



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 6, 2012

GOP Chairman Priebus Calls Harry Reid a “Dirty Liar”

The air war over this year’s presidential election grew more intense Sunday as Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus went on ABC’s *This Week* program and called Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) a “[dirty liar](#)” in the ongoing battle over Republican candidate Mitt Romney’s tax returns.

Priebus’s characterization of the Senate majority leader came two days after Romney called on Reid to “put up or shut up” over the charge that Romney paid no taxes for 10 years, something Reid said had been told to him by an investor in Bain Capital, where Romney was CEO until 1999. Reid would not identify the source, either in an interview with Huffington Post early last week or when he repeated the accusation on the Senate floor Thursday. Priebus lit into Reid in the opening minute of his interview with George Stephanopoulos on *This Week*.



“I’m not going to respond to a dirty liar who hasn’t filed a single page of tax returns himself,” Priebus said, while charging that Reid “complains about people with money but lives in the Ritz Carlton here [in Washington] down the street. So if that’s on the agenda, I’m not going to go there. This is just a made-up issue. And the fact that we’re going to spend any time talking about it is ridiculous.”

“You say you are not going to respond, but you just called him a dirty liar,” Stephanopoulos replied. “You stand by that, you think Harry Reid is a dirty liar?”

“I just said it,” Priebus answered. Appearing moments earlier on the same program, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), chairman of the Democratic National Committee, brushed aside questions about the propriety of Reid making the accusation without supporting evidence and repeated the Democrats’ call for Romney to make public more than the one year of tax returns he released early this year.

“I do know that Mitt Romney could clear this up in 10 seconds by releasing the 23 years of tax returns that he gave to John McCain when he was being vetted for vice president,” Schultz said in a reference to the 2008 campaign. “Or even 12 years of tax returns that his own father said were what was appropriate. Because one year of tax returns, like he’s released, could just be for show.” Romney’s father, the late Michigan Gov. George Romney, released 12 years of tax returns when he campaigned for the Republican presidential nomination in 1968.

The issue of Romney’s tax returns has dogged him throughout this year’s campaign. In January, under pressure from Republican rival Newt Gingrich, the former Massachusetts governor released his 2010 [tax filing](#) and an estimate of what he would pay on his 2011 income. He paid \$3 million to the Internal



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Revenue Service on his 2010 income and estimated he would pay \$3.2 million for 2011. He showed a combined income for the two years of \$45 million from assets he holds with Bain Capital and from a wide range of investments that included a Swiss bank account and holdings in Bermuda and the Cayman Islands. Romney has said he is following the example of 2008 Republican nominee John McCain, who released two years of tax filings. Barack Obama released seven years of tax payments in [2008](#). The Obama campaign has repeatedly called on Romney to release 10 years of his tax returns and has argued that the former Massachusetts governor's offshore investments show a lack of commitment to the American economy.

"I do know that there are massive questions about why he has a Swiss bank account, why he has investments in the Cayman Islands and a Bermuda corporation that he has transferred to his wife's name one day before he became governor of Massachusetts," Schultz said.

The Romney campaign has thus far refused to release any further tax records, arguing that no matter how many years he releases, the Democrats will demand more. "The word's out that he hasn't paid any taxes for 10 years," Reid [said](#) on the Senate floor Thursday. "Let him prove that he has paid taxes, because he hasn't." The following day Romney called on the Democratic leader to reveal the source of that allegation.

"I have paid taxes every year and a lot of taxes, a lot of taxes," Romney said. "Harry is simply wrong, and that's why I'm so anxious for him to give us the names of the people who have put this forward. I wouldn't be at all surprised to hear the names are people from the White House or the Obama campaign, or who knows where they're coming from?" Romney then issued a blunt challenge.

"Harry Reid really has to put up or shut up," he said.

Photo of RNC Chairman Reince Priebus

Photo of Senator Harry Reid (D-Nev.): AP Images



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