

they choose to move forward. It tends to be larger, they tend to be business enterprises and people who have more money.

But it is not just dealing with the audit function. I had a fascinating roundtable discussion in my hometown last month where I had attorneys and accountants who specialize in the practice dealing with tax practices. They were lamenting the problems, not just the fact that there isn't effective audits anymore. They think there are very few. But it is more fundamental than that.

They often will look one of their clients in the eye and say: Yes, you are right, there is a problem. The mistake is in your favor, but because the service level has been allowed to deteriorate so badly, it will cost you more money in my fees to get the \$500 or \$2,000 error corrected.

That just makes one cringe. Now, the notice that somehow putting money to implement the Affordable Care Act is not customer service is ludicrous, and I tried to get my friends on the other side of the aisle to talk to me about customer service.

How is it not customer service to help people with the tax credits that are involved with the Affordable Care Act, which over 7 million people get?

How is it not customer service to make sure that it is administered fairly for over 16 million people who fall under the Affordable Care Act?

Absolutely it is. This \$500 million cut would further degrade the ability to provide the service that not only should we require, but our employees in the IRS want. I would strongly urge the rejection of this ill-guided proposal.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The IRS has not shown this body, they have not shown the Missourians that I represent, and they have not shown all of the American taxpayers that they have been good stewards of user fees. They have a slush fund of nearly \$500 million. This body, over a course since fiscal year 2013, has not cut \$1; not \$1 has this body cut in assistance to taxpayer services to the IRS.

The Commissioner yesterday testified before the Committee on Ways and Means and said that he is the one who cut \$134 million last year alone in taxpayer services. The government is supposed to help serve the people. The people are not supposed to serve the government.

Mr. Speaker, there should not be one agency that is independent of Congress. Agencies were created by Congress. They should be funded by Congress. And no agency should have a \$500 million slush fund that they can decide to spend the money any way that they want. This is not an uncommon practice for us to require agencies, when they collect user fees, to have congress-

sional oversight and to be subject to appropriations. We are just trying to make sure that the IRS is held accountable, like numerous other agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the body to support this great piece of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 687, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PERMISSION TO POSTPONE ADOPTION OF MOTION TO RECOMMIT ON H.R. 1206, NO HIRES FOR THE DELINQUENT IRS ACT

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the question of adopting a motion to recommit on H.R. 1206 may be subject to postponement as though under clause 8 of rule XX.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

□ 1315

NO HIRES FOR THE DELINQUENT IRS ACT

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 687, I call up the bill (H.R. 1206) to prohibit the hiring of additional Internal Revenue Service employees until the Secretary of the Treasury certifies that no employee of the Internal Revenue Service has a seriously delinquent tax debt, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 687, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114-47 is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 1206

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "No Hires for the Delinquent IRS Act".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON IRS HIRING OF NEW EMPLOYEES UNTIL CERTIFICATION THAT NO IRS EMPLOYEE HAS A SERIOUSLY DELINQUENT TAX DEBT.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—No officer or employee of the United States may extend an offer of employment in the Internal Revenue Service to any individual until after the Secretary of the Treasury has submitted to Congress either the certification described in subsection (b) or the report described in subsection (c).

(b) *CERTIFICATION.*—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—The certification referred to in subsection (a) is a written certification by the Secretary that the Internal Revenue Service does not employ any individual who has a seriously delinquent tax debt.

(2) *SERIOUSLY DELINQUENT TAX DEBT.*—For purposes of this section, the term "seriously delinquent tax debt" means an outstanding debt under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for which a notice of lien has been filed in public records pursuant to section 6323 of such Code, except that such term does not include—

(A) a debt that is being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement under section 6159 or section 7122 of such Code;

(B) a debt with respect to which a collection due process hearing under section 6330 of such Code, or relief under subsection (a), (b), or (f) of section 6015 of such Code, is requested or pending;

(C) a debt with respect to which a levy has been made under section 6331 of such Code (or a debt with respect to which the individual agrees to be subject to a levy made under such section); and

(D) a debt with respect to which relief under section 6343(a)(1)(D) of such Code is granted.

(c) *REPORT.*—The report referred to in subsection (a) is a report that—

(1) states that the certification described in subsection (b) cannot be made;

(2) provides an explanation of why such certification is not possible;

(3) outlines the remedial actions that would be required for the Secretary to be in a position to so certify; and

(4) provides an indication of the time that would be required for those actions to be completed.

(d) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—This section shall apply to offers of employment extended after December 31, 2016.

SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

After 1 hour of debate, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in House Report 114-502, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered read and shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 1206, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 1206, the No Hires for the Delinquent IRS Act, prohibits the IRS from expanding its workforce unless the agency either certifies to Congress that IRS employees do not have seriously delinquent tax debts or explains why the agency is unable to provide this required certification.

I want to commend my friend and colleague from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) for helping bring attention to the fact that some of the IRS' own employees, Mr. Speaker, have serious delinquencies on their personal tax obligations.

The American public expects IRS employees—the same people, the same employees that audit American taxpayers—to abide by the Federal tax laws they enforce. However, Mr. Speaker, just last year, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration reviewed the IRS' handling of employees that were found to have willfully violated the tax laws. So, that is how the IRS is handling the matter of their own employees who have willfully violated the tax law.

Shockingly, Mr. Speaker, in 61 percent of those cases of IRS employees who have willfully violated the tax law, the IRS decided to retain the employees and failed to document why these employees were not fired.

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable and the American people deserve better. Allowing IRS employees to continue administering our tax laws when they, themselves, are in violation of that law undermines the trust of the American taxpayer.

My friend Mr. ROUZER's legislation is an important step forward towards creating accountability and restoring the public's trust in the IRS.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This is really a couple of sad days for this institution. Here we are filling in time with bills that are going nowhere and are deeply mistaken. No action on the budget, no action on the tragedy in Flint, no action on the needs of Puerto Rico, no action on Zika—essentially, the Republicans are about no action. So instead, they bring up this series of bills, and now, H.R. 1206.

Let's look at it carefully. What this bill says is that the IRS cannot hire a single person until the Secretary of the Treasury issues a written certification that not a single employee in the entire agency has a serious tax debt. So when an employee quits or is terminated, that position could not be filled

until an examination was completed of the tax status of every one of the 80,000 IRS employees.

Realistically, to certify that no single employee has a significant tax debt, the IRS would need to immediately and continuously terminate any employee with a Federal tax lien. The IRS already has the authority to terminate an employee for delinquent taxes. This was established in 1998 in section 1203 of the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act.

The White House's Statement of Administration Policy says that the bill is "unworkable in operation, as 'seriously delinquent' debts could be as low as \$1 and tax liens are recorded on a case-by-case basis."

This bill is yet another politically motivated attack on the IRS and its 80,000 employees, who have one of the lowest rates of tax delinquency in the Federal Government at around 1 percent.

I wish you would just look at the chart and see where the IRS is compared to the Congress. If you are really worried, ladies and gentlemen, about tax delinquency, we would need to look no further than here in the House, where tax delinquency among employees is more than 5 percent.

The administration opposes this bill, stating further: "These bills would impose unnecessary constraints on the Internal Revenue Service's operations without improving the agency's ability to administer the Tax Code and serve taxpayers."

As I said at the beginning, there is a lot of work that should be undertaken in this House. Instead, this is essentially an empty Chamber with empty legislation. These bills are nothing more than a distraction to cover up the basic failure of the Republican majority to bring on legislation that would truly meet the needs of the American people. I urge that we oppose this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), a most distinguished member of our committee, control the remainder of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. ROUZER. I thank my colleague and friend from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for yielding time to discuss this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I filed this bill, H.R. 1206, the No Hires for the Delinquent IRS Act, in response to reading news reports of more than 1,500 employees at the IRS who willfully failed to follow their own tax guidelines and, in a number of cases, were found to be seriously delinquent on their taxes.

For starters, it is the height of hypocrisy for the very agency that is

charged with collecting taxes to have employees who refuse to adhere to the standards and guidelines which the rest of us must follow and abide by. Of course, this is in addition to the egregious behavior and abuse of power some in the agency displayed when they targeted organizations for their political affiliations and beliefs. We all remember how the IRS misled taxpayers and the Congress in an effort to deny that such activity ever even occurred. Thankfully, the truth always has a way of being revealed, at least eventually.

I think we can all agree that the American people deserve a government that works for them, not against them. Certainly, the IRS is one of the most cumbersome, customer-unfriendly agencies in the Federal Government, regardless of how much they are funded. Anyone who denies this hasn't been listening to the American people.

Now, let me be clear. There are plenty of fine civil servants working hard at the IRS and in all other agencies of the Federal Government. It is the culture of arrogance and unchecked bureaucratic power that has developed within these agencies that is the problem and is the catalyst for the type of disregard and double standard this bill aims to help address. This culture starts with the leadership at the top.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is very simple. It prohibits the IRS from hiring any new additional employees until the agency can certify that every one of their employees who are out of step with the tax requirements imposed on the American people have a plan to achieve compliance. Now, who can argue against this?

