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IRS's Lois Lerner Breaks Silence, 'Did Nothing Wrong,' But Still Won't Testify

Lois Lerner was the former Director of Tax Exempt Organizations at the IRS. That made her the key IRS official at the center of the alleged targeting of conservative groups. The tidal wave of comments from someone who has been silent for so long is a puzzling development in this story that just won't quit. For over a year now, most everyone has been trying to get her to talk.

Interestingly, though, no one appears to be willing to give her immunity from prosecution to do so. And after her long pent up comments and comments that suggest she considers herself the victim here, it may be even less likely that she will be given immunity now. In a [fascinating exclusive interview](#) with Politico, Ms. Lerner defends her actions and says she did nothing wrong.

Her personal political leanings never impacted her work, she claims, and she bristled at any suggestion to the contrary. About all those emails? She had nothing to do with the email problems either. The email void that was for so long not revealed remains one of the sorest spots with many. Yet Ms. Lerner said that: "How would I know two years ahead of time that it would be important for me to destroy emails, and if I did know that, why wouldn't I have destroyed the other ones they keep releasing?"

DEMAND AN IRS INDEPENDENT PROSECUTOR



PETITION

(Image credit: grassfire.com)

The now not so new IRS Commissioner Koskinen has had his share of testifying about the email mess. And he has not been especially knowledgeable about the email gaffes. He didn't know about the instant-messaging system either. The investigation of the computer failures has not been conclusive.

Lerner allegedly flagged tax-exemption applications of conservative organizations, including Crossroads GPS. Ms. Lerner's lawyer continues to state that his client did nothing wrong. She is retired now on a government pension, but conceivably could still face prosecution, and that makes this interview especially interesting. For 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. Whether it was a waiver or not, the Committee sure didn't like it.

Her case was turned over to the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, where it remains. The press interview has already inflamed many Republicans, who were seeking answers for so long. Meanwhile, the slow wheels of government grind along. And given the appearances of much of this, the tax system is clearly suffering. Some taxpayers going through audits are probably a little less likely to trust the IRS these days. It is hard to blame them.

You can reach me at Wood@WoodLLP.com. This discussion is not intended as legal advice, and cannot be relied upon for any purpose without the services of a qualified professional.