



Moment of Truth for Koskinen in Probe of IRS Targeting of Conservatives

Representative John Fleming (R-La.), a member of the House Freedom Caucus, [filed a motion on Tuesday](#) to bring a “privileged resolution” to the House floor calling for the impeachment of IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. He told reporters at a press conference that “after so many months of waiting, it was time to move forward.”

Representative Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), the chairman of the caucus, agreed, saying, “On Thursday we’ll find out if we actually have the votes and move forward.”



Skepticism abounds. Some House members question whether Koskinen’s lies, dithering, and lack of forthrightness over the investigation into the Internal Revenue Service’s targeting of conservative groups meet the constitutional standard for impeachment. Article II, Section 4 states that “all civil officers of the United States shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, treason, bribery, or other crimes and misdemeanors.”

Others are upset about the unusual measure that would force a floor vote by House members, all of whom are facing reelection in November.

Fleming said:

For years the IRS has abused its power to target people based on their political views. Commissioner John Koskinen not only did nothing about it, but continued the trend of deception by deliberately keeping Congress and the American people in the dark.

To date no one has been held accountable and no one will unless we move forward with a resolution to require a vote on his impeachment.

Fleming added that any attempt to table the resolution or refer the matter to a committee “should be viewed as a vote against impeachment by that member.”

Back in May the House Oversight Committee, chaired by Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), spelled out just what those “high crimes and misdemeanors” are that were committed by the commissioner:

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

Failure 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 provid[ing] false and misleading information;

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



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on September 14, 2016

Falsely testifying that emails were unrecoverable once the agency realized some of Ms. Lerner's emails were missing;

Failing to notify Congress key evidence was missing; and

Despite destroying Lois Lerner's emails on March 4, 2014, not notifying Congress the emails were missing until June 2014.

The 40-member Freedom Caucus' effort to impeach Koskinen has precious little support from the House Republican leadership, and none at all from President Obama, who called the effort "crazy." The president said that "stuff happened before [Koskinen] even got into office. He responded to inquiries from one of the many congressional hearings to try to ferret out a scandal, and I guess [he] left some documents out inadvertently, and well, this is a good reason to impeach the guy? This is crazy."

Besides, added Obama, "It's not that he's venal or has stolen money or abused his office."

Koskinen himself denies wrongdoing, and insisted back in May that impeaching him would "set an unfortunate precedent, diminishing the ability of the federal government to attract experienced, dedicated people to positions of leadership."

It will take half the House to impeach Koskinen, after which the matter would be referred to the Senate. Under the Constitution (Article I, Section 3), "The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments ... and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two thirds of the members present."

Given the environment where moral laxity rules the day, and Americans' attention being increasingly diverted to the shenanigans surrounding the presidential election, Fleming will be lucky if his "privileged resolution" gets to the floor for a vote. If it does, and a vote actually takes place on Thursday, House members wishing to remain outside the fray will instead be forced to vote yea or nay. In two months their constituencies will determine whether that vote reflects their position on the controversy. Working in Koskinen's favor is the usual poor memories of those constituencies, especially over actions by Lois Lerner and high ranking IRS officials taken more than five years ago.

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