

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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July 3, 2019

Commissioner Charles Rettig
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue N.W
RM 3000
Washington, DC 20224

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing on behalf of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA) – the nation's largest non-partisan professional association, representing more than 26,000 active and retired federal law enforcement officers from every federal law enforcement agency – including the (CI) Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

FLEOA serves its membership in a variety of ways, from providing highly qualified attorneys to represent officers/agents during administrative or legal actions to educating and informing Congress about impactful law enforcement issues. To help fulfill our mission, FLEOA maintains a robust legislative affairs/outreach team who regularly interacts with staffers and legislators alike on issues that impact law enforcement. Over the last several years, a number of these issues have been directly related to CI agent. With that said, we wanted to share these experiences in hopes that this information would be used to help remedy a very concerning state of affairs for CI with Congress.

Over the last three years, FLEOA has engaged in numerous meetings with Congressional members regarding CI's operational effectiveness and resource issues. Overwhelmingly, senior staffers and legislators support the work and mission of CI regardless of political affiliation or positions on other IRS issues. Unfortunately, due to a lack of CI personnel acting as legislative affairs officers in Congress, there is not only a lack of knowledge regarding CI's law enforcement mission but, more alarmingly, a lack of knowledge regarding their existence as a law enforcement agency. On countless occasions, legislative staffers who work for committees that have jurisdiction over IRS operations, funding, or both, were completely unaware of CI's existence. During one conversation with a prominent Congressman's district director and tax legislative aid we discussed CI's significant effort to thwart Stolen Identity Refund Fraud (SIRF). Although both had significant dealings with IRS on SIRF, neither knew there was a distinct division within IRS that did this work. They effectively believed the IRS would hand these cases off to the FBI who would make arrests, execute search warrants, and work with the local U.S Attorney's Office to ensure a successful prosecution. Unfortunately, this type of conversation was a regular occurrence whenever we discussed CI with Congress.

In our discussions with FLEOA CI members, which includes both active duty and retired senior leaders from CI, members described a much better time for CI in Congress. Following the Reform & Restructuring Act of 1998 (RRA 1998), CI began the development of a robust communications effort that included legislative affairs officers placed strategically on various congressional committees. The role of these legislative affairs officers was to ensure CI was able to educate and inform staffers and legislators on CI operations. This concept of placing special agents on Congressional staffs and committees as legislative affairs officers was not new at the time CI began

their program in the early 2000s, every other major federal law enforcement agency (FBI, U.S Customs a.k.a. HSI, DEA, USSS and ATF) had established programs that continue to the current day. The focus of these special agent/legislative affairs officers is to quickly dispel any questions or concerns regarding agency operations and to educate the ever-changing group of congressional staffers tasked with writing bills and setting Congressional agendas that could, if not properly informed, negatively impact an agency's law enforcement operations.

Unfortunately, CI's legislative affairs program was eliminated sometime in the mid-2000s, to the dismay of several senior staffers we spoke to in Congress who praised these special agents/legislative affairs officers work. When we asked FLEOA CI members with specific knowledge of this program why it ended, their response was two-fold. First, CI's presence in Congress resulted in significant interest in CI's work and operations which sometimes overshadowed their interest in the IRS. Second, CI was the only IRS division who had a legislative affairs program and IRS leadership at the time was no longer supportive of allowing CI to operate outside the IRS legislative affairs office framework.

Hopefully these shared experiences help you and IRS leadership on your path to building a better and more transparent IRS. If you or any members of your staff would like to discuss these or other CI specific issues with us please don't hesitate to contact me (ncatura@fleoa.org) or FLEOA Executive Director Patrick O'Carroll (p.ocarroll@fleoa.org)

Sincerely,

Nathan R. Catura

Nathan R. Catura
National President
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association