For all the moaning and groaning I have heard from the other side of the aisle the past couple of days, this is not a bill that merits even one vote of opposition. This is a commonsense bill that will help encourage the IRS to clean up its act, and I encourage my colleagues to vote for it.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the bill, H.R. 1206, preventing the IRS from hiring anyone—not one person, not one individual—until the IRS proves that there is not a single employee in the entire agency with a serious tax debt.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: How can a hiring freeze possibly help taxpayers? Every person in this body knows that the IRS already has the authority to fire anyone—any employee—for serious Federal tax issues. Congress gave the IRS this power in section 1203 of the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act. It was signed into law in 1998, and it is working.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, the Department of the Treasury had a lower tax delinquency rate than any Federal agency and lower than the American public. It was lower than the Congress.

This is a mean piece of legislation and it is not right. It is not fair. It is

mean-spirited. So, I ask you: Why do we want to punish these Federal employees? Why do we want to go after the majority of IRS workers who are just hardworking, dedicated public servants? More importantly, Mr. Speaker, what good does this bill do?

Every year—not one year, but every year—the IRS is expected to do more with less. We cannot get blood from a turnip. This legislation does nothing to help taxpayers get the service they need and deserve. It does nothing—not one thing—to fight identity theft. This does nothing to stop stolen returns. It does nothing to help the taxpayers speak to a live IRS staff person in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is all about a message. It is a talking point. It is so sad that we have come to this point. As a Congress, we can do better.

Mr. Speaker, some of us here are ready to do the people's work. This is purely a waste of time. As Mr. LEVIN stated, this piece of legislation is not going anywhere.

Last week, I introduced the Taxpayer Protection Act. My bill responds to the real needs of American taxpayers.

□ 1330

There are many other good ideas to help taxpayers, but these bills are not being considered by this body this week.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, we are considering a bill, as I said before, that is mean, downright mean, a bill that is unnecessary, a bill that would do more harm than good.

We owe it to ourselves and we owe it to the American people, to the American taxpayer, to do better. We can do better.

Mr. Speaker, I urge each and every one of my colleagues to vote “no” on this pointless and harmful piece of legislation. It is the right thing to do, to vote “no.” This is not good for the Congress. It is not good for the Ways and Means Committee.

Why do we want to point? It is pointless to punish one IRS worker. More than 80,000 employees, and for one person, just one person, one individual, for tax debt, then they cannot hire an employee.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve and expect all IRS employees to abide by the Federal tax laws that the IRS is charged with administering, period, end of story.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS).

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the No Hires for the Delinquent IRS Act.

Between 2004 and 2013, nearly 1,600 IRS employees intentionally violated tax laws, according to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

Just last year, the same Inspector General reported that the IRS rehired

141 former employees who had bungled their own tax returns. Five of those rehires had intentionally failed to file their returns at all.

Think about that for a moment. The Federal bureaucrats who are responsible for ensuring the American people pay their taxes are not paying their own taxes, and they face no repercussion for botching their own returns.

This is one more example of how Washington is out of touch with the people it is meant to serve. It is no wonder the American people do not have faith in this Federal agency.

This bill will require the IRS to exclusively hire employees who pay their own taxes. It is essential to protecting American taxpayers and ensuring the IRS is held accountable. It is just common sense.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1206.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

This bill is just the next segment of Republican Tax Distraction Day.

Certainly, we should focus on misconduct, on delinquencies, from whatever the source. But here, on Republicans Tax Distraction Day, they are about distracting attention from their failure to address the real problem with reference to delinquencies and misconduct, and that is a problem that they have just shown total indifference about.

For anyone who was listening even a little bit last week, world news around the globe focused on something called the Panama Papers, 11.5 million files explored over the course of an entire year by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists detailing how some people, especially the very wealthy, have used the secrecy of an offshore tax haven in Panama to avoid paying their taxes and, in some cases, illegal money laundering by organized crime and other forms of official corruption. This isn't just an American problem, but there is no American exceptionalism to it either. It is an international problem.

Our European allies have responded to the Panama Papers by initiating new efforts to try to get at this problem of tax abuse. And the truth of the matter is, this is just the tip of the iceberg with this 11.5 million papers because it is only about abuse in one of a number of secret tax havens.

But, of course, it did not attract universal attention. If you were in Beijing today and you were to search for the Panama Papers on the Web, what you would find is: Sorry, no relevant material.

There is another place that you will find nothing about the Panama Papers, and that is in the House Ways and Means Committee and the Republican Caucus because they haven't been interested. They have shown constant indifference to problems that are gen-

erated from these tax havens, from the dodging, from the avoidance, from the evasion that has been going on, when that ought to be the focus of our attention. Instead of real abuse, they focus on imagined abuse.

