

TAXPAYER BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2015

APRIL 13, 2015.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, from the Committee on Ways and Means, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1058]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1058) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify that a duty of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue is to ensure that Internal Revenue Service employees are familiar with and act in accord with certain taxpayer rights, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

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The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. DUTY TO ENSURE THAT IRS EMPLOYEES ARE FAMILIAR WITH AND ACT IN ACCORD WITH CERTAIN TAXPAYER RIGHTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 7803(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4) and by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

“(3) **EXECUTION OF DUTIES IN ACCORD WITH TAXPAYER RIGHTS.**—In discharging his duties, the Commissioner shall ensure that employees of the Internal Revenue Service are familiar with and act in accord with taxpayer rights as afforded by other provisions of this title, including—

- “(A) the right to be informed,
- “(B) the right to quality service,
- “(C) the right to pay no more than the correct amount of tax,
- “(D) the right to challenge the position of the Internal Revenue Service and be heard,
- “(E) the right to appeal a decision of the Internal Revenue Service in an independent forum,
- “(F) the right to finality,
- “(G) the right to privacy,
- “(H) the right to confidentiality,
- “(I) the right to retain representation, and
- “(J) the right to a fair and just tax system.”.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

I. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

A. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 1058, reported by the Committee on Ways and Means, requires that Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) employees be familiar with and act in accordance with the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, which include:

- the right to be informed,
- the right to quality service,
- the right to pay no more than the correct amount of tax,
- the right to challenge the position of the IRS and be heard
- the right to appeal a decision of the IRS in an independent forum,
- the right to finality,
- the right to privacy,
- the right to confidentiality,
- the right to retain representation, and
- the right to a fair and just tax system.

The bill makes it the affirmative duty of the IRS Commissioner to promote and protect these rights.

B. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Through its oversight, the Committee has found examples in which IRS employees have failed to respect taxpayer rights, including mishandling of sensitive taxpayer information, seizing taxpayer assets without due process, and targeting groups for adverse treatment based on name and policy position, among others. Overall, the IRS has demonstrated a pattern of failing to act consistently in the best interest of the taxpayer. H.R. 1058 would ensure that the IRS acts in accordance with taxpayer rights.

C. LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Background

H.R. 1058 was introduced on February 25, 2015, and was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means. Nearly identical legislation, H.R. 2768, passed the House of Representatives in the 113th Congress under suspension of the rules by voice vote on July 31, 2013.

Committee action

The Committee on Ways and Means marked up H.R. 1058, the “Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2015,” on March 25, 2015, and ordered the bill, as amended, favorably reported (with a quorum being present).

Committee hearings

The need for permanent rules at the IRS regarding enhanced protection for taxpayers was discussed at Committee hearings in the 112th, 113th, and 114th Congresses:

- Oversight Subcommittee Hearing on the IRS Operations and the 2012 Tax Return Filing Season (March 22, 2012).
- Full Committee Hearing on IRS Targeting Conservative Groups (May 17, 2013).
- Full Committee Hearing Organizations Targeted by Internal Revenue Service for Their Personal Beliefs (June 4, 2013).
- Full Committee Hearing on the Status of Internal Revenue Service’s Review of Taxpayer Targeting Practices (June 27, 2013).
- Oversight Subcommittee Hearing on the IRS Exempt Organizations Division Post-U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration Audit Report (September 18, 2013).
- Oversight Subcommittee Hearing with IRS Commissioner Koskinen (February 5, 2014).
- Oversight Subcommittee Hearing on the IRS Operations and the 2014 Tax Return Filing Season (May 7, 2014).
- Full Committee Hearing with IRS Commissioner Koskinen (June 20, 2014).
- Oversight Subcommittee Hearing on Protecting Small Businesses from IRS Abuse (February 11, 2015).

II. EXPLANATION OF THE BILL

A. DUTY TO ENSURE THAT IRS EMPLOYEES ARE FAMILIAR WITH AND ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH CERTAIN TAXPAYER RIGHTS (SEC. 2 OF BILL AND SEC. 7803 OF THE CODE)

PRESENT LAW

The Code¹ provides that the Commissioner has such duties and powers as prescribed by the Secretary. Unless otherwise specified by the Secretary, such duties and powers include the power to administer, manage, conduct, direct, and supervise the execution and application of the internal revenue laws or related statutes and tax conventions to which the United States is a party, and to recommend to the President a candidate for Chief Counsel (and recommend the removal of the Chief Counsel). If the Secretary determines not to delegate such specified duties to the Commissioner, such determination will not take effect until 30 days after the Secretary notifies the House Committees on Ways and Means, Oversight and Government Reform, and Appropriations, and the Senate Committees on Finance, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and Appropriations. The Commissioner is to consult with the Oversight Board on all matters within the Board's authority (other than the recommendation of candidates for Commissioner and the recommendation to remove the Commissioner).

