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THE TAX LAWYER

TAXES | 4/13/2013

Tax Day Vote: Should Tax Delinquent IRS Employees Be Fired?

If you owe back taxes, you're in good company: 311,566 federal workers and retirees do too. In fact, they owe over \$3.5 billion. Some work for the IRS. But this Tax Day the House votes whether to fire them under H.R. 249 authored by Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah). It covers all federal employees, except members of Congress of course!

Both Rep. Chaffetz and Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) have [authored bills to force federal agencies, the U.S. Postal Service and congressional offices to fire employees who aren't paying](#). Excepted are employees suffering from family turmoil or working to correct significant financial hardship. Chaffetz's bill was approved in committee, but Coburn's still awaits consideration by a Senate panel. See [Federal Employees Owe \\$1.03 billion In Unpaid Taxes](#).



Chairman and President of the Trump Organization Donald Trump yells 'you're fired!' (Image credit: Getty Images via @daylife)

Yet a group representing Treasury employees notes these workers already face unpaid furlough days. Besides, members of Congress who are delinquent are exempt from the bill, which hardly seems fair.

IRS and Treasury Department employees are more up to date on taxes than most of the rest of the government. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has the highest percentage of tax delinquent workers at 4.4 percent. The Treasury Department, which includes the IRS, had the lowest, at 1.1 percent. Employees of the Board of Governors of the [Federal Reserve System](#) had a 5.6 percent delinquency rate.

Yet officials are quick to point out that federal employees are actually more compliant in paying taxes than the [U.S. population](#) as a whole. According to the IRS, 8.2 percent of the population was delinquent on their federal taxes at the end of 2011. That's up from 7.8 percent the year before.

The delinquency rate at the Executive Office of the President was 2.1 percent. The rates for employees of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate were 3.7 percent and 3.3 percent, respectively. Overall, the 9.8 million workers included in the data had a delinquency rate of 3.2 percent.

There's even evidence this bill would cost rather than save tax dollars. And many point out that Tax Day should probably more profitably be spent working on the unfairness in the tax code or the funding problems with the IRS that make it fall further and further behind.

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