

Here's What You Should Know About Presidential Tax Returns

The tax returns of all Americans are confidential, and publishing that information without the taxpayer's permission is a federal felony—even if that taxpayer is the president of the United States.

But, if you were to listen to the Democrats in Washington, D.C., and the compliant liberal mainstream media, you would think it's President Donald Trump who is breaking the law by not making his full returns public. There's just one problem with their complaint and subsequent argument: They don't hold up against historical fact.

The federal income tax as we have it today was first implemented in 1913 following the ratification of the 16th Amendment. There have now been 18 presidents since then, but only seven who have made theirs public, starting with Richard Nixon in 1973.

Perhaps one of the most infamous lines of his presidency was:

"People have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, I am not a crook."

Oftentimes, that quote is incorrectly attributed to the Watergate scandal, but in fact, he was responding to concerns over an audit of his personal income taxes. To allay public concerns, he released his returns dating back to the start of his presidency in 1969.

Now, Democrats and the liberal media would have you believe that every president since then has followed suit as a matter of transparency. But, that's not exactly true. Here are the

facts for each of the subsequent presidents:

- **Gerald Ford** – He did not make his returns public but rather provided summaries of them to the media.
- **Jimmy Carter** – He only made his returns public after he was elected, and only for the years he was in office, and only during his tenure in the White House: 1977, 1978 and 1979.
- **Ronald Reagan** – He only made the top two pages of his Form 1040 available for some of the years he was in office: 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986 and 1987.
- **George H.W. Bush** – Like Carter, he only made his returns public after he was elected, and only for the years he was in office, and only during his tenure in the White House: 1989, 1990 and 1991.
- **Bill Clinton** – Facing his own tax controversies, he was the first to provide his tax returns for the year in which he was elected; he also provided returns for all but his final year in office: 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999.
- **George W. Bush** – Following his immediate predecessor's example, he provided his tax returns for the year in which he was elected and for every year he was in the White House, except for his last: 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007.
- **Barack Obama** – he is the only president to provide tax returns prior to his presidency, as well as for every year (so far) of his two terms in office: 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- **Donald Trump** – under audit by the IRS at the time he ran for office, he refused to provide returns prior to his presidency, and has not yet been office long enough to file a return during it.

As you can see, Democrats and the liberal media are demanding Trump do something that only one other president has ever

done, and which he is not legally required to do, but have attempted to create the false impression that while he may not be breaking the law, he's somehow violating a presidential tradition. As the little history lesson above demonstrates, that's just not true.

Who wouldn't want to have a peek under the hood of a billionaire's finances? So, sure, a lot of Americans would like to see the president's past returns. But, as the outcome of the November election proved, not seeing them just isn't a deal-breaker for most voters.

As Rachel Maddow proved when she illegally obtained the top two pages of the president's 2005 return, Democrats and the liberal media would like to use any information they can glean from those returns to continue their campaign of delegitimizing his presidency and his administration. There is nothing untoward about refusing them that opportunity. {eoa}