

NEWS

Report: IRS In Bed With Left-Wing Atheist Group On Church Monitoring



Image Credit: The Federalist

"Evidence that the IRS has authorized procedures and 'signature authority' to resume initiating church tax investigations and examinations."

[James Beattie](#) April 21, 2015 at 10:59am

Two conservative watchdog organizations sued the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) earlier this month, alleging a connection between the IRS and an atheist organization.

As [National Review](#) reported Monday, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and Judicial Watch sued the IRS on April 9 to force the release of documents pertaining to churches out of favor with the agency after it refused to comply with a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

Commentator Quin Hillyer explained the story:

The controversy arose when [the Freedom From Religion Foundation] sued the IRS to force it to monitor churches (the IRS apparently monitored at least 99 churches) for alleged lack of compliance with rules against express electioneering by nonprofit organizations.

As executive agencies under Barack Obama so often have done, the IRS reached a friendly settlement to dismiss the suit. FFRF was so pleased with the settlement that it claimed, in a headline: "Anti-church electioneering victory is final." FFRF described how it achieved its "major victory"

The [FFRF complained in 2012](#) that Bishop Robert Morlino of the Diocese of Madison, Wis., sent out a letter to his flock during election season.

It said that "no Catholic in good conscience" should vote for any candidates who are "pro-choice," support same-sex marriage, or "who would promote laws that would infringe upon our religious liberties and freedom of conscience." No specific candidates were mentioned in Bishop Morlino's letter.

The FFRF also pleaded with the IRS to [sanction Billy Graham's organization](#) for their "vote biblical" campaign, which focused on the same three issues.

They eventually dropped the suit, giving a staggering statement: “FFRF agreed to voluntarily dismiss its closely watched federal lawsuit against the IRS after being given evidence that the IRS has authorized procedures and ‘signature authority’ to resume initiating church tax investigations and examinations.”

After the ADF, on behalf of these churches, submitted a FOIA request to see this “evidence,” an IRS tax law specialist replied on August 28, 2014, acknowledging the deadline — August 27, 2014 — passed one day before.

The specialist had a one time, ten-day extension to file — by September 11, 2014 — “after which you can file suit.” Still, the specialist said she did not expect “to locate and consider release of the requested records by Sept. 11, 2014, [so] we have extended the response date to Sept. 29, 2014 when we believe we can provide a final response.”

Dates were backed up to September 29, November 26, and March 31 without any success. Judicial Watch’s president, Tom Fitton, slammed the IRS in a press release:

For two years, the administration has been hiding information on the IRS’s targeting of Obama’s political opponents. It is certainly in the public’s interest to know what the new IRS guidelines are for investigating a basic First Amendment right.

Do you think the IRS is biased? Share your thoughts in the comments!

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