Unless otherwise specified by the Secretary, the Commissioner is authorized to employ such persons as the Commissioner deems proper for the administration and enforcement of the internal revenue laws and is required to issue all necessary directions, instructions, orders, and rules applicable to such persons. Unless otherwise provided by the Secretary, the Commissioner will determine and designate the posts of duty.

REASONS FOR CHANGE

The Committee has found examples of IRS employees showing disregard for the rights and protections afforded taxpayers under the Code, and that such disregard may be a result of lack of emphasis on the importance of such rights. Any public perception that such disregard is common and not taken seriously by upper management at the IRS undermines trust in the integrity of the IRS. The Committee believes that the public trust that the top management of the IRS is committed to ensuring such rights is imperative to good tax administration. Although the IRS has recently published a Taxpayer Bill of Rights, such publication does not itself carry force of law or impose any obligations on the management or employees of the IRS. Accordingly, codifying the requirement that the Commissioner assume responsibility to implement the bill of rights is warranted to ensure public trust.

EXPLANATION OF PROVISION

The provision adds to the Commissioner's duties the requirement to ensure that employees of the IRS are familiar with and act in accordance with taxpayer rights as afforded by other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. These rights are enumerated as fol-

¹ Sec. 7803(a).

laws: (A) the right to be informed, (B) the right to quality service, (C) the right to pay no more than the correct amount of tax, (D) the right to challenge the position of the Internal Revenue Service and be heard, (E) the right to appeal a decision of the Internal Revenue Service in an independent forum, (F) the right to finality, (G) the right to privacy, (H) the right to confidentiality, (I) the right to retain representation, and (J) the right to a fair and just tax system.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The provision is effective on the date of enactment.

III. VOTES OF THE COMMITTEE

In compliance with clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statement is made concerning the vote of the Committee on Ways and Means in its consideration of H.R. 1058, the “Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2015,” on March 25, 2015.

The Chairman’s amendment in the nature of a substitute was adopted by a voice vote (with a quorum being present).

The bill, H.R. 1058, as amended, was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by a voice vote (with a quorum being present).

IV. BUDGET EFFECTS OF THE BILL

A. COMMITTEE ESTIMATE OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS

In compliance with clause 3(d) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statement is made concerning the effects on the budget of the bill, H.R. 1058, as reported.

The bill, as reported, is estimated to have no effect on Federal budget receipts for fiscal years 2015–2025.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statement is made by the Joint Committee on Taxation with respect to the provisions of the bill amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986: the gross budgetary effect (before incorporating macroeconomic effects) in any fiscal year is less than 0.25 percent of the current projected gross domestic product of the United States for that fiscal year; therefore, the bill is not “major legislation” for purposes of requiring that the estimate include the budgetary effects of changes in economic output, employment, capital stock and other macroeconomic variables.

B. STATEMENT REGARDING NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND TAX EXPENDITURES BUDGET AUTHORITY

In compliance with clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states that the bill involves no new or increased budget authority. The Committee further states that there are no new or increased tax expenditures.

C. COST ESTIMATE PREPARED BY THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET
OFFICE

In compliance with clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, requiring a cost estimate prepared by the CBO, the following statement by CBO is provided.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, April 6, 2015.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
*Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1058, the Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2015.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Matthew Pickford.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,
Director.

Enclosure.

H.R. 1058—Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2015

H.R. 1058 would amend federal law to require the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to ensure that IRS employees are familiar with and act in accordance with certain taxpayer rights. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1058 would not have a significant cost over the next five years. CBO and the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) estimate that enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

According to the IRS, H.R. 1058 would codify the agency's current policies and practices. As recommended by the National Taxpayer Advocate (an independent organization within the IRS that advocates for taxpayers), the IRS has adopted several guidelines known as the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, which are identical to the provisions of H.R. 1058.

CBO and JCT have determined that H.R. 1058 contains no inter-governmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Matthew Pickford. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

**V. OTHER MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED UNDER THE
RULES OF THE HOUSE**

A. COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives (relating to oversight findings), the Committee advises that it was as a result of the Committee's review of the provisions of H.R. 1058 that the Committee concluded that it is appropriate to report the bill, as amended, favorably to the

House of Representatives with the recommendation that the bill do pass.

B. STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

With respect to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee advises that the bill contains no measure that authorizes funding, so no statement of general performance goals and objectives for which any measure authorizes funding is required.

C. INFORMATION RELATING TO UNFUNDED MANDATES

This information is provided in accordance with section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. No. 104-4). The Committee has determined that the bill does not contain Federal mandates on the private sector. The Committee has determined that the bill does not impose a Federal intergovernmental mandate on State, local, or tribal governments.

