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More IRS Bonuses Revealed By Lawsuit

Many Americans probably think the IRS shouldn't be handing out bonuses. Not to Lois Lerner or a fired IRS Commissioner anyhow. But they did, and a lawsuit by Tax Analysts tried to get to the bottom of these and other IRS bonuses. Why a lawsuit?

Because the IRS stonewalled, as it not infrequently does. Tax Analysts asked nicely first and made a Freedom of Information Act request. But the IRS has high walls. Eventually, Tax Analysts brought [a suit against the IRS](#) to compel the agency to release records of bonuses to high-level executives since 2010.

Many of the bonuses can be traced to IRS Commissioner Koskinen, who took the helm of the IRS in December 2013. Most of the IRS bonuses were paid in February and March 2014, with 238 awards totaling \$976,387. No further awards were recorded until November and January 2015, with 218 awards totaling \$1,000,108.



Former IRS official Lois Lerner speaks on Capitol Hill in Washington on March 5, 2014. Management flaws at the IRS contributed to a "dysfunctional culture" that allowed agents to mistreat conservative political groups when they applied for tax-exempt status, according to the results of a bipartisan congressional investigation released in August 2015. (Photo credit: AP Photo/Lauren Victoria Burke, File)

In all, the IRS paid 1,269 performance awards and retention incentives to 351 chief counsel executive and nonunion managers. These amounts totaled \$5.97 million between January 1, 2010, and February 2, 2015. The average performance award was \$4,483. Yet individual awards ranged from \$88 to \$44,096. Individual recipients' total awards ranged even more widely, from \$250 to \$285,688. For considerable detail on the bonuses, go [here](#).

As you read about bonuses, you might recall other reports saying that [61% of IRS employees caught willfully violating the tax law aren't fired, but may get promoted](#). You might find it even worse that Ms. Lois Lerner [received \\$129,000 in bonuses](#). The former IRS official received \$129,300 in bonuses between 2010 and 2013. As head of the IRS tax-exempt division at the heart of the targeting scandal, she received a 25% retention bonus each year—averaging \$43,000 a year—on top of her regular salary.

The IRS scandal broke in May 2013, but goes back to January 2010. The Supreme Court in [Citizens United](#) found it unconstitutional to ban free speech by corporations, unions and other organizations. Shortly thereafter, the IRS [distributed a BOLO](#) (Be on the Lookout) list for Tea Party organizations applying for tax exempt status. As the emails went awry, the fact that the [IRS used instant messaging to hide internal communications](#) was pooh-pooed by the administration.

Recently, the IRS says it [“discovered” that Lois Lerner’s dog had an email account](#), in addition to her official account and personal email accounts. There was already an official IRS email account, and Lerner’s own private email account that the IRS had labeled ‘Lois Home.’ The ‘Toby Miles’ account? Toby is the dog, and Michael Miles is Ms. Lerner’s husband.

The IRS says it may need to re-release additional documents. The IRS noted that a House Ways and Means Committee criminal referral in 2014 mentioned the Toby Miles email address, identified as [tobomatic@msn.com](#). Aha. Perhaps this kind of transparency merits a bonus....

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