



House Oversight Committee Issues Resolution to Censure IRS Commissioner

On Wednesday the House Oversight Committee, chaired by Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), [introduced a resolution](#) to censure IRS Commissioner John Koskinen (shown) for misconduct while head of the agency. The resolution “offers congressional condemnation and disapproval of Mr. Koskinen for a pattern of conduct inconsistent with the trust and confidence placed in him as an Officer of the United States. The resolution formally censures Mr. Koskinen and urges his resignation or removal.”



If passed by the House, censure “affords Congress additional consequences to consider in identifying appropriate penalties for the commissioner’s misdeeds. Mr. Koskinen must be held accountable for his misconduct,” the statement from the HOC added.

The resolution to censure had its genesis in the IRS targeting scandal dating back to 2010. Koskinen landed in the middle of the scandal with his appointment in December 2013. His efforts to delay various investigations until they became irrelevant with the passage of time almost worked. But Chaffetz wouldn’t let it go. Last fall he introduced a motion to impeach Koskinen, and the House Judiciary Committee, chaired by Representative Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) and on which Chaffetz sits, will be taking up that issue next week.

Included in his committee’s statement, Chaffetz rolled out the charges against Koskinen:

Specifically, Commissioner Koskinen warrants Congressional disapproval for the following reasons:

Failure to comply with a subpoena resulting in destruction of key evidence.

Failed to locate and preserve IRS records in accordance with a congressional subpoena and an internal preservation order where 422 backup tapes containing as many as 24,000 of Lois Lerner’s emails — key pieces of evidence — were destroyed on Koskinen’s watch.

Failure to testify truthfully under oath and provided false and misleading information.

Falsely testified the IRS turned over all emails relevant to the congressional investigation, including all of Ms. Lerner’s emails.

Falsely testified emails were unrecoverable once the agency realized some of Ms. Lerner’s emails were missing.

Failure to notify Congress key evidence was missing.

Despite destroying Lois Lerner’s emails on March 4, 2014, the IRS did not notify Congress the emails were missing until June 2014.

Present Speaker of the House Paul Ryan saw through Koskinen’s deliberate obfuscations and lack of



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 19, 2016

forthrightness back in June 2014 when he learned that Lerner's e-mails had been, according to Koskinen, "recycled and destroyed in the normal process." Said Ryan:

I'm sitting here, listening to this testimony, I don't believe it. That's your problem. Nobody believes you. The Internal Revenue Service comes to us a couple years ago and misleads us and tells us no targeting is occurring. Then it said it was a few rogue agents in Cincinnati. Then it said it was also on progressives. All of those things have been proven untrue....

You are the Internal Revenue Service. You can reach into the lives of hard-working taxpayers and with a phone call, an e-mail or a letter you can turn their lives upside down. You ask taxpayers to hang onto seven years of their personal tax information in case they are ever audited and you can't keep six months' worth of employee e-mails? And now that we are seeing this investigation, you don't have the e-mails, hard drives crashed. You learned about this months ago. You just told us [now]?

Two far-left members of Chaffetz's committee thought his efforts were just a waste of time. Representative Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) said back when Chaffetz first offered his resolution to impeach Koskinen, "This ridiculous resolution will demonstrate nothing but the Republican obsession with diving into investigative rabbit holes that waste millions of taxpayer dollars while having absolutely no positive impact on a single American. Calling this resolution a 'stunt' or a 'joke' would be insulting to stunts and jokes."

The other committee member who thinks Chaffetz is wasting his time is Representative Sander Levin (D-Mich.), who called Wednesday's resolution a "political witch hunt," adding that it is an attempt "to distract the American people from the fact that Republicans aren't doing their job. Republicans need to stop the political madness and get serious about doing the hard work of legislating."

After months of testimony about her role in the targeting scandal, Lois Lerner, former director of the unit that conducted the targeting of conservative groups, got off scot-free. The Department of Justice and the FBI, following their investigations into her role, said they "found no evidence that any IRS official acted based on political, discriminatory, corrupt, or other inappropriate motives what would support a criminal prosecution."

Now retired, Lerner told the *Washington Post* after leaving government service that she is "doing just fine."

Whether Chaffetz's resolution will gain enough traction to help the House Judiciary Committee's deliberations starting next week remain to be seen. But with his long record as an insider (Yale and Cambridge grad, deputy director of Clinton's Office of Management and Budget, assistant to Senator Abraham Ribicoff [D-Conn.] and former New York City Mayor John Lindsay, assistant to the director of the Kerner Commission, and principal financial officer of Freddie Mac before becoming IRS commissioner), Koskinen is likely also, when all is said and done, to take the rest of his life off without punishment and claim that, like Lerner, he's "doing just fine."

Photo: AP Images

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