D. APPLICABILITY OF HOUSE RULE XXI 5(b)

Rule XXI 5(b) of the Rules of the House of Representatives provides, in part, that “A bill or joint resolution, amendment, or conference report carrying a Federal income tax rate increase may not be considered as passed or agreed to unless so determined by a vote of not less than three-fifths of the Members voting, a quorum being present.” The Committee has carefully reviewed the bill, and states that the bill does not involve any Federal income tax rate increases within the meaning of the rule.

E. TAX COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS

The following statement is made pursuant to clause 3(h)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives. Section 4022(b) of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 requires the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation (in consultation with the Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury Department) to provide a tax complexity analysis. The complexity analysis is required for all legislation reported by the Senate Committee on Finance, the House Committee on Ways and Means, or any committee of conference if the legislation includes a provision that directly or indirectly amends the Internal Revenue Code and has widespread applicability to individuals or small businesses.

Pursuant to clause 3(h)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation has determined that a complexity analysis is not required under section 4022(b) of the IRS Reform Act because the bill contains no provisions that amend the Internal Revenue Code and that have “widespread applicability” to individuals or small businesses, within the meaning of the rule.

F. CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, AND LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

With respect to clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has carefully reviewed the pro-

visions of the bill, and states that the provisions of the bill do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits within the meaning of the rule.

G. DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

In compliance with Sec. 3(g)(2) of H. Res. 5 (114th Congress), the Committee states that no provision of the bill establishes or reauthorizes: (1) a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, (2) a program included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or (3) a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95–220, as amended by Public Law 98–169).

H. DISCLOSURE OF DIRECTED RULE MAKINGS

In compliance with Sec. 3(i) of H. Res. 5 (114th Congress), the following statement is made concerning directed rule makings: The Committee estimates that the bill requires no directed rule makings within the meaning of such section.

VI. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

A. TEXT OF EXISTING LAW AMENDED OR REPEALED BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e)(1)(A) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the text of each section proposed to be amended or repealed by the bill, as reported, is shown below:

TEXT OF EXISTING LAW AMENDED OR REPEALED BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e)(1)(A) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the text of each section proposed to be amended or repealed by the bill, as reported, is shown below:

INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986

* * * * *

Subtitle F—Procedure and Administration

* * * * *

CHAPTER 80—GENERAL RULES

* * * * *

Subchapter A—Application of Internal Revenue Laws

* * * * *

SEC. 7803. COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL REVENUE; OTHER OFFICIALS.

(a) **COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL REVENUE.—**

(1) **APPOINTMENT.—**

(A) **IN GENERAL.—**There shall be in the Department of the Treasury a Commissioner of Internal Revenue who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Such appointment shall be made from individuals who, among other qualifications, have a demonstrated ability in management.

(B) **TERM.—**The term of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue shall be a 5-year term, beginning with a term to commence on November 13, 1997. Each subsequent term shall begin on the day after the date on which the previous term expires.

(C) **VACANCY.—**Any individual appointed as Commissioner of Internal Revenue during a term as defined in subparagraph (B) shall be appointed for the remainder of that term.

(D) **REMOVAL.—**The Commissioner may be removed at the will of the President.

(E) **REAPPOINTMENT.—**The Commissioner may be appointed to serve more than one term.

(2) **DUTIES.—**The Commissioner shall have such duties and powers as the Secretary may prescribe, including the power to—

(A) administer, manage, conduct, direct, and supervise the execution and application of the internal revenue laws or related statutes and tax conventions to which the United States is a party; and

(B) recommend to the President a candidate for appointment as Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service when a vacancy occurs, and recommend to the President the removal of such Chief Counsel.

If the Secretary determines not to delegate a power specified in subparagraph (A) or (B), such determination may not take effect until 30 days after the Secretary notifies the Committees on Ways and Means, Government Reform and Oversight, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Finance, Governmental Affairs, and Appropriations of the Senate.

(3) **CONSULTATION WITH BOARD.—**The Commissioner shall consult with the Oversight Board on all matters set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3) (other than paragraph (3)(A)) of section 7802(d).

(b) **CHIEF COUNSEL FOR THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE.—**

(1) **APPOINTMENT.—**There shall be in the Department of the Treasury a Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the consent of the Senate.

(2) **DUTIES.—**The Chief Counsel shall be the chief law officer for the Internal Revenue Service and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by the Secretary, including the duty—

(A) to be legal advisor to the Commissioner and the Commissioner's officers and employees;

(B) to furnish legal opinions for the preparation and review of rulings and memoranda of technical advice;

(C) to prepare, review, and assist in the preparation of proposed legislation, treaties, regulations, and Executive orders relating to laws which affect the Internal Revenue Service;

(D) to represent the Commissioner in cases before the Tax Court; and

(E) to determine which civil actions should be litigated under the laws relating to the Internal Revenue Service and prepare recommendations for the Department of Justice regarding the commencement of such actions.

