April 15th, 2015

Individual and International Income Tax Reform – Americans Living Abroad

Dear Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch and Ranking Member Ron Wyden,

I have been studying and working abroad for close to 5 years now, and I saw recently on the American Citizens Abroad website, your call for opinions on tax reform for American citizens living abroad. I wanted to weigh in and share some of the difficulties I have had in navigating and filing my 2014 taxes.

My case is quite simple with really only foreign earned income being the main share of my tax declaration. However, I have spent many hours trying with difficulty to read and understand the many tax forms and file my return. A simple and streamlined, preferably online, way to declare and then exclude my foreign earned income would really help ease the burden of double reporting and taxation and this would really be appreciated by American citizens living abroad.

I also supporting moving towards a Residence based taxation policy instead of a Citizenship based policy, as long as the code includes the closing of loopholes for those who move abroad specifically to avoid paying their fair share of US taxes.

The tax code is only growing more complex and it will be a challenge to simplify, and I think it is also really very shameful that companies like Intuit (owners of TurboTax) can lobby to fight tax reform bills. These companies like Intuit have a real profit from selling a software solution to the problem that they fight to keep complicated and to keep from being solved. I hope that you will consider more the voice citizens writing to you, that you represent, instead of the lobbyists of companies working to fight tax reform.

The hours of stress and frustration spent doing taxes make people cynical about and uninterested in the tax and political process. I urge you to simplify the tax code and filing process for Americans, as well as telling people the many great things that taxes pay for in our society. This would go a long way to changing the public opinions on taxes, increasing the number of people who file and pay taxes, and get people more involved in the political process.

I appreciate your efforts in soliciting opinions and ideas for tax reform, and I wish you luck in the task of making the tax code simpler and fairer for the American people.

Sincerely,



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