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### IRS Loses Lois Lerner Emails---What Tea Party Targeting?

Lois Lerner's emails are missing, says the IRS. Remember Lois Lerner? The IRS probably would like to forget her, and no doubt her emails too. She was the former Director of Tax Exempt Organizations at the IRS. That makes her the IRS official at the center of the targeting scandal.

She is retired now on a government pension, but conceivably could still face prosecution. Lerner allegedly flagged tax-exemption applications of conservative organizations, including Crossroads GPS. She allegedly also turned a blind eye to liberal groups like Priorities USA. But when the whole mess came to light, she refused to testify on multiple occasions.

She was held in [contempt of Congress](#) for refusing to testify. After making a statement in which she said she had done nothing wrong, Lerner refused to answer questions, invoking her constitutional right against self-incrimination. But some Republicans say her statement amounted to a waiver. Her case was turned over to the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.



The Gadsden flag (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

If prosecuted and convicted—which seems unlikely—the raft of charges could conceivably add up to 11 years. Given the stakes, her silence should not be surprising. And despite a [14-page letter](#) to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder lambasting her conduct, she may just slip quietly away. But the latest development involves her emails.

The IRS has admitted to Congressional investigators that many of Lois Lerner's emails prior to 2011 are missing. Oops. Her computer crashed. The IRS came up with 24,000 Lerner emails from 2009 to 2011. The IRS did this by getting emails from 83 other IRS employees that had cc's of Lerner emails. But no one knows how many of Ms. Lerner's emails are gone.

According to Representative Dave Camp (R-Mich), the missing emails were mainly to and from people outside the IRS. Oh, that means emails from Ms. Lerner to the White House, Treasury, Department of Justice, FEC, or Democrat offices. Mr. Camp sounds fit to be tied: "The fact that I am just learning about this, over a year into the investigation, is completely unacceptable and now calls into question the credibility of the IRS's response to congressional inquiries," he said.

He has called for a Department of Justice investigation. One key issue is just who outside the IRS was involved in handling tea party applications. That is why emails between Ms. Lerner and others in the administration could be so very valuable. The IRS says it went to great lengths and spent nearly \$10 million to produce more than 750,000 documents. (Those are \$10 million of our tax dollars, correct?)

Overall, the IRS said it is producing 67,000 emails to and from Lerner, covering 2009 to 2013. And as the investigation trundles on, it may begin to sound to some people as if the grassy knoll of the key emails may remain shrouded. That is one more black eye for the IRS, an important agency that has had too many.

No matter how genuine the loss of the emails, no matter how innocent those at the IRS may be who are trying to comply with law, this doesn't look good. At least a few taxpayers may feel a little more secure when they show up for their tax audit proclaiming that they lost key records. Perhaps the IRS will be a little more forgiving now when a taxpayer doesn't have receipts?

And another question worth asking is [Dear Mr. President: Is There A 'Smidgen Of Corruption?' In IRS 'Lost' Lerner Emails?](#)

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