

JATP condemns IRS targeting of Tea Party and Patriot organizations.

May 21, 2013

The Jefferson Area Tea Party (JATP) strongly condemns the Internal Revenue Service for its admission that it inappropriately targeted conservative organizations, especially those that included the words "tea party" or "patriot" in their names, for further review of their tax-exempt applications during the 2012 election cycle.

We became aware of the problem early last year after learning the IRS sent a letter to Richmond Tea Party. In the letter were demands for substantial intrusive disclosures that are typically not required to process an application for 501 (c) (4) tax-exempt status. The atmosphere of intimidation created by this action caused the JATP to forgo filing its own 501 (c) (4) application, as was being discussed at that time. Instead, the JATP is in full compliance of tax law through other means.

What should alarm all citizens is this brazen and illegal use of overreaching power by the Federal Government to harass whomever it chooses. Today, it's the tea party movement. Tomorrow, it will be another organization or entity. And, very likely, yesterday it was someone else.

We risk having freedom of speech silenced. We risk having freedom of peaceful dissent squashed. The IRS should not be a punitive, political hammer pounded by an administration to bully critics who exercise their Constitutional rights.

The JATP believes simple apology from the IRS does nothing to guarantee this type of abuse will never happen again. Time has proven that initial reports of limited knowledge of the abuse was deceptive. Top officials in both the IRS and the White House have admitted to knowing more and knowing it earlier in the days following the initial apology. Only swift and meaningful public actions by the IRS and President Obama will suffice.

Everyone who was complicit in this unethical activity should immediately resign and a thorough independent investigation should follow.

Executive Board
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