



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 4, 2013

Tea Party Hero Ben Carson Targeted by IRS After Prayer Breakfast Speech

Noted neurosurgeon and emerging conservative spokesman Dr. Ben Carson (shown at right, signing book) said that he was targeted by the IRS after comments he made earlier this year at the National Prayer Breakfast in front of President Obama that were critical of America's current leadership. During the [speech](#), with Obama seated directly to his right, Carson quoted several scriptures from the book of Proverbs, following up with comments about political correctness and "moral decay and fiscal irresponsibility" that were widely interpreted as targeting the Obama administration. The speech has turned Carson into a "tea party" hero and has fueled talk of a possible run for public office.



But, according to Carson, the comments also earned him an audit from the IRS, the first he had ever encountered. While the tax bureaucrats passed the retired Johns Hopkins University professor and surgeon with flying colors, Carson said the visit made him suspicious in light of other conservative and Christian groups who have been targeted by the IRS. "I guess it could be a coincidence," Carson told the [Washington Times](#), "but I never had been audited before and never really had any encounters with the IRS. But it certainly would make one suspicious because we know now the IRS has been used for political purposes and therefore actions like this come under suspicion."

As reported by [The New American](#), several conservative Christian groups which had challenged Obama administration policies were targeted by the IRS over their tax-exempt status. Among the groups was the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, which took out ads before the 2012 presidential election encouraging Americans to vote according to biblical, pro-family values. Additionally, the 180-year old Baptist newspaper the *Biblical Recorder* was targeted following a now-famous [interview it ran with with Chick-fil-A president Dan Cathy](#) in which Cathy boldly spoke out in favor of traditional marriage and families. In a related story, on October 2 the National Organization for Marriage announced that it is suing the IRS over evidence that it had leaked the group's donor list to pro-homosexual groups in 2012.

Melanie Sloan of the watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington told the *Washington Times* that while she had not been overly concerned about the IRS reviews of some groups, the peculiar timing of Carson's audit was suspicious. "I have not been particularly persuaded in the past with the IRS targeting of the tea party groups," the former Justice Department official said. "But this one seems a little odd. This certainly raises questions that I assume someone will begin to investigate."

The *Times* recalled that the IRS contacted Carson in June, four months after his famous speech, "and asked to look at his real estate holdings. After finding nothing that concerned them, the agents informed him that they were conducting a full audit of his finances and asked to go back an additional



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year to review his records.”

After a two-month thorough investigation of Carson’s finances, the tax bureaucrats informed him that everything was in good order. “They told me everything was in good standing and left,” he said. Nonetheless, reported the *Times*, “he said the more serious issue is that the IRS has been politicized — ‘something that never should have happened’ — and that leaves all of its activities open to suspicion.”

While Carson’s prayer breakfast speech quickly turned him into the latest darling of talk-show conservatives, at least one commentator took him to task for using the prayer breakfast venue to attack Obama. “Our politics have become so polarized and corrupted that a president of the United States cannot even attend an event devoted to drawing people closer to God and bridge partisan and cultural divides without being lectured about his policies,” wrote conservative [Christian columnist Cal Thomas](#) shortly after Carson’s speech.

“I am no fan of the president’s policies, but the National Prayer Breakfast is billed as one of the few nonpolitical events in a very political city,” wrote Thomas, charging that Carson’s remarks “were inappropriate for the occasion. It would have been just as inappropriate had he praised the president’s policies. The president had a right to expect a different message about another Kingdom.”

Thomas also chided Carson for doing “victory laps” on all the conservative talk shows after the speech and claiming that the response over his comments was overwhelmingly positive. “That’s not the point,” noted Thomas. “While many might agree with his positions ... voicing them at the National Prayer Breakfast in front of the president was the wrong venue.”

The conservative Christian columnist concluded that should “future presidents think their policies will be prey for political opponents at the prayer breakfast, they might decide not to come. That would be too bad for them and too bad for the country.”

Photo of Ben Carson signing book for Maryland delegate William Frank: AP Images



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