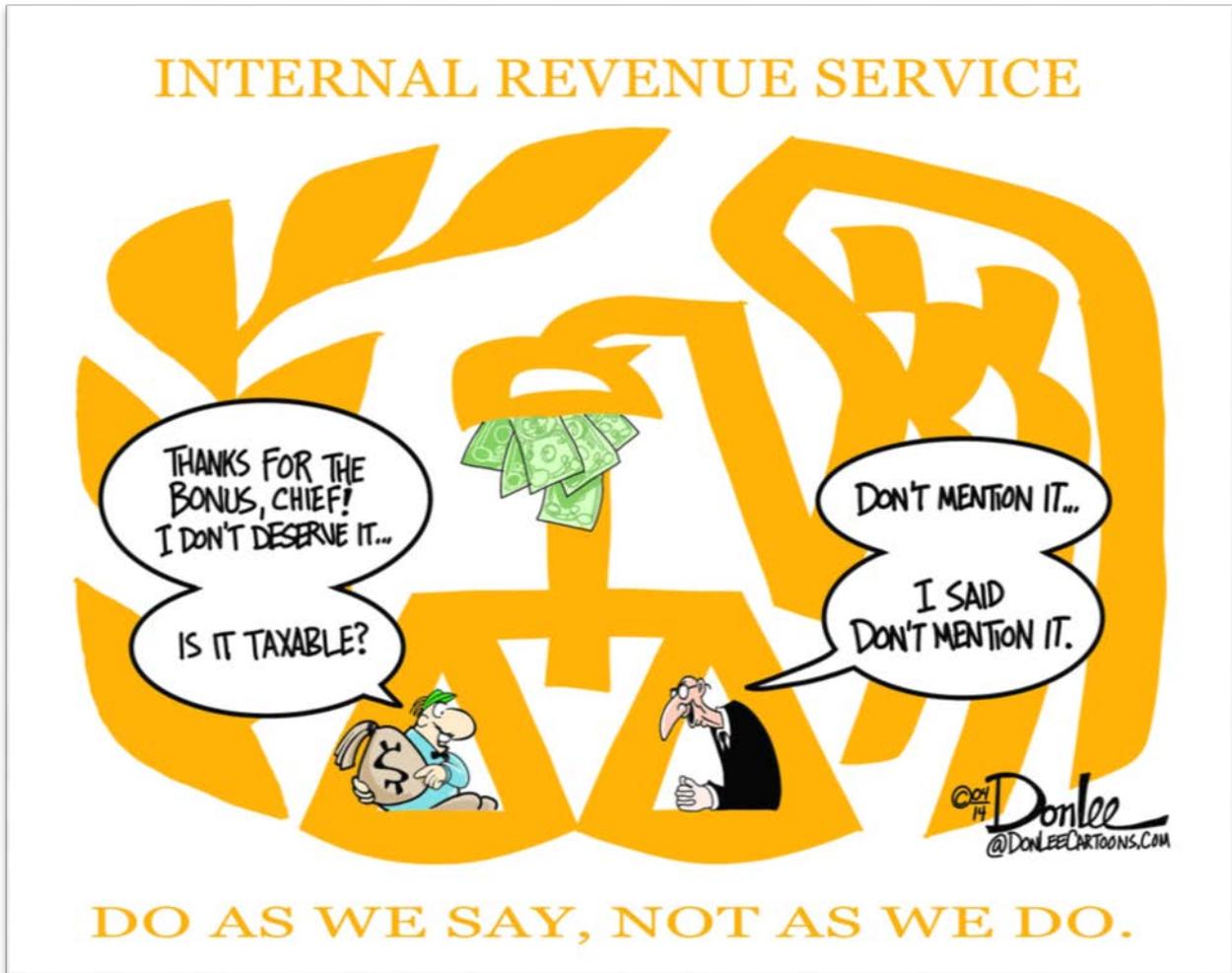


[Government Speech]

“[Government Speech creating spirituality, assessment & empowering Body/Mind/Spirit]”



The **IRS** is preaching to the Choir of **THEIRS**

IRS workers who didn't pay taxes got bonuses



[Gregory Korte](#), USA TODAY 6:29 p.m. EDT April 22, 2014



The Internal Revenue Service headquarters in Washington, D.C.(Photo: J. David Ake, AP)

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service handed out \$2.8 million in bonuses to employees with disciplinary issues — including more than \$1 million to employees who didn't pay their federal taxes, a watchdog report says.

The [report by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration](#) said 1,146 IRS employees received bonuses within a year of substantiated federal tax compliance problems.

The bonuses weren't just monetary. Employees with tax problems received a total of 10,582 hours of paid time off — valued at about \$250,000 — and 69 received permanent raises through a step increase, the report said. The report looked at bonuses in 2011 and 2012.

