



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on March 16, 2017

## Income Tax Filings Down, Income Tax Revenue Up

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is sweating. The burdensome bureau reports that individual income tax filings are down 8.5 percent from this time last year. That amounts to 5.7 million fewer filings from “taxpayers.”

That might sound satisfying to those of us who recognize the income tax as the unconstitutional seizure of property that it is. But before you pop the cork on the bubbly, compare the fall-off in filings with the ramp-up in revenue.



In its monthly statement, the U.S. Treasury Department reports that it collected \$611,318,000,000 in individual income tax revenues through the first five months of fiscal 2017 (ending on February 28). That’s up \$6,733,300,000 over the same period last year.

So, fewer people are filing their taxes, but the government is collecting more money from the filings?

Despite the record amount of revenue plundered from the people by the federal government, the Treasury reported a deficit of \$348,984,000,000. [CNSNews.com](#) reported that in the first five months of the current fiscal year, the federal government plundered approximately \$8,238 per employed person in the United States.

The share of the deficit shouldered by each of those workers is approximately \$2,288.

It is instructive to remember that despite branding themselves as the party of limited government and fiscal responsibility, Republicans have been in control of the House of Representatives — where revenue-raising bills must originate — since 2011, and of both the House and Senate since 2015, and the federal government is flabbier than ever.

Republicans in particular promise to reduce the size of government and reduce its intrusion into the lives of Americans, then, with their hands on the controls of government, they immediately begin building the bureaucracy, only according to a blueprint they drew, as opposed to the plans drawn up by their former political foes.

As for the filing failure, Bloomberg offers four theories that could explain the delay.

First, “plain old procrastination.” In other words, Americans are just waiting to file until the last possible moment. This is a fiscally sound tactic, as to pay one’s “debt” to the IRS is to extend an interest free loan to the federal government.

The second theory put forward by Bloomberg is called “You-Know-Who.” The business behemoth explains:

The political rhetoric of President Donald Trump may be scaring some taxpayers. With the Republican promising to crack down on illegal immigration, undocumented immigrants may be afraid to create a paper trail with the government by claiming tax refunds.



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John Hewitt, chairman and chief executive of Liberty Tax, raised the possibility in a call with analysts March 8. Undocumented immigrants often use individual taxpayer identification numbers (ITINs) rather than Social Security numbers to file. “Those ITIN filers are filing at a reduced level this year,” Hewitt said. They’re “probably fearful of the Trump initiatives.”

It’s also possible that the overall political atmosphere could be affecting filing. The Trump administration is enforcing the health insurance mandate differently this tax season, while Congress moves quickly to gut the Affordable Care Act, and Trump has promised massive tax cuts. Although no tax code changes would affect what you currently owe, Julie Miller, a spokeswoman for TurboTax owner Intuit Inc., speculated that “there could just be confusion, or [people are] waiting for the dust to settle.”

The third theory posits that the federal government’s announcement that it would not issue refunds before February 15 might have encouraged some filers to delay sending in their returns.

Finally, Bloomberg posits that some “taxpayers” might be confused by recently enacted federal tax statutes, particularly the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 (PATH Act). The report explains the possible mix-up:

The PATH Act affects taxpayers claiming the earned income and additional child tax credits — about 27 million people claimed the EITC last year — but other taxpayers may wrongly think the rule changes affect them, sowing confusion. “Many people assumed this was the holding of refunds until [mid-February] for everyone,” said Michael Millman of Millman Research Associates.

H&R Block Chief Executive Officer Bill Cobb cited this “uncertainty” as a factor in delayed filings. “Taxpayers who typically file in January and early February appear to be less motivated to file quickly, given that their refunds may be delayed,” Cobb said in an earnings call on March 7.

Regardless of the reason, paying one’s income tax is not an option. It is an obligation, an obligation that one ignores at the peril of his home, his paycheck, and all of his property.

Taking money from someone against his will — even if that money is used for an arguably good cause — is theft. And if it is illegal for an individual to do something, logic dictates that it is equally illegal for government to do that thing, as the government is nothing more than collective organization of the rights of individual members of the society.

This process of government-sponsored thievery is known as “legal plunder.”

As French political economist Frederic Bastiat explained in his 1850 pamphlet, *The Law*:

Man can live and satisfy his wants only by ceaseless labor; by the ceaseless application of his faculties to natural resources. This process is the origin of property.

But it is also true that a man may live and satisfy his wants by seizing and consuming the products of the labor of others. This process is the origin of plunder.

Why do politicians — Democrats and Republicans — think they should use the authority they have been given to take the property of others and use it for this or that social program? Bastiat has an explanation:

When a politician views society from the seclusion of his office, he is struck by the spectacle of the inequality that he sees. He deplores the deprivations which are the lot of so many of our brothers, deprivations which appear to be even sadder when contrasted with luxury and wealth.



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Perhaps the politician should ask himself whether this state of affairs has not been caused by old conquests and lootings, and by more recent legal plunder. Perhaps he should consider this proposition: Since all persons seek well-being and perfection, would not a condition of justice be sufficient to cause the greatest efforts toward progress, and the greatest possible equality that is compatible with individual responsibility? Would not this be in accord with the concept of individual responsibility which God has willed in order that mankind may have the choice between vice and virtue, and the resulting punishment and reward?

But the politician never gives this a thought. His mind turns to organizations, combinations, and arrangements — legal or apparently legal. He attempts to remedy the evil by increasing and perpetuating the very thing that caused the evil in the first place: legal plunder. We have seen that justice is a negative concept. Is there even one of these positive legal actions that does not contain the principle of plunder?

Readers are encouraged to analyze the Treasury Department's financial disclosure statement for themselves. They will notice that the list of federal departments deducting money from the pockets of the American people is long and unbelievable:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Energy
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of the Interior
- Department of Labor
- Department of Transportation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- International Assistance Program

There are billions in waste in all these departments, and the financial health and political liberty of the American people are being thrown in in the transaction.

Finally, consider the wise warning of the Anti-Federalist writer Brutus:

This power [federal taxing power], exercised without limitation, will introduce itself into every comer of the city, and country — It will wait upon the ladies at their toilet, and will not leave them in any of their domestic concerns; it will accompany them to the ball, the play, and the assembly; it will go with them when they visit, and will, on all occasions, sit beside them in their carriages, nor will it desert them even at church; it will enter the house of every gentleman, watch over his cellar, wait upon his cook in the kitchen, follow the servants into the parlor, preside over the table, and note down all he eats or drinks; it will attend him to his bed-chamber, and watch him while he sleeps; it will take cognizance of the professional man in his office, or his study; it will watch the merchant in the counting-house, or in his store; it will follow the mechanic to his shop, and in his work, and will haunt him in his family, and in his bed; it will be a constant companion of the industrious farmer in all his labour, it will be with him in the house, and in the field, observe the toil of his hands, and the sweat of his brow; it will penetrate into the most obscure cottage; and finally, it will light upon the head of every person in the United States. To all these different classes of



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people, and in all these circumstances, in which it will attend them, the language in which it will address them, will be GIVE! GIVE!

This year, Americans are giving more money, they're just not giving it fast enough to satisfy the feds.



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