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"America's Got Talent," than there is of ever reaching a consensus on the IRS' handling of the applications for tax-exempt status made by right-leaning political groups.

Ken Berry • Sep. 09, 2014



There's a better chance of Democrats and Republicans agreeing to the winner in "America's Got Talent," than there is of ever reaching a consensus on the IRS' handling of the applications for tax-exempt status made by right-leaning political groups.

In a new report, a Democratic-controlled Senate subcommittee investigating the shenanigans behind the "Tea Party scandal" that erupted last year harshly criticized the IRS for using inappropriate criteria in targeting political groups, but declared

that there was no evidence of political bias. In fact, the majority concluded that

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Levin stressed that the lack of political bias doesn't excuse the IRS' actions. "TIGTA's audit findings, which found that the IRS used inappropriate selection criteria for conservative groups and subjected them to intrusive questions and improper delays, told only half the story, because it left out that the IRS mistreated liberal groups in the same way, and its key finding that the IRS' actions were not politically motivated," he said in a prepared statement.

TIGTA head Russell George promptly leaped to his office's defense after the subcommittee's report was released. "I firmly stand behind the audit report that we issued last year showing the inappropriate treatment of applicants for 501 (c) (4) status, for which the IRS apologized," *USA Today* quoted George as saying.

Republicans lined up behind George and continue to maintain that the IRS singled out conservative political groups. The dissenting report issued by subcommittee member and former presidential candidate John McCain (R-AZ) noted that 83% of the targeted groups are conservative. McCain also pointed out that Lois Lerner, former director of the Tax-Exempt division, has refused to testify in Congressional hearings and an undisclosed number of her e-mails appear to be missing in action.

"While some liberal groups were examined by the IRS from May 2010 to May 2012, there were far fewer such groups, they were systematically separate from the review of conservative groups, their questioning was far less intrusive, and, in some cases, the liberal groups were affiliates of specific organizations like ACORN that had behaved illegally in the past and could reasonably expect additional scrutiny. The inclusion of a scant few liberal groups by the IRS does not bear comparison to the targeting of conservative groups," said McCain in the minority report.

It appears that political divide will continue to permeate these investigations. To

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