Employees' tax problems included "willful understatement of tax liabilities over multiple tax years, late payment of tax liabilities, and underreporting of income," the report said.

STORY: [Top IRS execs rack up big travel bills](#)

"We take seriously our unique role as this nation's tax administrator, and we will strive to implement a policy that protects the integrity of the tax administration system and the reputation of the service," IRS chief Human Capital Officer David Krieg said in a written response to the audit.

The IRS said it has instituted a policy to take conduct into account when handing out bonuses to senior executives. Making that policy apply to all of the agency's workers would require negotiations with the National Treasury Employees Union.

NTEU President Colleen Kelley said the union would review any proposed changes to its contract for the "relatively small number of employees who may have had some overlap between a performance award review period and a conduct issue."

In fiscal year 2012, the agency awarded bonuses of \$86.3 million in cash and almost 490,000 hours of time off. About 69% of the agency's 98,000 employees received some kind of bonus.

The IRS [suspended most bonuses last year](#) in a cost-savings move to avoid furloughs but restored them in fiscal year 2014.

Non-payment of taxes by federal employees is a government-wide problem. The IRS says 311,536 federal employees were tax delinquents in 2011, owing a total of \$3.5 billion.

Bills have been introduced in the House and Senate to fire federal employees with seriously delinquent taxes. The House bill, sponsored by Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, failed to clear a procedural hurdle; the Senate bill by Sen. Tom Coburn is in committee

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2014/04/22/irs-bonuses-employees-delinquent-taxes/8012195/>

Federal employees owe \$3.3B in back taxes



[Gregory Korte](#), USA TODAY 6:32 p.m. EDT May 22, 2014



The Capitol dome as seen from the Capitol visitors' center.(Photo: J. Scott Applewhite, AP)

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WASHINGTON — Federal employees owe a total of \$3.3 billion in back taxes to the federal government, according to Internal Revenue Service data released Thursday.

In all, 318,462 federal employees owed back taxes as of last Sept. 30 — an increase of 2.6% from the previous year. That puts the average tax bill at \$10,391, according to IRS data obtained by USA TODAY under the Freedom of Information Act.

But federal workers are better at paying their taxes than the average taxpayer. Their delinquency rate of 3.19% is far lower than the 8.7% for the population at large.

Some federal workers are worse than others. The non-payment rate for employees of the House of Representatives is 4.87%. In the Senate, it's 3.24%. That's 714 tax delinquents on Capitol Hill owing a total of \$8.6 million — more than one for each representative or senator. Thirty-six employees in the Executive Office of the President are delinquent on their taxes, for a rate of 2.06%.

Tax delinquencies on Capitol Hill are four times more common than at the Treasury Department, which [has come under congressional scrutiny](#) over bonuses paid to tax-delinquent IRS employees.

A report by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration last month found that the IRS paid more than \$1 million to employees who didn't pay their federal taxes. But at just 1.2% delinquent, the Treasury Department has the best rate of tax compliance in the federal government, according to the reports.

STORY: [IRS workers who didn't pay taxes got bonuses](#)

The statistical reports tally tax delinquencies at the agency level, so it's unclear who's not paying their taxes and whether any members of Congress are delinquent. The reports are part of a 20-year-old IRS effort, called the Federal Employee/Retiree Delinquency Initiative, to increase tax compliance by federal employees. The report doesn't break out the IRS, which is part of the

Treasury Department, but IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said recently that more than 99% of IRS employees are current on their taxes.

The highest rates of tax delinquency are at small federal agencies dealing with civil rights and the disabled: The National Council on Disability (11.54%), the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind (10%) and the Civil Rights Commission (9.52%).

Outside the Treasury Department, the most conscientious taxpayers are active-duty military personnel, who have a delinquency rate of just 1.7%.

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<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2014/05/22/congress-irs-tax-delinquencies/9442749/>

Tax Scam Uncle Sam? You Oughta Be Fired! Says Utah Rep. Chaffetz

- By Devin Dwyer

WASHINGTON, March 18, 2010

Working for [Uncle Sam](#) comes with some great perks, like job stability, posh benefits packages, and in many cases, average salaries that are higher than what the same job pays in the private sector.

That's why Republican Rep. [Jason Chaffetz](#), R-Utah, is irked that nearly 100,000 civilian federal employees owe the IRS \$962 million in back taxes. He thinks they should pay up or be fired.

Chaffetz has introduced a bill that calls for the federal government to "ferret out" civilian employees who have "seriously delinquent tax debt" and prevent the hiring of other [tax delinquents](#).



More than 3 percent of the 2.8 million federal civilian employees owed the Treasury unpaid [federal income taxes](#) in 2008, according to the IRS. If you include retirees and military service members, the numbers go from nearly 100,000 up to 276,000 current or former workers who owe \$3 billion in taxes.