If the Secretary determines not to delegate a power specified in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), (D), or (E), such determination may not take effect until 30 days after the Secretary notifies the Committees on Ways and Means, Government Reform and Oversight, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Finance, Governmental Affairs, and Appropriations of the Senate.

(3) PERSONS TO WHOM CHIEF COUNSEL REPORTS.—The Chief Counsel shall report directly to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, except that—

(A) the Chief Counsel shall report to both the Commissioner and the General Counsel for the Department of the Treasury with respect to—

(i) legal advice or interpretation of the tax law not relating solely to tax policy;

(ii) tax litigation; and (B) the Chief Counsel shall report to the General Counsel with respect to legal advice or interpretation of the tax law relating solely to tax policy.

If there is any disagreement between the Commissioner and the General Counsel with respect to any matter jointly referred to them under subparagraph (A), such matter shall be submitted to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary for resolution.

(4) CHIEF COUNSEL PERSONNEL.—All personnel in the Office of Chief Counsel shall report to the Chief Counsel.

(c) OFFICE OF THE TAXPAYER ADVOCATE.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the Internal Revenue Service an office to be known as the “Office of the Taxpayer Advocate”.

(B) NATIONAL TAXPAYER ADVOCATE.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Office of the Taxpayer Advocate shall be under the supervision and direction of an official to be known as the “National Taxpayer Advocate”. The National Taxpayer Advocate shall report directly to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and shall be entitled to compensation at the same rate as the highest rate of basic pay established for the Senior Executive Service under section 5382 of title 5, United States Code, or, if the Secretary of the Treasury so determines, at a rate fixed under section 9503 of such title.

(ii) APPOINTMENT.—The National Taxpayer Advocate shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury after consultation with the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and the Oversight Board and without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, relating to appointments in the competitive service or the Senior Executive Service.

(iii) QUALIFICATIONS.—An individual appointed under clause (ii) shall have—

(I) a background in customer service as well as tax law; and

(II) experience in representing individual taxpayers.

(iv) RESTRICTION ON EMPLOYMENT.—An individual may be appointed as the National Taxpayer Advocate only if such individual was not an officer or employee of the Internal Revenue Service during the 2-year period ending with such appointment and such individual agrees not to accept any employment with the Internal Revenue Service for at least 5 years after ceasing to be the National Taxpayer Advocate. Service as an officer or employee of the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate shall not be taken into account in applying this clause.

(2) FUNCTIONS OF OFFICE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—It shall be the function of the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate to—

(i) assist taxpayers in resolving problems with the Internal Revenue Service;

(ii) identify areas in which taxpayers have problems in dealings with the Internal Revenue Service;

(iii) to the extent possible, propose changes in the administrative practices of the Internal Revenue Service to mitigate problems identified under clause (ii); and

(iv) identify potential legislative changes which may be appropriate to mitigate such problems.

(B) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(i) OBJECTIVES.—Not later than June 30 of each calendar year, the National Taxpayer Advocate shall report to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate on the objectives of the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate for the fiscal year beginning in such calendar year. Any such report shall contain full and substantive analysis, in addition to statistical information.

(ii) ACTIVITIES.—Not later than December 31 of each calendar year, the National Taxpayer Advocate shall report to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate on the activities of the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate during the fiscal year ending during such calendar year. Any such report shall con-

tain full and substantive analysis, in addition to statistical information, and shall—

(I) identify the initiatives the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate has taken on improving taxpayer services and Internal Revenue Service responsiveness;

(II) contain recommendations received from individuals with the authority to issue Taxpayer Assistance Orders under section 7811;

(III) contain a summary of at least 20 of the most serious problems encountered by taxpayers, including a description of the nature of such problems;

(IV) contain an inventory of the items described in subclauses (I), (II), and (III) for which action has been taken and the result of such action;

(V) contain an inventory of the items described in subclauses (I), (II), and (III) for which action remains to be completed and the period during which each item has remained on such inventory;

(VI) contain an inventory of the items described in subclauses (I), (II), and (III) for which no action has been taken, the period during which each item has remained on such inventory, the reasons for the inaction, and identify any Internal Revenue Service official who is responsible for such inaction;

(VII) identify any Taxpayer Assistance Order which was not honored by the Internal Revenue Service in a timely manner, as specified under section 7811(b);

(VIII) contain recommendations for such administrative and legislative action as may be appropriate to resolve problems encountered by taxpayers;

(IX) identify areas of the tax law that impose significant compliance burdens on taxpayers or the Internal Revenue Service, including specific recommendations for remedying these problems;

(X) identify the 10 most litigated issues for each category of taxpayers, including recommendations for mitigating such disputes; and

(XI) include such other information as the National Taxpayer Advocate may deem advisable.

