

Judicial Watch Goes After IRS Emails (Again)

Judicial Watch has a lengthy history of exposing the Internal Revenue Service's abuses against it and other conservative political groups in what is now known as the "IRS Targeting Scandal."

For those who don't remember, here's a brief timeline:

- In June 2014, the IRS claimed to have "lost" responsive emails belonging to Lerner and other IRS officials.
- In July 2014, Judge Emmett Sullivan ordered the IRS to submit to the court a written declaration under oath about what happened to Lerner's "lost" emails. The sworn declarations proved to be less than forthcoming.
- In August 2014, Department of Justice attorneys for the IRS finally admitted Judicial Watch that Lerner's emails, indeed all government computer records, are backed up by the federal government in case of a government-wide catastrophe. The IRS' attorneys also disclosed that Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration was looking at several of these backup tapes.
- In November 2014, the IRS told the court it had failed to search any of the IRS standard computer systems for the "missing" emails of Lerner and other IRS officials.
- On February 26, 2015, TIGTA officials testified to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee that it had received 744 backup tapes containing emails sent and received by Lerner. This testimony showed that the IRS had falsely represented to both Congress, Judge Sullivan and Judicial Watch that Lerner's emails were irretrievably lost. The testimony also revealed that IRS officials responsible for responding to the document requests never asked for the backup tapes and that 424

backup tapes containing Lerner's emails had been destroyed during the pendency of Judicial Watch's lawsuit and Congressional investigations.

- In June 2015, Judicial Watch forced the IRS to admit in a court filing that it was in possession of 6,400 "newly discovered" Lerner emails. Judge Emmet Sullivan's ordered the IRS to provide answers on the status of the Lerner emails the IRS had previously declared lost. Judicial Watch raised questions about the IRS' handling of the missing emails issue in a court filing, demanding answers about Lerner's emails that had been recovered from the backup tapes.
- In July 2015, U.S District Court Judge Emmet Sullivan threatened to hold John Koskinen, the commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, and Justice Department attorneys in contempt of court after the IRS failed to produce status reports and recovered Lerner emails, as he had ordered on July 1, 2015.
- In September 2016, Obama IRS Commissioner Koskinen was nearly impeached for misleading Congress on Lerner's emails.

The government watchdog group launched a new chapter in this story by filing a new Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the IRS in order to obtain records relating to the agency's "preservation and/or retention" of the email records of officials who have left the agency since January 2010. It filed the complaint after the IRS failed to respond to a Nov. 15 FOIA request seeking:

- All records concerning the preservation and/or retention of email records generated by IRS officials and employees upon their departure from the IRS; and
- All records related to any changes, updates or modifications to IRS policies and procedures for the retention of email records generated by IRS officials and employees.

“Judicial Watch doesn’t trust the IRS, especially given its dishonesty about Lois Lerner’s emails,” the group’s president, Tom Fitton, said. “The IRS was used by Obama and his allies to suppress his political opposition in a way that helped guarantee his reelection. Now we need to make certain that the IRS is not continuing to try to cover its tracks by destroying records.”

In the video above, he discusses the targeting scandal and the new lawsuit. {eoa}