And keep in mind, by the way, this particular piece of legislation is designed to cover IRS employees for their delinquencies. They bother to exempt the Congress of the United States from that provision.

But I think the focus ought to be on these abuses and delinquencies that are occurring in other places that are costing us real dollars. The Panama Papers show the importance of our working together with our allies to address lawlessness and money laundering and tax evasion. They show why we need to be participating in the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting initiative.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. LEWIS. I yield the gentleman another 30 seconds.

Mr. DOGGETT. They show why the Stop Tax Haven Abuse legislation that I have introduced and the Corporate EXIT Fairness Act, to deal with those who renounce their citizenship, why they deserve a hearing and attention, the attention that they are not getting today or any day from this Republican Congress.

If this Congress will do nothing to address this tax evasion and avoidance, the least we can do is to do no harm. But today's action does do harm. Rather than getting at the real problems, they seek to limit an already underfunded agency.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. LEWIS. I yield the gentleman another 30 seconds.

Mr. DOGGETT. They seek to limit, impair, and hinder an already underfunded agency in doing its job of tax avoidance so that everyone contributes to the costs of our national security and vital services.

We need to be strengthening the law, ensuring fair enforcement, and ensuring that we have the resources necessary to keep America the strongest country in the world.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, it is pretty straightforward. The IRS needs to earn and keep the trust of the American taxpayer. And I say “earn” with emphasis because the IRS has lost the trust of the American taxpayer.

Allowing IRS employees to continue administering our tax laws when they are in violation of the law undermines the people's trust. It does not earn the people's trust.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I say thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to my colleagues for their hard work on this package of bills to rein in the IRS and make it more accountable to taxpayers.

Earlier this week, the taxpayers in my home State of Michigan and across the country reflected on another year of a tax burden that is too high and take-home pay that is too low. But not only is our current tax system broken, the agency in charge of enforcing it is, too. Time after time, the IRS has proven that it can't be trusted to clean up its act and fails to practice what it preaches.

In a report last year, the IRS inspector general found that hundreds of employees are violating IRS guidelines and failing to pay their personal tax obligations. Those are obligations, and I tend to think that the good employees of the IRS would be encouraged as well if their colleagues paid their taxes.

The No Hires for the Delinquent IRS Act would simply—and this is what we are talking about—prevent the IRS from any additional hiring until it verifies that its current employees have paid their own taxes.

Now, a good friend and colleague of mine has described this as a waste of time. The single mom in Monroe, Michigan, doesn't think that this is a waste of time. The family farmer in Jackson doesn't think that this is a waste of time. The small-business owner in Charlotte doesn't think that this is a waste of time. Why? Because they all have to pay their taxes on time.

People who work at the IRS should have to play by the same rules as everyone else does. And, in fact, that might assist them in making sure that congressional employees pay their taxes too, and any other department of the Federal Government pays their taxes too, because why? They pay their taxes, and now they can do what their job asks them to do.

The good colleague and gentleman from Georgia understands, I am certain, the principle that we both know well, where it says: To whom much is given, much is required. Much responsibility has been given to the IRS, and much is required. Pay your taxes.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed listening to my friend from Michigan, and I would just say why shouldn't we lead by example here in Congress, to whom much has been given? Shouldn't we have the credibility?

I would have supported this bill in Ways and Means, with one simple amendment. I offered an amendment to apply the same provisions to Congress.

The House of Representatives has a worse record of compliance with our employees than the IRS. The IRS has the best record in the Federal Government. Every single department in the executive branch has a better record in Congress.

Why should we have over 500 people on that chart not paying their taxes?

If it is such a great idea that you can implement this smoothly and simply for the IRS, why shouldn't it be easier to implement with Congress, which has about 10 percent of the employees but has four times more delinquency?

Well, people on the committee were all aflutter. They did not, on a technical basis, allow me to offer this amendment, so I went to the Rules Committee.

I think this is a good principle. People ought to pay their taxes. But if you are going to use a sledgehammer like this and it is possible to administer, why doesn't it apply to Congress?

Congress sets the rules. Congress funds the IRS. Congress passes that crazy Internal Revenue Code that people hate and then blame the IRS for administering what Congress passed.

Now, I am mystified. If this is not just a stunt to try and divert attention from the fact that Congress and the Republican leadership has been attacking the IRS, defunding it, making its job a difficult job under the best of circumstances, why not apply it to Congress?

