

House Freedom Caucus Battling GOP Leadership Over IRS Commissioner

The House Freedom Caucus, frustrated by Republican leadership's stonewalling on its efforts to impeach IRS Commissioner John Koskinen, launched a new effort Wednesday night to circumnavigate Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and others in their party's leadership.

U.S. Reps. John Fleming (R-La.) and Tim Huelskamp (R-Kan.) introduced a new impeachment resolution. This resolution, however, is a "privileged resolution" and is a procedural move intended to force a floor vote on Koskinen's impeachment.

Freedom Caucus Chairman Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) applauded the move:

"I thank my colleagues John Fleming and Tim Huelskamp for their resolution to impeach IRS Commissioner John Koskinen," he said. "Mr. Koskinen has failed the American people through gross negligence, dereliction of duty and violating the public trust.

"With two subpoenas and three preservation orders in place, under Mr. Koskinen's watch, the IRS destroyed 422 backup tapes containing potentially 24,000 emails relevant to the IRS targeting of conservative organizations. This is unacceptable.

"The American people see two standards in this country: one for 'we the people' and another for the powerful and politically connected. No private citizen would be able to get away with what the IRS did, and neither should Mr. Koskinen."

Fleming also released a statement after introducing the resolution. In it, he said Americans are "sick and tired" of

the lack of accountability after “clear malfeasance by government officials.”

“This is part of a string of cover-ups, including Secretary Clinton’s emails and Fast and Furious,” he said. “In this case, the IRS commissioner presided over the erasing of 24,000 of Lois Lerner’s emails after they had been subpoenaed by Congress.

“He deliberately kept Congress and the American people in the dark, making materially false statements under oath. Koskinen needs to be held accountable and in this case that means impeachment. We can no longer wait.”

The House Freedom Caucus is pushing to get a vote on the resolution by the end of the week. Congress will recess on Friday for a very long summer break and won’t return to Washington until September.

If a vote happens—in light of the IRS targeting scandal—impeachment by the Republican-controlled House is very likely. The Senate would then have to convene a trial and vote for or against Koskinen’s removal from office.