

Opening Statement of Chairman Jim Jordan

July 23, 2014

The Subcommittee meets today to continue its oversight of the Internal Revenue Service and its targeting of conservative tax-exempt applicants.

We welcome back our witness, IRS Commissioner John Koskinen.

Commissioner Koskinen seems to have a difficult time telling the full truth. First, we were promised that the IRS would produce all of Lois Lerner's emails. Then, we learned that some of Ms. Lerner's emails had been destroyed and there was absolutely no way he could produce all of Ms. Lerner's emails to Congress.

Second, we were told that the IRS had confirmed that all back-up tapes with Lois Lerner's e-mails had been destroyed. Then, we learned last week from IRS attorney Thomas Kane that a back-up tape may in fact exist.

Third, we were told that there was one hard drive crash – Lois Lerner's. Then, the Ways and Means Committee disclosed that there were 7 or 8 total crashes, and now we learned from Mr. Kane that there are as many as 20.

Fourth, we were told that the IRS found out in April 2014 that Ms. Lerner's emails were lost.

But then we learned from Mr. Kane that the IRS knew on February 4, 2014, about Ms. Lerner's hard drive crash and that it found out days later that the hard drive had been recycled and its contents were unrecoverable. This is why we continue to have hearings.

We have convened this hearing because today – over a month after the IRS first told Congress that it had lost Lois Lerner's emails – there are *still* unanswered questions.

There are still unanswered questions about why the IRS delayed for several months in notifying Congress, the Justice Department, and the American people about the problems with Ms. Lerner's emails.

Deputy Attorney General Cole told us last week that the Justice Department learned of the missing Lois Lerner emails from press accounts in the media. Imagine that. This is the highest profile investigation in years and the Justice Department learns through media reports that an untold number of emails are simply gone.

Deputy Attorney General Cole said he would have liked to know about the emails earlier, and he announced that the Justice Department was investigating why Commissioner Koskinen failed to disclose the missing emails in a timely manner. The same goes for us. We would have liked to know too.

But rather than the IRS coming to Congress and informing us what it knew when it knew it, the IRS waited four

months. The IRS only came forward to finally acknowledge the missing e-mails when it had no choice. And it disclosed the news the only way it knows how – by burying the information deep on page 7 of enclosure 3 to a Friday afternoon letter to the Senate.

Information obtained by the Committee in the last few days provides more questions than answers about the missing emails. But remember, this isn't information the IRS is offering up willingly. It has taken almost a month for the IRS to finally start coming clean, and it has taken subpoenas to get people to talk.

The American people have this information only because the Committee has been asking questions. And that is why Commissioner Koskinen is here today. He is the President's handpicked man to restore trust in the IRS.

Until we know all the facts, until we clear up all the confusion and all the misstatements about Lois Lerner's missing emails, the Committee will continue to press for the truth. That is the mission of the Oversight Committee and that is why we meet here today.