Why shouldn't we set the example, particularly when we have more people under our employment who are on that big list? Don't we lead by example? Shouldn't people look to us?

The hypocrisy in not allowing my amendment to apply to Congress may be one of the reasons why Congress is the only entity in the Federal Government that has probably lower ratings than the IRS. It is because we are not willing to be accountable, because we play games, because we do things that we know will never be enacted into law but would be a good sound bite on somebody's Web site or a quick interview.

□ 1345

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I am going to give all of my colleagues an opportunity to step up and to cosponsor legislation that would extend to Congress the same degree of scrutiny as they want to have for the IRS.

Even though the IRS problem is much smaller than ours—it is less than one-quarter—what is good for the goose is good for the gander. I don't know if this is sauce, but I would invite my colleagues to step up and not play games. Have Congress be accountable.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve and expect IRS employees to follow the same tax laws that they administer. It is very simple.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER), the sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, there are several things that come to mind here. Number one, each Member of Congress is held accountable every 2 years by the voters of their respective district.

The last time I checked, this is referred to as the people's House. We are either here to represent our constituencies and our people back home or we are representing the bureaucracy of the Federal Government.

Now, I don't know what side my other colleagues, particularly on the other side of the aisle, care to be on as it relates to this, but I personally think it is important to represent our people back home, not the bureaucracies here in Washington, D.C.

The other thing I have heard as it relates to this bill is it is mean. My goodness. What is mean about this? All it says is, when the IRS can certify that their employees who are delinquent have a plan to get back into compliance, they are able to hire again. Until then, there is a freeze on hiring.

There is nothing mean about that. It is just good common sense. It is an encouragement, and it is an incentive for the IRS to clean up its act.

Then we hear about the funding issue. I have never ever, ever once heard the other side say that there was plenty of funding for any Federal agency, the IRS or any agency.

I will tell you what is mean and what is destructive is an obstructive, intrusive Federal Government that does not allow the individual American people and our families to do what they do best, and that is grow a business, make a profit, and create jobs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. ROUZER. I read somewhere not long ago that rules and regulations of the IRS and elsewhere have cost this economy \$2 trillion in the last fiscal year—\$2 trillion.

If we got rid of the rules and regulations that are harming the economy and that are keeping our economy from growing at a robust pace, then the IRS would end up having a whole lot more money.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. ROUZER. I yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Why shouldn't we have the same rule apply to the 10,000 employees of the House of Representatives?

Mr. ROUZER. This bill is about accountability. Every Member of this Congress is held accountable every 2 years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS).

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1206, which would restrict the IRS' ability to hire qualified personnel until it has documented that

each one of its 80,000 employees has not violated an unusual, uncertain tax standard. This legislation is totally unnecessary and promises to further undermine taxpayer service and tax enforcement.

First of all, it is totally unnecessary, suggesting that IRS employees are tax delinquent when, in reality, IRS employees demonstrate a tax compliance rate much higher than that of Members of Congress or other Federal agencies.

Indeed, 99 percent of IRS employees are tax compliant in contrast to only 95 percent of the House of Representatives.

Further, IRS employees already are subject to the Federal Payment Levy Program that can levy Federal salaries to recover tax debts. Certainly, this is a bill in search of a problem.

Secondly, this bill would further impede the ability of the IRS to serve taxpayers and enforce tax laws. Due to Republican insistence on dramatically reducing the IRS funding by over \$1 billion in the last 5 years, the IRS has already experienced extraordinary reductions in personnel and service.

Seven former IRS Commissioners from both parties have spoken about this unprecedented reduction and its negative impact on our tax system.

My constituents, your constituents, and constituents all over the country have suffered enough. Our national debt has suffered. Every time we collect \$1, that yields another \$4 in revenue.

So I would urge my colleagues to vote against this bill. I certainly will do so.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman notes the Federal Payment Levy Program. I would like to clarify that this bill would only treat an employee as seriously delinquent in the most egregious case where no payments were being made because wages can be levied under the Federal Payment Levy Program. Most employees would fall within one of the exceptions and would be within the definition of seriously delinquent.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy.

Mr. Speaker, I like the notion of accountability. It is true that we are up for election every other year, and I am sure that my friend from North Carolina has a system in his office to make sure that the 18 people who work for him are not on this list of over 500 people. But that is not a suitable accountability. We are talking about an entire agency.

I think there is no good reason that we shouldn't have the same sort of accountability for almost 10,000 people who work for the House of Representatives.

Shouldn't we collectively set an example? After all, there are four times as many people who have tax delinquency who work for the House of Representatives.

Why shouldn't we set an example? If it can be easily administered and we want to send a message, why don't we send a message that we care about it?

