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IRS is Assessing Security for Offices, Staff After Political Attacks

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The Internal Revenue Service is reviewing security for its employees and offices after a wave of political attacks from Republican lawmakers and right-wing groups.

The IRS, which has about 600 facilities nationwide, has become a target of GOP lawmakers in recent weeks, after President Joe Biden signed a new spending law that law includes \$80 billion for the agency to enhance tax enforcement and upgrade its computer systems.

Threats against the agency increased after Republicans, including House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Senator Chuck Grassley, have falsely claimed that the additional funding would lead to a massive increase in the number of armed IRS agents and that enhanced enforcement would be aimed at middle-income taxpayers.

“We are conducting a comprehensive review of existing safety and security measures,” IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig said in a memo to employees on Tuesday. “This includes conducting risk assessments based on data-driven decisions given the current environment and monitoring perimeter security, designations of restricted areas, exterior lighting, security around entrances to our facilities and other various protections.”

The IRS is also monitoring threat intelligence and has increased engagement with the Department of Homeland Security, local law enforcement agencies and the inspector general that oversees the agency, said Rettig, who was appointed by former President Donald Trump as the top IRS official in 2018. The plan was reported earlier by the Washington Post.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said that the additional funding for audits will be used to increase enforcement of households making at least \$400,000 a year and large corporations. Money will also be spent on technology upgrades and improving customer service.

“For me this is personal. I’ll continue to make every effort to dispel any lingering misperceptions about our work,” Rettig said in the memo. “And I will continue to advocate for your safety in every venue where I have an audience.”

The announcement of the security review comes after a major union representing IRS employees asked for the agency to increase measures to protect workers, particularly those who work in public-facing roles.

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