Martine Jaffré
[redacted]
Switzerland
[redacted]

Hatch, Wyden Launch New Effort to Seek Input on Bipartisan Tax Reform

Individual Income Tax for citizens living abroad

Dear Sir or Madam,

My parents are French and I gained American citizenship by chance as I was born in the United States in 1969. I left at the age of three to return only once at the age of 15 for a short vacation.

I spent my entire life in Europe with no contact to the United States. When I became aware of possible tax obligations, I asked the Embassy in Bern for more information. That was in 2005 when I had my passport renewed. Since I am a secretary and do not earn much, I was told there was no need to file as it would have been a waste of time and effort for the IRS, and I would anyhow benefit of a tax exclusion. I did not bother to inquire further.

Times have changed. I have the feeling that the American administration has become so costly; it is on a worldwide crusade to refill the coffers. Thanks to Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), I have become a criminal overnight.

Now a specialist accountant helps me fill in the IRS forms because I would not know where to start. This procedure will cost me money but I have no other solution.

I find rather unfair that the IRS does not recognize that I have 3 children just because they are not American. I hope the IRS will not request information about my husband's financial records, as he is not American. I also find it unfair the way Americans are now treated by the banks in Switzerland. Some banks are getting rid of their US clients. It is too complicated for them and too risky vis-à-vis US authorities. I will have trouble asking for a loan for instance. FACTA has turned US citizens living abroad into "hot potatoes": nobody wants them!

The easiest solution for me will be to relinquish my citizenship. I do not necessarily want to but if it makes my life easier, I might decide to do so. When I was a child, my father would tell me "You should be proud to be American". I was. Now I hide it as if it were something to be ashamed of. Perhaps I should not have become a US citizen in first place!

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Martine Jaffré
Bavois, Switzerland.