"If you get to the point where the government is putting a lien on their property and they've exhausted their appeals... the right thing to do is fire them as a federal worker," said Chaffetz. "If you're going to take federal tax dollars, you should be paying your federal taxes."

Currently, only IRS employees can be terminated for non-payment of federal income taxes -- a measure Chaffetz wants extended to all federal agencies. The IRS has the lowest level of tax delinquency among its employees than at any other federal agencies, according to the most recent statistics.

But skeptics of Chaffetz's plan argue firing the delinquents en masse circumvents due process and could only hamper efforts to recoup the cash.

Firing federal employees as soon as a lien is imposed by the IRS would be "prior to any due process hearing," said Rep. Stephen Lynch, D-Mass., who chairs the House Oversight and Government Reform subcommittee on the federal workforce.

"We have a system that's in place. For a federal employee, we have the [IRS] garnish their pay at 15 percent -- which is higher than for the regular taxpayer," he said. "We're getting the money back."

Wade Morrow, assistant general counsel for the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest federal employees union, said workers should be held to account for back taxes but that Chaffetz's rule would not accommodate the complexities of individual cases.

"There may be other facts and circumstances that you should consider," he said, adding that some individuals may have become delinquent due to sickness or divorce complications or due to a mistake in tax filings. Morrow also said the most serious offenders could face termination under existing guidelines if the tax delinquencies interfere with their jobs.

"Getting them to pay back what they owe is preferable to having them all fired, in which case you're not going to get anything at all," said Morrow.

Chaffetz: Firing Federal Employee Tax Delinquents Aligns With Obama in Principle

Chaffetz conceded the terminations would probably make it harder for the individuals to pay their tax bills and said employees appealing to the IRS or "making a good faith effort" to repay them should be spared.

But he said a broad purge of tax delinquents is still justified and consistent with a principle laid out by President Obama for contractors employed by the federal government.

Earlier this year, Obama ordered federal agencies to terminate contracts with companies who don't pay federal taxes.

"It's simply wrong for companies to take taxpayer dollars and not be taxpayers themselves," the president said Jan. 20. "We need to insist on the same sense of responsibility in Washington that so many of you strive to uphold in your own lives, in your own families and in your own businesses."



Democrats in both the House and the Senate have introduced legislation codifying new rules for federal contractors who don't pay their taxes. Chaffetz is the first and only Republican so far to co-sponsor the House version.

"I think the president's right in the case [of companies] and now I'd like it expanded to federal workers as well," he said. "If you're going to take federal tax dollars, you should be paying your federal taxes."

The bill is currently under consideration by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Tax/100000-federal-employees-owe-irs-back-taxes/story?id=10125860>

Nearly 700 IRS Contract Workers Owe \$5.4 Million In Back Taxes: Report

10/23/2013 12:01 pm ET | Updated Dec 23, 2013

AP

By STEPHEN OHLEMACHER



GETTY

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly 700 employees of Internal Revenue Service contractors owe \$5.4 million in back taxes, said a report Wednesday by the agency's inspector general.

More than half of those workers are supposed to be ineligible to do work for the IRS because they are not enrolled in installment plans to pay the taxes they owe.

Unlike other federal agencies, the IRS requires employees and those who work on agency contracts to comply with federal tax laws. That means they have to file returns on time and either pay all the taxes they owe or enroll in a payment plan.

"Because many contractor employees have access to sensitive IRS systems and facilities, the IRS should address tax noncompliance for these employees in a similar manner as it would for its own employees," said J. Russell George, Treasury inspector general for tax administration.

The IRS does a good job of checking compliance when contract workers first start their jobs, the report said. But the agency should do a better job of monitoring whether workers continue to follow tax laws afterward.

The report said the IRS vigorously checks tax compliance among the agency's 90,000 employees. Contract workers should be held to the same standard, the report said.

"The IRS takes tax compliance for taxpayers and those who work for the IRS very seriously," the IRS said in a statement. "For an IRS employee, failure to timely pay one's full federal tax liability is considered misconduct, which may result in discipline or removal." "With regards to contractors, the IRS remains committed to working with these employees to help resolve their tax liabilities, and we remain committed to strengthening our policies to ensure that contractor employees are and remain tax compliant," the IRS said.

The inspector general's office reviewed tax records for nearly 13,600 employees of IRS contractors. Investigators found 691 who owed back taxes as of June 2012, the report said. Some 352 of the workers owed back taxes and were not enrolled in a payment plan, for a delinquency rate of 2.6 percent. Those workers owed a total of \$2.7 million in back taxes, the report said.

