



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 3, 2014

Inspector General: Can't Release Documents Re: IRS Sharing of Taxpayer Info With WH

The Internal Revenue Service finds itself at the center of yet another scandal, as the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) has revealed that the agency has been improperly disclosing taxpayers' information to the White House.

The discovery came out of a lawsuit filed by the non-profit group Cause of Action. Fox News writes,



Cause of Action originally filed a Freedom of Information Act request asking the IRS to turn over any documents, if they existed, related to correspondence between the IRS and the White House about requests for tax returns for individuals or businesses.

The IRS claimed that it could not do so because of the Internal Revenue Code, prompting Cause of Action to file a lawsuit. The judge in the case determined that the IRS must comply and turn over relevant documents by December 1.

On December 2, TIGTA confirmed that although there were in fact over 2,000 documents relevant to the request, it could not release them to Cause of Action because of constraints in the tax code. "These pages consist of return information protected by 26 U.S.C. § 6103 and may not be disclosed absent an express statutory exception," TIGTA said. "Because no such exception exists here, we are withholding those."

Dan Epstein, spokesman for Cause of Action, contends that the high number of relevant documents reveals wrongdoing occurred. "That indicates scandal," Epstein asserted, noting that the IRS "essentially ignored the order of the court."

The group is currently considering how to move forward to force the IRS to disclose the documents.

TIGTA's revelation only further confirms the already well-known collusive relationship between the IRS and the White House.

The investigation into the White House scandal involving the draconian scrutiny of conservative groups seeking tax-exempt status uncovered documents revealing that two IRS officials made over 100 visits to the White House during the period in which the tax agency was targeting conservative organizations.

Sarah Hall Ingram (who headed the IRS office that oversaw tax-exempt organizations between 2009 and 2012) reportedly [visited](#) the White House 165 times to meet with an Obama official who was exchanging confidential taxpayer information with the IRS.

Likewise, IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman [visited the White House 157 times](#) — more than any of



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the most trusted members of the president's Cabinet. As noted by the online Daily Caller, "By contrast, Shulman's predecessor Mark Everson only visited the White House once during four years of service in the George W. Bush administration."

Further investigation into the IRS scandal by the House Ways and Means Committee revealed earlier this year that the Obama administration's Treasury Department and former IRS official Lois Lerner conspired to create new 501(c)(4) regulations to restrict the activity of conservative groups.

The Daily Caller reported in February,

The Treasury Department and Lerner started devising the new rules "off-plan," meaning that their plans would not be published on the public schedule. They planned the new rules in 2012, while the IRS targeting of conservative groups was in full swing, and not after the scandal broke in order to clarify regulations as the administration has suggested.

The proposed rules — which would impose stricter standards on what qualifies as political activity — would have limited the practices of a number of non-profit groups.

Treasury official Ruth Madrigal wrote a June 14, 2012 e-mail to Lerner and others obtained by Ways and Means and provided to the Daily Caller, in which she said, "Don't know who in your organizations is keeping tabs on c4s, but since we mentioned potentially addressing them (off -plan) in 2013, I've got my radar up and this seemed interesting."

The IRS also shared taxpayer information with the Federal Elections Commission. IRS official Lois Lerner exchanged e-mails with an attorney at the FEC's general counsel on two separate occasions in which she influenced the record before the FEC's vote in the case of a conservative non-profit organization. According to *National Review*:

The correspondence suggests that the discrimination [against] conservative groups extended beyond the IRS and into the FEC, where an attorney from the agency's enforcement division in at least one case sought and received tax information about the status of a conservative group, the American Future Fund, before recommending that the commission prosecute it for violations of campaign-finance law.

The Daily Caller added,

Deputy assistant to the president for health policy Jeanne Lambrew, the most powerful official on Obamacare implementation within the White House, exchanged confidential taxpayer information with the IRS during the 2012 election. Lambrew hosted 155 White House meetings with IRS official Sarah Hall Ingram, with whom Lambrew exchanged the confidential information.

Meanwhile, when asked on Tuesday about the Cause of Action case, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said he wasn't familiar with it but that the administration "pretty closely" adheres to rules that ensure proper communication between the IRS and the White House. "I can tell you that, as a rule, that the Obama administration has been very rigorous in following all of the rules and regulations that govern proper communication between Treasury officials and White House officials and the Internal Revenue Service," Earnest insisted.

But Epstein points to the recent evidence that undermines Earnest's statement. "We know for a fact that the IRS broke the law," Epstein said, adding that he is hopeful that Congress and the Department of Justice will continue to pursue the case and attempt to gain access to the documents. "If there is any evidence that the White House requested [unauthorized taxpayer information], then people in the White



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House are going to be implicated," Epstein asserted.



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