We can learn from the gentleman about his system to make sure there are no tax delinquencies in his office. I would like to know that, and I am sure the leadership of the House of Representatives would like to implement it here.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill. It would hamstring the IRS and would make no real impact on tax avoidance in the United States. This bill is shameful.

If we are serious about cracking down on tax dodging, we would focus on ending corporate inversions. Our government must stand up and say to these corporations: Stop cheating the American people.

We cannot continue to allow corporations to pretend that they are American companies reaping the benefits that this country has to offer and all the while claiming to be a foreign corporation when the tax bill comes. They don't pay their fair share of taxes in the United States.

Corporations are cheating the American people out of revenue that could make such a real difference in the lives of children and families so that they can dodge taxes and gouge prices.

A quote from an article in The New York Times last week by Nicholas Kristof says: "The Real Welfare Cheats. One academic study found that tax dodging by major corporations costs the U.S. Treasury up to \$111 billion a year. By my math, less than one-fifth of that annually would mean more than enough to pay the additional costs of full-day prekindergarten for all 4-year-olds"—that is about \$15 billion—"prevent lead poisoning in tens of thousands of children (\$2 billion), provide books and parent coaching for at-risk kids across the country (\$1 billion) and end family homelessness (\$2 billion)."

The administration has issued new rules to curb inversions, but the Congress—the Congress—needs to work to end this abhorrent practice.

It is absurd that the U.S. Treasury does not have the authority to share a list of inverted corporations with other government agencies. Congress can give them that authority.

It is up to us to make sure that Treasury can provide such a list. Congress also needs to strengthen the definition of an inverted corporation in the Tax Code. We should also consider inversions a deal breaker when we dole out Federal contracts.

Inverted corporations should not receive Federal contracts. They are bad actors, and we should not be rewarding them with lucrative contracts for moving their mailboxes to avoid paying their taxes in the United States.

That is why Congressman DOGGETT and I introduced the No Federal Contracts for Corporate Deserters Act, so that inverted companies will no longer be able to benefit from Federal contracts at the expense of companies who do pay their fair share.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. DELAURO. Instead of pursuing this unnecessary and misguided bill that would punish the IRS, but honestly makes very little impact on tax avoidance, what we should do is we need to go after those corporations. They game our system at the expense of the American taxpayer of up to almost \$11 billion.

Wouldn't every American like to have an opportunity to be able to say that they can send their kid to school, that they don't have to risk homelessness, and that they can provide their kid with an education instead of these corporations taking and ripping off the United States?

Let's get real on the floor of this House of Representatives. Do you want to do the right thing? Do you want to do what is morally responsible? Then, let us end these inverted corporations. Let them pay their fair share of taxes or tell them that it is illegal and that we can prosecute them.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me make a point that is being lost in the debate here. Current law actually requires that the IRS fire willfully noncompliant employees unless they have reasonable cause for not paying their taxes. That is current law.

Yet, in most cases—61 percent of cases, Mr. Speaker—the IRS fails to even document why delinquent employees were not penalized.

In addition, Mr. Speaker—and I think the American people would be stunned to hear this—there are instances of IRS employees who are delinquent in their taxes who have not only not been fired, but have received bonuses.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER).

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, I have listened to this debate today and the discussion about inversions. There is a broader point that is missed here.

Inversions aren't even an issue if America is the most attractive place to do business. Capital investment goes where it is welcome, not where it is unwelcome.

Why do you hear about inversions today? It is because we have an outdated Tax Code that significantly needs reform. It is because we have more rules and regulations than we

have ever had before that are stifling the economy to the tune of \$2 trillion annually. It is because we have a healthcare law in place that is killing the economy and job growth.

I can't tell you how many businesses I meet and go and visit all across the district that are sitting right at 49 employees. I wonder why. It is because of the healthcare law that is unworkable and destroying the American economy.

Again, capital and investment goes where it is welcome. How do we make that possible again? We reform our Tax Code so that this is the most attractive place to do business in the world. We get rid of the rules and regulations that make it so difficult to do business, all the rules and regulations coming out of labor, EPA, and everywhere else.

□ 1400

It is not just one, it is all of them. It is death by a thousand cuts. I can't tell you how many people I have talked to all across my district who say: DAVID, do you know what? Business is just no fun anymore.

And so they are plotting their exit strategy. They are not plotting the strategy of growth. They are plotting a strategy to exit and retire with what they have been able to achieve so far.

