



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 27, 2013

Investigator Reaffirms That Conservatives, Not Liberals, Targeted by IRS

According to the Treasury Department's Inspector General J. Russell George, there is no evidence that the Internal Revenue Service targeted liberal organizations. The assertion comes as a striking blow to Democrats who have defended the agency in recent weeks asserting that conservative groups were not the only ones being targeted by the IRS.

The IRS [scandal](#) involves the Tax Exempt and Government Entities Division of the IRS openly targeting Tea Party and other conservative groups that applied for tax-exempt 501(c)(4) "social welfare" organization status between 2010 and 2012. Those groups faced additional audits and scrutiny by the agency. The audits cost the organizations tens of thousands of dollars and countless employee hours, and ultimately delayed the groups from receiving tax-exempt status.

Treasury Inspector General George has been conducting an investigation into IRS activities in this matter and determined that the IRS was using inappropriate criteria to identify tax-exempt applications for review by a team of specialists, including applications from organizations with "Tea Party," "Patriots," or "9/12" in the name.

Inspector General George [told](#) Congress that the IRS had asked illegal questions of the target Tea Party organizations in the process of the audits, "including requests for donor information, position on issues, and whether officers have run for public office."

The investigation reveals that the IRS targeted 292 conservative groups.

The *Washington Examiner* [reported](#):

The letter from the Treasury Department Inspector General for Tax Administration revealed that there just weren't many progressive groups who even sought special tax exempt status. A total of 20 sought it, and six were probed. All 292 Tea Party groups, meanwhile, were part of the IRS witchhunt.

Democrats seized upon the information that six progressive groups were probed, and declared that the IG investigation was flawed and not entirely "forthright" with its information. The Democrats claimed that by leaving out the information regarding the progressive details, it gave Republicans the opportunity to make the scandal appear politically motivated.

IRS REPORT





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“Half of the story has been told for I think for a very political reason and that is to make conservative groups feel as though they are the only ones receiving this heightened scrutiny and treatment and that somehow it must be orchestrated by the White House,” Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.) said. “And we believe that that’s completely false.”

But according to the IRS inspector general, the only groups that were systemically targeted by the IRS are conservative ones.

In a [letter](#) to Democrats, George wrote, “We found no indication in any of these materials that ‘Progressives’ was a term used to refer cases for scrutiny for political campaign intervention.”

“TIGTA [U.S. Treasury inspector general for tax administration] concluded that inappropriate criteria were used to identify potential political cases for extra scrutiny — specifically, the criteria listed in our audit report. From our audit work, we did not find evidence that the criteria you identified, labeled ‘Progressives,’ were used by the [IRS](#) to select potential political cases during the 2010 to 2012 timeframe we audited,” Inspector General [J. Russell George](#) said.

George clarified that while 30 percent of the groups with the word “progressive” in their name received additional scrutiny, 100 percent of the groups with “tea party,” or “patriot”, or “9/12” in their names received extra scrutiny:

Based on the information you flagged regarding the existence of a “Progressives” entry on BOLO lists, TIGTA performed additional research which determined that six tax-exempt applications filed between May 2010 and May 2012 having the words “progress” or “progressive” in their names were included in the 298 cases the IRS identified as potential political cases. We also determined that 14 tax-exempt applications filed between May 2010 and May 2012 using the words “progress” or “progressive” in their names were not referred for added scrutiny as potential political cases. In total, 30 percent of the organizations we identified with the words “progress” or “progressive” in their names were processed as potential political cases. In comparison, our audit found that 100 percent of the tax-exempt applications with Tea Party, Patriots, or 9/12 in their names were processed as potential political cases during the timeframe of our audit.

George’s letter undermines assertions by the Democrats that the additional scrutiny was not politically motivated but was simply a result of the changes made to the campaign finance rules following the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* case.

“While we have multiple sources of information corroborating the use of tea party and other related criteria we described in our report, including employee interviews, e-mails, and other documents, we found no indication in any of these other materials that ‘progressives’ was a term used to refer cases for scrutiny for political campaign intervention,” [George](#) wrote.

Meanwhile, the White House has repeatedly issued statements that it had nothing to do with the IRS’ deliberate targeting of conservative groups.

President Obama asserted in a press statement the following day, “I can assure you that I certainly did not know anything about the IG report before the IG report had been leaked through the press.”

But a recently constructed [Forbes](#) timeline on the events involved in the scandal seems to imply there is evidence that the White House was more involved than it has admitted.

Forbes reported:

President Obama, White House, and the Democratic National Committee publicly and repeatedly



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warn about nefarious and illicit activities of conservative groups, starting in August of 2010. There are eleven public warnings, nine of which are issued by President Obama himself in public speeches.

Higher ups in the IRS learn about targeting on June 29, 2011 but have three follow up meetings to define and expand the categories of targeted groups, the latest being January 25, 2012.

Forbes goes on to list each publicly issued warning, wherein Obama and others use terms such as “front groups,” “right-wing shadow groups,” and “groups with harmless sounding names.”

Several months after the warnings, on June 29, 2011, IRS director of exempt organizations Lois Lerner learns that the IRS flagged the groups with the aforementioned titles for deeper review.

On August 4, 2011, the IRS’s Rulings and Agreements staff met with the chief counsel “so that everyone would have the latest information on the issue,” a TIGTA report states.

By January 25, 2012, the IRS had expanded the categories of the groups it would scrutinize to include those that are “political action type organizations involved in limiting/expanding Government, educating on the Constitution and Bill of Rights, [and] social economic reform movement.”

Could it be that higher-ups may have been involved in the scandal, despite assertions that they were not?

With multiple investigations into this scandal in full swing, it’s anyone’s guess just how much more may be revealed.



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