop doing what's making them cheer. This is awful, and we should all want it to stop.

And maybe by the time you read this, it will have stopped. Maybe they've gotten together and bro-hugged, and everything will be fine. After all, sometimes guys fight. It used to be out on the street with fists, and now it's with tweets, but you get the point. We've got two mega-alphas in a small, enclosed public space, and they're going to rumble.

Only one of them is going to be able to be dominant. I'm thinking it's probably going to be the guy with his finger on the nuclear button. But nuking Elon is bad for America in general, and this is a bad fight for the Republican Party in particular. Elon Musk is a brilliant guy, a unique visionary, a living legend. He has revolutionized electric vehicles, employed hundreds of thousands of people, and made a lot of people a ton of money. Oh, I'm not done. He's completely revolutionized—there's that word again—space travel such that we're back to traveling to space in American rockets instead of Russian ones. Then he revolutionized the Internet with Starlink and is about to help the blind see and the lame walk. He also saved free speech with Twitter, now X. His DOGE program is awesome even if it hasn't quite got \$1 trillion in savings yet. Oh, and his contribution to defeating the Democrats in 2024 was important.

Was it decisive? I don't know. No one knows. But we know it was better to have him on our side than not on our side— and will be in the future.

That's quite a resume. The guy is a national treasure. But so is Donald Trump, who completely revolutionized— dang, I'm using that word a lot— American politics. He is another billionaire who risked everything to try to save his country. But Donald Trump has already done a term in office where things did not go his way. He's learned his lessons. He's not making the same mistakes this time. He's got better people, better plans, and better execution. This is a guy who's been through the wringer. He gets what's possible within the political sphere.

In contrast, this is Elon Musk's first time in the political sphere in the sense of actually generating policy. He's grown disenchanted, just like Trump did during his first term. And of course he did. Washington, DC, and American politics suck. If you're not disappointed, you're terrible. His anger with how he was treated by the Establishment and the obstacles he faced when all he was trying to do was make things better is righteous.

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Here's the problem that's probably the root of Elon Musk's disenchantment. Elon Musk is, at heart, a visionary and an engineer. He envisions a result, then he creates processes to achieve them. It's very binary. Either you succeed or you don't. Something either works or it doesn't. But that's not how politics functions. Politics is all about process; the outcome is often secondary. Now, that is suboptimal in an objective world where your only goal is the best-engineered result possible. Politics is not about obtaining the best-engineered result possible. It is not about enacting a perfect policy, program, or paradigm. It is about getting the very best result you can get through the process that exists, a process that must incorporate people whose objectives are not yours. In politics, people are not looking for the best possible result but the best possible result for themselves. That means to build a coalition, you have to compromise.

Elon Musk's success in the real world is based on refusing to compromise. He doesn't do anything halfway. And Trump was not used to not doing anything halfway when he built buildings. When he built buildings, either the building stayed up and got leased out, or it didn't. If it did, it was a success; if it didn't, it was a failure. It was very binary. But politics isn't binary. Politics is poly.

And Trump has the benefit of four years in office where he learned that. Is the Big Beautiful Bill perfect? Of course not. It can't be perfect. When Elon Musk wants to design a new rocket, he goes and finds the most brilliant rocket scientists in the world and gives them one objective – to build the best rocket in the world. But that's not the objective in politics. The objective in politics is to maximize the benefit for your constituents. So, you're not going to get a sleek, beautiful Tesla. You might get a Ford Taurus, but you're more likely to get a Ford Pinto. Sometimes, you need to be happy that it runs, even though it might explode if it gets rear-ended. That's just the way it is.

Donald Trump understands this now. He knows that the BBB isn't perfect. But the BBB is good enough. It deports the illegal aliens, which is the biggest thing

going on right now. It preserves the tax cuts, which is key to ensuring the economy's success and, therefore, Republican success down the road. Does it cut spending as much as we would like? No. I'd like every deadbeat, loser, chisler, and bum booted off every single government giveaway. The problem is, deadbeats, losers, chislers, and bums have representatives who are protecting their interests, and if they don't get their cut, they're not going to vote for us and then we are not going to get anything.

Trump learned, painfully and through experience, that you've got to compromise to get closer to what you actually want. Elon Musk, who has more blank-you money than anyone since Crassus, has not had that same experience. He's never had to compromise before now. But now he's had a situation where he can't get exactly what he wants, and X War III was the result.

My parents were Scottish and German, so they didn't actually yell at each other. I can only imagine that this is how little kids with Latin parents feel like when Mami and Papi are fighting. People fight and then they make up. Now, some people are speculating that this is a giant put-on designed to blow people's minds, and if I hadn't been alive for the last decade of insanity, I would write that off completely. It's possible this is some sort of 4D chess match between grandmasters that is beyond my capacity to comprehend. More likely, Elon is just really, really angry. And when somebody swings at Trump, he swings back

But it's time to stop swinging. We need both of these guys on our team. We need Donald Trump on his A game, and we need Elon doing what Elon does. Elon's at terrific personal risk here if this relationship goes completely off the rails. He's got zero friends on the left. They are out for his blood. They will literally take everything he owns and throw him in jail – if not try to murder him – should the Republicans lose power. How do I know? Because we saw what they did to Donald Trump when he was on a temporary power hiatus.

But Republicans still love Elon Musk, and the Republican Party needs guys like Elon Musk, not just for his money but for his brains. There's no going to the left for him. There's no sitting out politics. He got in the game and now there's no escape. Elon Musk needs the Republican Party because the Democrat Party wants him in a cell or a hole. The Republican Party needs Elon Musk because he's Elon Musk.

Okay, you guys have had your fight. That's enough. Now, shake hands and go play.

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