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Wyden Opposes Billy Long IRS Nomination in Committee Vote *As Prepared for Delivery*

Over the last several years, I have heard every member of this committee, Democrat and Republican, talk about the importance of independence and neutrality at the IRS. If you genuinely believe in those priorities, you cannot vote for Billy Long's nomination for IRS commissioner.

Here's what we know about former Congressman Long.

He wasn't on the Ways and Means Committee. He didn't write any original tax legislation in 12 years in Congress.

He has no tax policy experience, but he has lots of tax fraud experience.

When he left office, he threw in with a bunch of fly-by-night operators selling tax deals that were sketchy at best.

He got paid to promote fake "tribal tax credits" by a company called White River Energy.

After White River's scheme got exposed as a fraud in a Bloomberg report in mid-December, the company's CFO reassured panicky investors that everything would work out -- they'd soon have friends at the IRS under Trump to take the heat off. He said he'd be able to use his contacts to obtain favors and special private rulings. We've got it on tape.

The CFO and several other White River employees then started making big-dollar donations to Congressman Long's Senate campaign, which had been mothballed all the way back in 2022. More than \$165,000 came into the campaign after Trump announced Long's nomination. Much of it was from people affiliated with White River. Long pocketed \$130,000 of that himself. He has repeatedly been asked to explain his role in this scheme. What did he know about these fake tax credits? Who did he talk to about them? Why did White River employees think it was a good idea to donate to his dormant campaign? He didn't answer any of those questions.

Finance Committee investigators obtained confirmation from the IRS that these tribal tax credits Congressman Long helped sell were indeed fake and that promoters could face prosecution.

Staff read that confirmation aloud to Congressman Long last month. He became outraged, and he demanded to know who at the IRS had provided that information to the Finance Committee. He said he'd find out immediately if he gets confirmed.

If his involvement in that one tax scam isn't enough, there's more.

He was slinging Employee Retention Tax Credits long after they had technically expired -- when a well-meaning rescue program for small businesses had been overrun by fraudsters. Congressman Long is on tape saying that "everybody qualifies" for the ERTC. That's a lie. He bragged about getting money for a funeral home even though the pandemic was a boom time for that kind of business due to the number of Americans dying of Covid-19. Finance Committee investigators obtained another recording, this time of an executive at a firm called Appreciation Financial that sold these scam-ridden tax credits.

He said he made Congressman Long his guest to the inauguration earlier this year. He said they had dinner and spent a few nights together. His exact quote on the subject of IRS enforcement around employee retention credits is this:

"We could be worried about promoter audits now but we don't have to worry about any of that now with Billy coming in."

Echoing the executive at White River, this second tax credit promoter said he'd been promised special favors by Congressman Long himself.

Again, we have it on tape.

I haven't even mentioned Congressman Long's multiple letters urging politically-motivated attacks against nonprofit organizations. That's the opposite of neutrality and independence.

The fact is the scandals here are too big to ignore.

I know for a fact that there will be more troubling information that comes to light.

It is not too late for us to tell the Trump administration to go back and find somebody who isn't surrounded by scandal. Who has experience managing a large organization. Who has real experience with tax policy.

We need an independent IRS now more than ever. For that reason I will oppose the Long nomination and I urge all my colleagues to do the same.

A web version of this statement is [here](#).

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