(iii) REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY.—Each report required under this subparagraph shall be provided directly to the committees described in clause (i) without any prior review or comment from the Commissioner, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Oversight Board, any other officer or employee of the Department of the Treasury, or the Office of Management and Budget.

(iv) COORDINATION WITH REPORT OF TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION.—To the extent that information required to be reported under

clause (ii) is also required to be reported under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (d) by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, the National Taxpayer Advocate shall not contain such information in the report submitted under such clause.

(C) OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.—The National Taxpayer Advocate shall—

- (i) monitor the coverage and geographic allocation of local offices of taxpayer advocates;
- (ii) develop guidance to be distributed to all Internal Revenue Service officers and employees outlining the criteria for referral of taxpayer inquiries to local offices of taxpayer advocates;
- (iii) ensure that the local telephone number for each local office of the taxpayer advocate is published and available to taxpayers served by the office; and
- (iv) in conjunction with the Commissioner, develop career paths for local taxpayer advocates choosing to make a career in the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate.

(D) PERSONNEL ACTIONS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The National Taxpayer Advocate shall have the responsibility and authority to—

(I) appoint local taxpayer advocates and make available at least 1 such advocate for each State; and

(II) evaluate and take personnel actions (including dismissal) with respect to any employee of any local office of a taxpayer advocate described in subclause (I).

(ii) CONSULTATION.—The National Taxpayer Advocate may consult with the appropriate supervisory personnel of the Internal Revenue Service in carrying out the National Taxpayer Advocate's responsibilities under this subparagraph.

(3) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMISSIONER.—The Commissioner shall establish procedures requiring a formal response to all recommendations submitted to the Commissioner by the National Taxpayer Advocate within 3 months after submission to the Commissioner.

(4) OPERATION OF LOCAL OFFICES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each local taxpayer advocate—

(i) shall report to the National Taxpayer Advocate or delegate thereof;

(ii) may consult with the appropriate supervisory personnel of the Internal Revenue Service regarding the daily operation of the local office of the taxpayer advocate;

(iii) shall, at the initial meeting with any taxpayer seeking the assistance of a local office of the taxpayer advocate, notify such taxpayer that the taxpayer advocate offices operate independently of any other Internal Revenue Service office and report directly to Congress through the National Taxpayer Advocate; and

(iv) may, at the taxpayer advocate's discretion, not disclose to the Internal Revenue Service contact with, or information provided by, such taxpayer.

(B) MAINTENANCE OF INDEPENDENT COMMUNICATIONS.— Each local office of the taxpayer advocate shall maintain a separate phone, facsimile, and other electronic communication access, and a separate post office address.

(d) ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORTING.—The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration shall include in one of the semiannual reports under section 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978—

(A) an evaluation of the compliance of the Internal Revenue Service with—

(i) restrictions under section 1204 of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 on the use of enforcement statistics to evaluate Internal Revenue Service employees;

(ii) restrictions under section 7521 on directly contacting taxpayers who have indicated that they prefer their representatives be contacted;

(iii) required procedures under section 6320 upon the filing of a notice of a lien;

(iv) required procedures under subchapter D of chapter 64 for seizure of property for collection of taxes, including required procedures under section 6330 regarding levies; and

(v) restrictions under section 3707 of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 on designation of taxpayers;

(B) a review and a certification of whether or not the Secretary is complying with the requirements of section 6103(e)(8) to disclose information to an individual filing a joint return on collection activity involving the other individual filing the return;

(C) information regarding extensions of the statute of limitations for assessment and collection of tax under section 6501 and the provision of notice to taxpayers regarding requests for such extension;

(D) an evaluation of the adequacy and security of the technology of the Internal Revenue Service;

(E) any termination or mitigation under section 1203 of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998;

(F) information regarding improper denial of requests for information from the Internal Revenue Service identified under paragraph (3)(A); and

(G) information regarding any administrative or civil actions with respect to violations of the fair debt collection provisions of section 6304, including—

(i) a summary of such actions initiated since the date of the last report; and

(ii) a summary of any judgments or awards granted as a result of such actions.

(2) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration shall include in each semiannual report under section 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978—

(i) the number of taxpayer complaints during the reporting period;

(ii) the number of employee misconduct and taxpayer abuse allegations received by the Internal Revenue Service or the Inspector General during the period from taxpayers, Internal Revenue Service employees, and other sources;

(iii) a summary of the status of such complaints and allegations; and

(iv) a summary of the disposition of such complaints and allegations, including the outcome of any Department of Justice action and any monies paid as a settlement of such complaints and allegations.

