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THE TAX LAWYER

TAXES 2/26/2015

Lois Lerner Of IRS Got \$129,300 Bonus, But For What?

It is easy to have fatigue over *anything* to do with the IRS targeting scandal, now reaching [day 658!](#) There is anger on all sides, with views being pretty polarized. Should we hold more hearings? Move on? Offer her immunity? Indict her? Make her IRS Commissioner? Before you answer, consider the new [hearings revealing 32,000 more emails, and possible criminal activity!](#)

No matter how you come out on the underlying issues, it strikes many people as a little bit odd—if not downright bizarre—that Ms. Lois Lerner [received \\$129,000 in bonuses?](#) That's right, the former IRS official received \$129,300 in bonuses between 2010 and 2013. That is what [records](#) obtained through the Freedom of Information Act reveal. As head of the tax-exempt division at the heart of the IRS targeting scandal, she received a 25 percent retention bonus each year—averaging \$43,000 a year—on top of her regular salary.

It seems a little odd that she was collecting them [while she presided over alleged discrimination against conservative nonprofits.](#) The IRS scandal broke in May 2013, but goes back to January 2010, when the Supreme Court in [Citizens United](#) found it unconstitutional to ban free speech by corporations, unions and other organizations. Shortly thereafter, in August 2010, the IRS [distributed a BOLO](#) (Be on the Lookout) list for Tea Party organizations applying for tax exempt status. Extra scrutiny, please.



In October 2010, IRS Exempt Organization Chief Lois Lerner met with the DOJ about prosecuting conservative groups. Lerner or others at the IRS send voluminous taxpayer records to the FBI and DOJ, which could violate privacy laws. By March 2012, amid reports of targeting, [former IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman testifies](#) there is “absolutely no targeting” by the IRS of conservative and/or Tea Party organizations.

On November 9, 2012, [Mr. Shulman steps down](#) as Commissioner, replaced by Steven Miller. On May 10, 2013, during a bar meeting, Ms. Lerner admits targeting, calling it “absolutely incorrect, insensitive, and inappropriate.” Four days later, on May 14, 2013, the Inspector General [issues a report](#) confirming targeting. Attorney General Eric Holder announces an [FBI investigation](#).

On May 15, 2013, Acting IRS Commissioner [Steven Miller resigns](#). President Obama names [Daniel Werfel](#) Acting Commissioner. Mr. Miller and Inspector General J. Russell George [testify to the House Ways and Means Committee](#). On May 22, 2013, Ms. Lerner professes her innocence, then [takes the Fifth](#). Next day, she is placed on [administrative leave](#).

On June 12, 2013, the IRS suspends BOLO lists for Tea Party names. On June 20, 2013, the IRS pays \$70 million in bonuses. Ms. Lerner receives \$42,000, part of her total of \$129,300. Former Commissioner Miller receives \$100,000. On June 24, 2013, the IRS admits that “inappropriate criteria” were used for tax-exempt status. Next day, Democrats claim progressives were targeted too.

On September 24, 2013, Ms. Lerner's retirement is announced, with full pension. On February 3, 2014, President Obama tells Fox there's "[not a smidgen of corruption](#)" at the IRS. On March 11, 2014, the Committee on House Oversight and Reform [issues a report](#) on Lois Lerner. On April 7, 2014, IRS Commissioner John Koskinen confirms there are [six investigations](#): four by Congressional committees, one by the DOJ, one by the TIGTA. Over 250 IRS employees spend 100,000 hours, costing taxpayers at least \$14 million.

On April 8, 2014, the Committee on House Oversight and Government Reform says it will pursue contempt charges against Ms. Lerner. On May 7, 2014, the House of Representatives holds Ms. Lerner in contempt of Congress. On June 13, 2014 (Friday the 13th!), the IRS *first* says it lost Ms. Lerner's emails from 2009 to 2011. The IRS says hard drives and backups are destroyed, for six other IRS employees' too. The IRS spent \$10 million trying to recover them, but they ~~are~~ were gone.

On September 22, 2014, Ms. Lerner breaks her silence to [Politico](#), saying that she is the victim. In November-December 2014, the Inspector General recovers 30,000 backed up Lerner emails. In FOIA litigation, court ordered documents show that the DOJ met with Ms. Lerner in 2010 about conservative groups. The IRS and Inspector General decline to provide documents revealing taxpayer private data, though the White House may have received them.

Regardless of who you think did what, and why they did it, this is pretty odd. If IRS employees were targeting without direction from their bosses, perhaps they shouldn't get bonuses? Not big ones anyhow. No one may have intended any breach of law. Maybe the IRS should not have to administer our insanely complex tax law, but it does. And without regard to political party, every American should want to get to the bottom of this strange case once and for all.

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