Here is the fundamental question of this bill. Are we going to be on the side of the American people? Or are we going to be on the side of the bureaucracy? Are we going to defend the EPA? Are we going to defend the IRS? Are we going to defend the Department of Labor? Are we going to defend all these rules and regulations that are killing the American economy? Or are we going to stand with the American people? That is the question before us today.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN).

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this week represents another missed opportunity for Congress to take action on the challenges facing the American people.

I understand that we are at this point because the majority can't pass a budget, they can't take action to combat the Zika virus, they can't help the people of Flint, Michigan, and they can't address the opiate crisis.

Unfortunately, your right wing and your extreme right wing can't seem to agree with each other. Instead of taking real action, we are going to vote today to prohibit the IRS from hiring any new employees until the Treasury certifies that none of the agency's existing employees have unpaid taxes.

This legislation is both unworkable and unnecessary. IRS employees have a tax compliance rate of over 99 percent, but a hiring freeze will hinder our ability to go after the real tax cheats in this country, and that is something we should all be able to agree on.

Instead of arbitrary changes to the IRS, Congress needs to take action to

make our Tax Code work for the American people instead of corporate interests, something that is conspicuously absent from your debate today.

Let's talk about how we can close loopholes that allow multinational corporations to pay nothing in Federal income taxes while working class Americans and small businesses pay their fair share.

Let's have a debate about the corporate tax dodgers who are able to shift their headquarters out of the country with a stroke of the pen, all while continuing to use our American infrastructure resources and customer base.

Let's talk about the thousands and thousands of tax-dodging corporations, including the 18,000 corporations that are registered to a single building in the Cayman Islands, a building full of post office boxes.

Today corporate profits are at an all-time high, but the share of Federal revenue from corporate taxes continues to shrink, dropping from 33 percent of the revenue in 1952 to less than 10 percent today.

While many corporations complain about the 35 percent statutory tax rate, the reality is the effective tax rate is much lower. In fact, a 2013 GAO report found that U.S. corporations pay an effective tax rate of just 12.6 percent. A recent study from Oxfam found that U.S. corporations are currently hiding \$1.4 trillion in profits from domestic taxation in tax havens like in Panama and the Cayman Islands.

While corporations dodge paying their fair share in taxes, the burden falls to the middle class and the small businesses in all of our districts, and that is just wrong. That is the reality of why we are here with these useless bills in consideration this week. Once again, the majority can't pass a budget well past the required deadline. Let's have a serious conversation about how we can adjust our Tax Code away from the corporate interests and in favor of working families.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, we owe it to ourselves and we owe it to the American taxpayers to do better. As a body, we can do better, much better.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage each and every one of my colleagues to vote "no," to vote "no" on this pointless and harmful piece of legislation. This bill is not worthy of the paper that it is written on. Vote "no" on this mean-spirited bill. It is not the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The Internal Revenue Service, the people who work there, most of them, like most Americans, pay their taxes. The Internal Revenue Service is charged, obviously, with administering the Tax Code, they are charged with collecting taxes.

I served a long time in the U.S. Attorney's Office, and I can tell you that

the Internal Revenue Service is probably the most intimidating Federal agency of the whole panoply of Federal agencies. The American people have a right to expect IRS employees, these IRS employees who are auditing taxpayers, collecting taxes, to abide by Federal tax laws.

Mr. Speaker, that is why there is a law on the books that says the IRS can fire an employee who is delinquent on their taxes. That is why I found it so amazing that when the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration went and did an investigation, they found that the IRS, the bureaucrats that run the IRS, in 61 percent of the cases where you had an IRS employee that was delinquent on their taxes, that they were not fired.

Further, it was shocking to find that there were cases when these employees who were delinquent on their taxes were not only not fired, but they received a bonus.

This is unacceptable and the American people deserve better. Allowing IRS employees to continue administering our tax laws when they themselves are in violation of that law undermines the trust of the American taxpayer.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yea," on my colleague, Mr. ROUZER's legislation, H.R. 1206. It is an important step forward in creating accountability and restoring the public's trust in the IRS.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia). All time for debate on the bill has expired.

The Chair understands that the amendment printed in House Report 114-502 will not be offered.

Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. KILDEE. I am opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Kildee moves to recommit the bill H.R. 1206 to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendments:

Page 3, after line 11, insert the following:

(d) SPECIAL RULE OF APPLICABILITY.—This section shall not apply for any year if the Federal tax delinquency rate for either chamber of Congress is greater than the Federal delinquency tax rate for the Department of Treasury, as published by the Internal Revenue Service in its Federal Employee/Retiree Delinquency Initiative (FERDI) for the prior year.

