

Preview Statement of Chairman Darrell Issa
“IRS Obstruction: Lois Lerner’s Missing E-mails”
June 23, 2014

The Committee meets today as we continue our efforts to get the full, unobstructed truth about the IRS’s targeting of Americans because of their political beliefs.

When IRS Commissioner John Koskinen appeared before this Committee in March, he promised that he would produce what this Committee had made its top priority: acquiring all of Lois Lerner’s e-mails. Commissioner Koskinen made these promises without any qualifications or limitations.

Here is what he said:



http://youtu.be/r8yA6_vOwtI

No one is above the law. Not the IRS. And certainly not you, Mr. Koskinen.

The Committee requested all of Lois Lerner’s e-mails over a year ago. And we subpoenaed the e-mails in August 2013 and again in February 2014. Transparency clearly did not compel the IRS to tell the truth about Lois Lerner’s lost e-mails. You worked to cover up the fact they were missing and only came forward to fess up on a Friday afternoon after you had been caught red-handed.

I’m struck that your acknowledgement of missing Lois Lerner e-mails came just two weeks after we had found some of them at the Justice Department. You didn’t even give this Committee the courtesy of a direct communication about missing e-mails after your false testimony. Instead, your staff shared a communication you made to a Senate Committee controlled by the President’s party.

In your previous testimony, you had said it might take years to deliver all these e-mails. Did you hope you could run out the clock on this scandal? Perhaps you thought Congress would never realize there were missing e-mails until we found them at the Justice Department?

Commissioner Koskinen, I called you to testify tonight because the American people deserve answers about what happened to Lois Lerner’s e-mails and why the IRS hid this for over a year. I subpoenaed you to appear tonight because I am tired of game-playing in response to congressional oversight.

Commissioner Koskinen, you are the President's hand-picked man to restore trust and accountability at the IRS. You testified under oath in March that you would produce all of Lois Lerner's e-mails subpoenaed by this Committee. You gave your commitment to producing all those e-mails to this Committee. You gave your word, sir. The American people have no trust in the IRS, and for good reason. It is hard to have trust in an agency that behaves like the IRS – an agency that has one set of rules for the taxpayer and another set of rules for itself.

Commissioner Koskinen, you may say that the IRS has produced thousands of documents. And the Committee certainly appreciates that. But, of course, it doesn't matter how large a production you make if the IRS omits the most critical documents. I would remind you that your promise under oath was not a promise to produce a majority or a portion of Lois Lerner's e-mails. You promised to produce them all.

Commissioner Koskinen, you personally did not cause the targeting. You personally did not destroy the e-mails. But by your actions and your deception, you now own this scandal. I hope you will give full answers to these pressing questions – this includes disclosure of other truths the IRS is hiding. And, most of all, I hope that you will finally accept responsibility and apologize for the actions of the agency – actions that have cost the American people their trust in the IRS.