

Republican Perspective

24 May 2017

by Ed Manning

PUZZLING

“The only thing worse than a liar is a liar that's also a hypocrite!” Tennessee Williams

Once upon a time, politicians sold the income tax as a tax primarily for rich people, and — the people were told — ordinary folks would never pay more than 1 or 2 percent. The assumption was that any expansion of the income tax would be a betrayal. Chalk one up for politician betrayal!

Today, the federal tax code is over 74,500 pages long, and defies the 56% of citizens that pay federal taxes to decipher its complexity. The Mercatus Center at George Mason University, estimates the cost of complying with such rules to be as high as \$600 billion per year. Republicans under the leadership of President Trump are attempting a simpler way. From my viewpoint, the effort is long overdue.

Any change to our current tax system will require approval of Congress and we can bank on Democrat opposition. However, there is one action that the President can initiate without Congress. Fire the IRS Commissioner!

Commissioner John Koskinen term, an Obama appointee, a Democrat donor expires this November. He has not earned the right to fulfill it. Congressman Jim Jordan, outlined the corruption that has occurred on Koskinen's watch. Backup tapes destroyed that were under Congressional subpoena. Not telling Congress about Lois Lerner's missing emails. Making false statements to Congress.

Ms. Lerner was well aware of Democrat demands for the IRS to go after the Tea Party and other conservative groups. The IRS targeted conservatives with a vengeance. 400 organizations were placed on hold for tax-advantaged status. Both the 2010 and 2012 elections were affected.

President Obama appointed Mr. Koskinen to clean up the IRS in 2013 (after Obama said there was “not one smidgeon of evidence” of wrongdoing). But he has succeeded only in making the agency more corrupt.

In January, 53 House Republicans penned a letter to President Trump asking for Mr. Koskinen's removal:

“Congressional investigations, hearings, and actions have shown that Commissioner Koskinen misled Congress, obstructed investigations into the IRS, and failed to comply with Congressional subpoenas. Commissioner

Koskinen's willful deception and obstructionism has only further eroded any remaining confidence.

Pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7803, you have the authority to remove Commissioner Koskinen. We encourage you to dismiss him in the most expedient manner practicable. Such an action would restore the credibility of our Federal tax authority and the faith the American people have in their Constitutional rights to free speech and association."

In March of this year, the IRS informed the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia it located "an additional 6,924 documents of potentially responsive records" relating to a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit by Judicial Watch, a conservative watchdog group. Here is the statement released by Jenny Beth Martin, co-founder of Tea Party Patriots:

"Years after the Obama Justice Department refused to conduct any real investigation of the IRS targeting scandal, in which conservatives were targeted for their political beliefs, and during which former president Obama laughed it off and claimed there was 'not a smidgen' of corruption at the IRS, and years after IRS Commissioner Koskinen claimed all the Lois Lerner backup emails during the relevant time period were erased, we now learn that there are almost 7,000 undisclosed documents potentially related to the IRS targeting. Not only did the IRS magically 'find' potentially relevant documents but the IRS is now refusing to make them public. We call on the IRS to immediately release all these new documents, so the American people can finally begin to see what the IRS has been hiding regarding their scandalous abuse of power. We call on IRS Commissioner John Koskinen, a Democratic Party major donor, to finally be held accountable for his role in covering up the targeting of conservatives for their political views. Commissioner Koskinen and the IRS may have been protected by the Obama White House, but now under President Trump we are confident the time for holding them accountable is finally here."

Why Mr. Koskinen remains Commissioner of the IRS remains puzzling, indeed. A big alligator roams the swamp...