(B) Clauses (iii) and (iv) of subparagraph (A) shall only apply to complaints and allegations of serious employee misconduct.

(3) OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration shall—

(A) conduct periodic audits of a statistically valid sample of the total number of determinations made by the Internal Revenue Service to deny written requests to disclose information to taxpayers on the basis of section 6103 of this title or section 552(b)(7) of title 5, United States Code;

(B) establish and maintain a toll-free telephone number for taxpayers to use to confidentially register complaints of misconduct by Internal Revenue Service employees and incorporate the telephone number in the statement required by section 6227 of the Omnibus Taxpayer Bill of Rights (Internal Revenue Service Publication No. 1); and

(C) not later than December 31, 2010, submit a written report to Congress on the implementation of section 6103(k)(10).

* * * * *

B. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW PROPOSED BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e)(1)(B) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law proposed by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW PROPOSED BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e)(1)(B) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law proposed by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986

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Subtitle F—Procedure and Administration

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CHAPTER 80—GENERAL RULES

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Subchapter A—Application of Internal Revenue Laws

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SEC. 7803. COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL REVENUE; OTHER OFFICIALS.

(a) COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL REVENUE.—

(1) APPOINTMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—There shall be in the Department of the Treasury a Commissioner of Internal Revenue who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Such appointment shall be made from individuals who, among other qualifications, have a demonstrated ability in management.

(B) TERM.—The term of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue shall be a 5-year term, beginning with a term to commence on November 13, 1997. Each subsequent term shall begin on the day after the date on which the previous term expires.

(C) VACANCY.—Any individual appointed as Commissioner of Internal Revenue during a term as defined in subparagraph (B) shall be appointed for the remainder of that term.

(D) REMOVAL.—The Commissioner may be removed at the will of the President.

(E) REAPPOINTMENT.—The Commissioner may be appointed to serve more than one term.

(2) DUTIES.—The Commissioner shall have such duties and powers as the Secretary may prescribe, including the power to—

(A) administer, manage, conduct, direct, and supervise the execution and application of the internal revenue laws or related statutes and tax conventions to which the United States is a party; and

(B) recommend to the President a candidate for appointment as Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service when a vacancy occurs, and recommend to the President the removal of such Chief Counsel.

If the Secretary determines not to delegate a power specified in subparagraph (A) or (B), such determination may not take effect until 30 days after the Secretary notifies the Committees on Ways and Means, Government Reform and Oversight, and

Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Finance, Governmental Affairs, and Appropriations of the Senate.

(3) *EXECUTION OF DUTIES IN ACCORD WITH TAXPAYER RIGHTS.*—*In discharging his duties, the Commissioner shall ensure that employees of the Internal Revenue Service are familiar with and act in accord with taxpayer rights as afforded by other provisions of this title, including—*

(A) the right to be informed,

(B) the right to quality service,

(C) the right to pay no more than the correct amount of tax,

(D) the right to challenge the position of the Internal Revenue Service and be heard,

(E) the right to appeal a decision of the Internal Revenue Service in an independent forum,

(F) the right to finality,

(G) the right to privacy,

(H) the right to confidentiality,

(I) the right to retain representation, and

(J) the right to a fair and just tax system.

[(3)] (4) *CONSULTATION WITH BOARD.*—The Commissioner shall consult with the Oversight Board on all matters set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3) (other than paragraph (3)(A)) of section 7802(d).

(b) *CHIEF COUNSEL FOR THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE.*—

(1) *APPOINTMENT.*—There shall be in the Department of the Treasury a Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the consent of the Senate.

(2) *DUTIES.*—The Chief Counsel shall be the chief law officer for the Internal Revenue Service and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by the Secretary, including the duty—

(A) to be legal advisor to the Commissioner and the Commissioner's officers and employees;

(B) to furnish legal opinions for the preparation and review of rulings and memoranda of technical advice;

(C) to prepare, review, and assist in the preparation of proposed legislation, treaties, regulations, and Executive orders relating to laws which affect the Internal Revenue Service;

(D) to represent the Commissioner in cases before the Tax Court; and

(E) to determine which civil actions should be litigated under the laws relating to the Internal Revenue Service and prepare recommendations for the Department of Justice regarding the commencement of such actions.

If the Secretary determines not to delegate a power specified in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), (D), or (E), such determination may not take effect until 30 days after the Secretary notifies the Committees on Ways and Means, Government Reform and Oversight, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Finance, Governmental Affairs, and Appropriations of the Senate.

(3) PERSONS TO WHOM CHIEF COUNSEL REPORTS.—The Chief Counsel shall report directly to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, except that—

(A) the Chief Counsel shall report to both the Commissioner and the General Counsel for the Department of the Treasury with respect to—

(i) legal advice or interpretation of the tax law not relating solely to tax policy;

(ii) tax litigation; and (B) the Chief Counsel shall report to the General Counsel with respect to legal advice or interpretation of the tax law relating solely to tax policy.