Page 3, line 12, strike "(D)" AND INSERT "(E)".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

This Republican bill is unnecessary because the IRS already, as has been said, has rules in place to terminate employees that are delinquent on their taxes. But it is important to note that out of the entire Federal Government, the employees of the Treasury Department have the lowest tax delinquency rate, a rate of 1.19 percent, one-fourth the delinquency rate for the U.S. House of Representatives, which is over 5 percent, and substantially lower than the delinquency rate for the general public, which is about 9 percent.

My motion would stop this bill from going into effect in any year that the Federal tax delinquency rate of either the House or the Senate is more than that of the Treasury Department. It is that simple.

You know what we are doing here. We are taking precious time on the floor of this House of Representatives to deal with a bill that will go nowhere, that has no impact, and is simply a talking point to continue to beat up the IRS.

Meanwhile, we have public health crises taking place. The Zika crisis, which endangers pregnant women, what have we done on the floor of the House to deal with that real crisis? What have you brought to the floor for us to vote on? Nothing.

And in my own hometown of Flint, Michigan, a city of 100,000 people who now for 2 years have not been able to drink water that comes from the tap because it has been poisoned by the terrible decisions of its State government, a community in crisis that has every right to expect that its government, its Federal Government, would come to the aid of these people, 100,000 people poisoned by their own State government in crisis, 9,000 children under the age of 6 who for 2 years have had lead going into their bodies. Lead is a neurotoxin.

Three people today in Michigan have been criminally charged for inflicting this terrible tragedy on my hometown, a city in America in crisis, facing a disaster. And what is the response of the United States Congress? What is the response of the Republican leadership?

Not 1 minute devoted to coming up with a solution for the people in Flint. Nothing. More messaging bills, more talk, no help for people in crisis, no effort to deal with the Zika crisis, and nothing, nothing for this great American city facing an existential threat and facing generations of impacts, unless the State, that so far has failed to step up, and the Federal Government act.

I sat through the hearings that have been held here in the United States

Congress and listened to Members, Democrats and Republicans, offer concern and offer sympathy. But when I introduced the Families of Flint Act, an effort that would share equally the responsibility for solving this terrible crisis between the State and Federal Government, rather than arguing about who was at fault—we all have a sense that the State of Michigan is at greatest fault—but rather than litigating that question, we seek to solve the problem.

Not only do I not yet have one Republican cosponsor who has been willing to step up, nearly 100 Democrats have, and I am sure there will be more. And I asked for help from my friends on the other side, but no time on this floor has been devoted to what is clearly one of the biggest crises facing this Nation—a great American city facing a threat, a literal threat to its existence, a threat to the health of those people, a threat to the future of those children.

One of the first votes I cast when I came here to the House of Representatives was to cast a vote to provide relief to the victims of Hurricane Sandy, not my district, not my community, not my region, but fellow Americans.

□ 1415

I was proud of that vote. I was proud that, at that moment, on that day, as a Member of the House of Representatives, I was first an American, and when other Americans were suffering, we were willing to help. Why not Flint? Why spend time on these meaningless political messaging bills when there are real problems in this country that need to be addressed?

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we put aside this nonsense and get to the work that the American people sent us here to do.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from North Carolina is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, the motion to recommit is an attempt by the minority to gloss over the IRS' failure to enforce its rules for IRS employee conduct and over its failure to protect taxpayer dollars.

Quite simply, this bill would require the IRS to report to Congress as to whether it has employees with seriously delinquent tax debt or to report why it cannot provide that information to Congress.

As I have said multiple times, the American people deserve and expect IRS employees to follow the same tax laws that they administer. That is an expectation of the IRS; so it is not surprising that the IRS would have a low rate of delinquency amongst its employees. IRS employees should know that it is current law. Current law actually requires that the IRS fire willfully tax-noncompliant employees unless they have reasonable cause for not paying their taxes. What is shocking is that, in most cases, Mr. Speaker, the

IRS leadership fails to even document why delinquent employees are not penalized, and 61 percent were not penalized for having delinquent taxes.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, is a critical step forward in restoring accountability and trust in the IRS. It is a trust that has been broken—a trust, I would argue, that doesn't exist between the people and the IRS.

I urge my colleagues to make the IRS accountable to the American people—to vote against the motion to recommit and to vote “yes” on H.R. 1206.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the order of the House of today, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1530

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia) at 3 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the order of the House of today, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

The motion to recommit on H.R. 1206;

Passage of H.R. 1206, if ordered; and

Passage of H.R. 4885.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

NO HIRES FOR THE DELINQUENT IRS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to recommit on the bill (H.R. 1206) to prohibit the hiring of additional Internal Revenue Service employees