



## Is this Still America?

“Is this still America?”

That’s what I asked Steven Miller, the acting head of the Internal Revenue Service’s when he testified recently before the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee.

I asked it because it’s unconscionable that the IRS targeted Americans based on their political beliefs. Who initiated it and who approved this abuse of power? Was personal taxpayer information shared with other federal agencies? Miller, who had “lawyered up” just before the hearing, feigned ignorance and outrage at the thought that anyone under his command might break the law.

This scandal isn’t about politics, It’s about discrimination and abuse of power. Initially it appears there are five separate scandals within the IRS involving targeting and leaking of personal taxpayers information. Then you have almost two years of concealing this appalling behavior from Congress. And lying to Congress.

The House Ways & Means Committee, which oversees the IRS, has been demanding answers from the agency for two years. Now that the abuses are coming to lights due to an inspector general’s report, we have launched a deliberate, comprehensive investigation to get to the truth – bad or good.

Americans shouldn’t fear the IRS. Nor should they worry the powerful agency is discriminating against them based on their beliefs. It’s bad enough how much wasted time American families and businesses waste just complying with this bloated, complex tax code.

A new study published by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University found that Americans face up to nearly \$1 trillion annually in hidden tax-compliance costs. The tax code is a drag on our economy. It didn’t cause the IRS behavior in this case, but it’s a compelling argument to curtail the power of the IRS by curtailing the size and scope of the tax code.

The last time our tax code was simplified, Ronald Reagan was our president and there was strong, bi-partisan support for a tax code that lowered and simplified rates for all Americans. Members of the tax-writing House Ways & Means Committee upon which I serve has devoted the last two and a half years to laying the foundation to fix this broken code, eliminate the lobbyist loopholes and make America competitive again with the rest of the world.

As Congress considers the IRS abuses and tax reform, the Fair Tax is the gold standard of simplicity. A simple retail sales tax that no longer punishes hard work, thrift and investment. The most efficient tax in the world to collect. A tax with no loopholes, no hidden tax breaks, no exemptions other than to ensure no American pays sales tax on their necessities up to the poverty level.

Yes, it’s too bold for many lawmakers. Yes, we have to continue to educate and build support in the public and in Congress. But if you want the IRS completely and totally out of our lives, the Fair Tax continues to be the only option that achieves it.

Let’s keep working. This won’t succeed from Washington, but only from the grassroots up. And it’s worth fighting for. Now more than ever.

*In addition to being a senior member of the House Ways & Means Committee, Texas Congressman Kevin Brady also chairs the Joint Economic Committee.*