If there is any disagreement between the Commissioner and the General Counsel with respect to any matter jointly referred to them under subparagraph (A), such matter shall be submitted to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary for resolution.

(4) CHIEF COUNSEL PERSONNEL.—All personnel in the Office of Chief Counsel shall report to the Chief Counsel.

(c) OFFICE OF THE TAXPAYER ADVOCATE.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the Internal Revenue Service an office to be known as the “Office of the Taxpayer Advocate”.

(B) NATIONAL TAXPAYER ADVOCATE.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Office of the Taxpayer Advocate shall be under the supervision and direction of an official to be known as the “National Taxpayer Advocate”. The National Taxpayer Advocate shall report directly to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and shall be entitled to compensation at the same rate as the highest rate of basic pay established for the Senior Executive Service under section 5382 of title 5, United States Code, or, if the Secretary of the Treasury so determines, at a rate fixed under section 9503 of such title.

(ii) APPOINTMENT.—The National Taxpayer Advocate shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury after consultation with the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and the Oversight Board and without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, relating to appointments in the competitive service or the Senior Executive Service.

(iii) QUALIFICATIONS.—An individual appointed under clause (ii) shall have—

(I) a background in customer service as well as tax law; and

(II) experience in representing individual taxpayers.

(iv) RESTRICTION ON EMPLOYMENT.—An individual may be appointed as the National Taxpayer Advocate only if such individual was not an officer or employee of the Internal Revenue Service during the 2-year period ending with such appointment and such individual agrees not to accept any employment with the Internal Revenue Service for at least 5 years after

ceasing to be the National Taxpayer Advocate. Service as an officer or employee of the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate shall not be taken into account in applying this clause.

(2) FUNCTIONS OF OFFICE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—It shall be the function of the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate to—

(i) assist taxpayers in resolving problems with the Internal Revenue Service;

(ii) identify areas in which taxpayers have problems in dealings with the Internal Revenue Service;

(iii) to the extent possible, propose changes in the administrative practices of the Internal Revenue Service to mitigate problems identified under clause (ii); and

(iv) identify potential legislative changes which may be appropriate to mitigate such problems.

(B) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(i) OBJECTIVES.—Not later than June 30 of each calendar year, the National Taxpayer Advocate shall report to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate on the objectives of the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate for the fiscal year beginning in such calendar year. Any such report shall contain full and substantive analysis, in addition to statistical information.

(ii) ACTIVITIES.—Not later than December 31 of each calendar year, the National Taxpayer Advocate shall report to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate on the activities of the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate during the fiscal year ending during such calendar year. Any such report shall contain full and substantive analysis, in addition to statistical information, and shall—

(I) identify the initiatives the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate has taken on improving taxpayer services and Internal Revenue Service responsiveness;

(II) contain recommendations received from individuals with the authority to issue Taxpayer Assistance Orders under section 7811;

(III) contain a summary of at least 20 of the most serious problems encountered by taxpayers, including a description of the nature of such problems;

(IV) contain an inventory of the items described in subclauses (I), (II), and (III) for which action has been taken and the result of such action;

(V) contain an inventory of the items described in subclauses (I), (II), and (III) for which action remains to be completed and the period during which each item has remained on such inventory;

(VI) contain an inventory of the items described in subclauses (I), (II), and (III) for which no action has been taken, the period during which each item has remained on such inventory, the reasons for the inaction, and identify any Internal Revenue Service official who is responsible for such inaction;

(VII) identify any Taxpayer Assistance Order which was not honored by the Internal Revenue Service in a timely manner, as specified under section 7811(b);

(VIII) contain recommendations for such administrative and legislative action as may be appropriate to resolve problems encountered by taxpayers;

(IX) identify areas of the tax law that impose significant compliance burdens on taxpayers or the Internal Revenue Service, including specific recommendations for remedying these problems;

(X) identify the 10 most litigated issues for each category of taxpayers, including recommendations for mitigating such disputes; and

(XI) include such other information as the National Taxpayer Advocate may deem advisable.

(iii) REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY.—Each report required under this subparagraph shall be provided directly to the committees described in clause (i) without any prior review or comment from the Commissioner, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Oversight Board, any other officer or employee of the Department of the Treasury, or the Office of Management and Budget.

(iv) COORDINATION WITH REPORT OF TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION.—To the extent that information required to be reported under clause (ii) is also required to be reported under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (d) by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, the National Taxpayer Advocate shall not contain such information in the report submitted under such clause.

