

MAC THORNBERRY  
13TH DISTRICT  
TEXAS



ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
VICE CHAIR

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
May 14, 2013

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,  
EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES  
CHAIRMAN

PERMANENT SELECT  
COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Honorable Jacob J. Lew  
Secretary of the Treasury  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20220-0001

Dear Secretary Lew,

The recent admission by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that it targeted conservative political groups for additional auditing during the 2012 election cycle is deeply disturbing. Because of the enormous power that the IRS holds over the lives of all Americans, any misuse of that power cannot be tolerated. Abuse of this kind and on this scale threatens the very relationship between the federal government and our citizens.

The IRS states on its website that its mission is to “provide taxpayers top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and enforce the law with integrity and fairness to all.” I trust you can see how far short the IRS has now fallen of its mission and how the IRS has breached its trust of the American people.

As the scope of the IRS is, unfortunately, growing, the ability of the IRS to handle an increasing workload is further called in to question as management oversight is clearly not sufficient. As you know, the IRS is set to take up new enforcement responsibilities for the new health care law starting in 2014. These types of actions raise many questions as to whether or not certain individuals will be unfairly targeted over others for their health insurance coverage simply because of their party affiliation.

There are a number of questions that my constituents expect to have answered, including:

- Why were these groups targeted?
- Did any official or organization outside of the IRS suggest that they be targeted?
- What corrective actions are being taken?
- What steps are being taken to ensure the American people and Members of Congress that this will not happen again?
- Will you hold senior management officials accountable for the actions of those under their purview?
- What senior manager approved or was responsible for these audits?
- What steps will you take to restore trust in the IRS and recreate the culture of integrity that the IRS states is a cornerstone of its mission?

Given the nature of your work as Secretary of Treasury and the business in which the IRS is involved, I am certain you can understand that mismanagement such as this would not be tolerated in the private sector and that the top management would be out of the job for directly and indirectly failing to manage his or her subordinates. I trust that you will not be so dismissive of this issue that you settle for letting low to mid-level IRS staffers take the fall for the inadequacies of those who manage them.

My constituents and I look forward to your thorough and timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mac Thornberry', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Mac Thornberry  
Member of Congress

WMT/AI