By comparison, the delinquency rate for all federal workers and retirees was 3.2 percent in 2011, according to the IRS statistics. The Treasury Department, which includes the IRS, had the lowest delinquency rate, at 1.1 percent.

Among the general public, 8.2 percent of taxpayers owed delinquent taxes in 2011. IRS "employees are held to a very strict standard, even in cases of personal hardship. If they fail to file on time or pay their tax debts, they face disciplinary action, including removal," said Colleen M. Kelley, president of the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents IRS employees. "The IRS has the same requirement for contractors, but they are monitored with much less frequency."

The IRS said it will review cases of delinquent contract workers and take "additional action as necessary." Wednesday's report looked only at employees of IRS contractors. The inspector general's office is working on a separate report on back taxes owed by companies that have been awarded IRS contracts, which is expected in the next several weeks.

In 2010, the inspector general reviewed tax records for 135 IRS contractors with contracts of \$250,000 or more. At the time, investigators found 20 contractors that owed a total of \$5.2 million in delinquent taxes.

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http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/23/irs-workers-back-taxes_n_4150054.html

preach to the choir

to talk about something with a group of people who already agree with you preach to the converted / *realized that all I was doing was preaching to the choir - the men who really need to hear about this don't come to these groups.*

See also: [choir](#), [preach](#)

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<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/preach+to+the+choir>

Preaching to the choir is an English idiom that means a person is trying to convince or persuade another person or group to believe in or agree with something that they already believe in or agree with. Preaching to the chorus and preaching to the converted are similar idioms with the same meaning, but preaching to the choir is the most commonly used.

This particular idiom stems from the traditional church where the choir, or chorus, of a church stands behind the preacher singing hymns that express the belief of the church while the preacher delivers a sermon, hoping to reach the non-believers in the congregation. The preacher would not turn around and deliver the sermon to the choir rather than the congregation, as this would be considered a futile or pointless act. Thus, the idiom reflects the same principle.

Someone might say “you’re preaching to the choir” if you were offering a heated or passionate explanation of your social, political, or moral views and they already agreed with your position. This is a way of letting you know that there is or will be no debate to what you are saying and that they are in full agreement. They may also be implying that you can stop spending energy trying to convince them of your point because it is a point they’ve already concluded on their own.

Ad

Similarly, an individual may rant or vent his or her feelings on a subject and conclude with a statement such as “I know, I’m preaching to the choir.” This is an expression indicating that the person simply wanted to vent his feelings on a matter to someone he knew would understand and agree with him, rather than someone who would debate the matter or offer a different perspective.

Though the idiom is rarely used in conjunction with a verbal insult in social conversation, it could be an indicator that the speaker is wasting his time in conversation and should move on to another topic.

<http://www.wisegeek.org/what-is-preaching-to-the-choir.htm>

make content based choices. The simple principle has broad implications, and has led to contentious disputes within the Supreme Court.

In [*Rust v. Sullivan*](#), government-funded doctors in a government health program were not allowed to advise patients on obtaining abortions. The doctors challenged this law on Free Speech grounds. However, the Court held that because the program was government-funded, the doctors were therefore speaking on behalf of the government. Therefore, the government could say what it wishes, and “the Government has not discriminated based on viewpoint; it has merely chosen to fund one activity to the exclusion of the other.” This case has been reinforced to represent the seminal Government Speech Doctrine case, as seen in *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia*, 515 [U.S. 819](#) (1995), as well as *Johanns v. Livestock Marketing Association*, 544 [U.S. 550](#) (2005).¹¹ In [*Legal Services Corp. v. Velazquez*](#), the Supreme Court held that, although providing government-funded legal services appeared similar to government-funded doctors, the speech of the lawyers was private speech because lawyers spoke on behalf of their clients. As a result, the government could not prevent these attorneys from filing constitutional suits against the government.

The principle plays a particularly large role when it comes to identifying various forms of speech on government property. In situations when the speech being distributed has been deemed to be private speech, it has generally been found that all government restrictions must be content neutral. This restriction has been found to apply across all forms of government. When it was found that newsracks were a form of private speech, all restrictions on their placement on public streets had to remain content neutral, despite a city’s interests in safety and aesthetics.

Courts below the Supreme Court have also adopted the Government Speech Doctrine. For example, in *Downs v. Los Angeles Unified School District*, 228 F.3d [1003](#) (9th. Cir. 2000), the [Ninth Circuit](#) upheld a school board's denial of a faculty member's decision to post anti-homosexual material on a high school bulletin board celebrating [Gay and Lesbian Awareness Month](#). The court based its decision on its finding that the bulletin board was not a "public forum," such as a sidewalk or a public park where anyone is allowed to exercise Free Speech rights, but rather a private forum for government speech (in this case, the public school system).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_speech