(C) OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.—The National Taxpayer Advocate shall—

(i) monitor the coverage and geographic allocation of local offices of taxpayer advocates;

(ii) develop guidance to be distributed to all Internal Revenue Service officers and employees outlining the criteria for referral of taxpayer inquiries to local offices of taxpayer advocates;

(iii) ensure that the local telephone number for each local office of the taxpayer advocate is published and available to taxpayers served by the office; and

(iv) in conjunction with the Commissioner, develop career paths for local taxpayer advocates choosing to make a career in the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate.

(D) PERSONNEL ACTIONS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The National Taxpayer Advocate shall have the responsibility and authority to—

(I) appoint local taxpayer advocates and make available at least 1 such advocate for each State; and

(II) evaluate and take personnel actions (including dismissal) with respect to any employee of any local office of a taxpayer advocate described in subclause (I).

(ii) CONSULTATION.—The National Taxpayer Advocate may consult with the appropriate supervisory personnel of the Internal Revenue Service in carrying out the National Taxpayer Advocate's responsibilities under this subparagraph.

(3) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMISSIONER.—The Commissioner shall establish procedures requiring a formal response to all recommendations submitted to the Commissioner by the National Taxpayer Advocate within 3 months after submission to the Commissioner.

(4) OPERATION OF LOCAL OFFICES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each local taxpayer advocate—

(i) shall report to the National Taxpayer Advocate or delegate thereof;

(ii) may consult with the appropriate supervisory personnel of the Internal Revenue Service regarding the daily operation of the local office of the taxpayer advocate;

(iii) shall, at the initial meeting with any taxpayer seeking the assistance of a local office of the taxpayer advocate, notify such taxpayer that the taxpayer advocate offices operate independently of any other Internal Revenue Service office and report directly to Congress through the National Taxpayer Advocate; and

(iv) may, at the taxpayer advocate's discretion, not disclose to the Internal Revenue Service contact with, or information provided by, such taxpayer.

(B) MAINTENANCE OF INDEPENDENT COMMUNICATIONS.—Each local office of the taxpayer advocate shall maintain a separate phone, facsimile, and other electronic communication access, and a separate post office address.

(d) ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORTING.—The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration shall include in one of the semiannual reports under section 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978—

(A) an evaluation of the compliance of the Internal Revenue Service with—

(i) restrictions under section 1204 of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 on the use of enforcement statistics to evaluate Internal Revenue Service employees;

(ii) restrictions under section 7521 on directly contacting taxpayers who have indicated that they prefer their representatives be contacted;

(iii) required procedures under section 6320 upon the filing of a notice of a lien;

(iv) required procedures under subchapter D of chapter 64 for seizure of property for collection of taxes, including required procedures under section 6330 regarding levies; and

(v) restrictions under section 3707 of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 on designation of taxpayers;

(B) a review and a certification of whether or not the Secretary is complying with the requirements of section 6103(e)(8) to disclose information to an individual filing a joint return on collection activity involving the other individual filing the return;

(C) information regarding extensions of the statute of limitations for assessment and collection of tax under section 6501 and the provision of notice to taxpayers regarding requests for such extension;

(D) an evaluation of the adequacy and security of the technology of the Internal Revenue Service;

(E) any termination or mitigation under section 1203 of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998;

(F) information regarding improper denial of requests for information from the Internal Revenue Service identified under paragraph (3)(A); and

(G) information regarding any administrative or civil actions with respect to violations of the fair debt collection provisions of section 6304, including—

(i) a summary of such actions initiated since the date of the last report; and

(ii) a summary of any judgments or awards granted as a result of such actions.

(2) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration shall include in each semiannual report under section 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978—

(i) the number of taxpayer complaints during the reporting period;

(ii) the number of employee misconduct and taxpayer abuse allegations received by the Internal Revenue Service or the Inspector General during the period from taxpayers, Internal Revenue Service employees, and other sources;

(iii) a summary of the status of such complaints and allegations; and

(iv) a summary of the disposition of such complaints and allegations, including the outcome of any Department of Justice action and any monies paid as a settlement of such complaints and allegations.

(B) Clauses (iii) and (iv) of subparagraph (A) shall only apply to complaints and allegations of serious employee misconduct.

(3) OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration shall—

(A) conduct periodic audits of a statistically valid sample of the total number of determinations made by the Internal Revenue Service to deny written requests to disclose information to taxpayers on the basis of section 6103 of this title or section 552(b)(7) of title 5, United States Code;

(B) establish and maintain a toll-free telephone number for taxpayers to use to confidentially register complaints of misconduct by Internal Revenue Service employees and incorporate the telephone number in the statement required by section 6227 of the Omnibus Taxpayer Bill of Rights (Internal Revenue Service Publication No. 1); and

(C) not later than December 31, 2010, submit a written report to Congress on the implementation of section 6103(k)(10).

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