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Dear IRS Employees: Emails Go To Congress, So Let's Text

For more than two years, President Obama has denied there is an IRS problem, quipping that there is [not a smidgen of corruption](#) at the IRS. He has long claimed that any missteps were innocent, entirely the fault of [bonehead decisions in local offices](#). On his recent Daily Show appearance, President Obama was at it again:

You've got this back office, and they're going after the Tea Party. Well, it turned out, no, Congress had passed a crummy law that didn't give people guidance in terms of what it was they were trying to do. They did it poorly and stupidly. The truth of the matter is that there was not some big conspiracy there. They were trying to sort out these conflicting demands. You don't want all this money pouring through non-for- profits, but you also want to make sure everybody is being treated fairly."

Yet it is harder and harder to believe. [IRS documents](#) have revealed a Lois Lerner [email](#) about teaching IRS staffers to understand the potential pitfalls of revealing too much information to Congress. Forget email. Instead, the IRS used a neat instant messaging system that automatically deleted office communications. House Oversight Committee [documentation](#) suggests it was used *deliberately* by IRS officials to evade public scrutiny. The fact that the [IRS use instant messaging to hide internal communications](#) came out more than a year ago, yet it is still pooh poohed by the administration.



Lois Lerner testifies before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee March 5, 2014.

IRS Commissioner Koskinen has claimed he was unaware of the instant-messaging system. Maybe, but Mr. Koskinen was not convincing in trying to explain away Ms. Lerner's obstruction. Congress found Ms. Lerner in contempt after she professed her innocence, and *thereafter* [took the Fifth](#). Much later, she [broke her silence to Politico, saying she did nothing wrong](#). In fact, *she* was the victim, she said. The U.S. Attorney's Office said in this [letter](#) that she [will not be charged with contempt](#).

Some of the real juice may be in text or instant messages. In 2013, when the IRS targeting scandal was brewing, Ms. Lerner asked an IRS IT specialist if the IRS saved texts? The response was music to Ms. Lerner's ears. No, they are not automatically saved, was IT's response. The IT person went on to say that saving them was *possible*, though, so be careful. "Perfect," was Ms. Lerner's reply. And remember all those many millions of dollars of taxpayer money the IRS spent looking?

Yet House Members were recently told by the Inspector General that the IT staff of the IRS said they were *never even asked* for backup tapes to find Lerner's emails. Deputy Inspector General Tim Camus said finding the emails was easy. "They were right where you would expect them to be," he told the Oversight Committee.

[Records](#) reveal that Ms. Lerner [received \\$129,000 in bonuses](#), averaging \$43,000 a year on top of her salary during the time [she was presiding over alleged discrimination against conservative nonprofits](#). Even before Ms. Lerner became the face of the IRS targeting scandal, there were [allegations she had prior history of targeting conservatives](#). She would become what George Will called [the scowling face of the state](#).

She repeatedly refused to testify, yet collects a nice federal pension. Of course, Mr. Koskinen has testified before Congress numerous times. On March 26, 2014, he pledged that the IRS would produce all of Ms. Lerner's emails. Yet he knew there were big problems, and the 'facts' and dates just don't line up. Mr. Koskinen lamented the lost or destroyed backup tapes. Mr. Koskinen testified he had "confirmed" that all of the tapes were unrecoverable.

In fact, approximately 700 backup tapes had not been erased and contained relevant information. The inspector general said the 700 still-good backup tapes recovered were found within 15 days of the IRS's informing Congress they were not recoverable! What was so difficult? The inspector general's staff simply drove to Martinsburg, WV and asked for the tapes. The IRS had never even asked whether the tapes existed. Well, maybe they sent a text.

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