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Rep. Issa: IRS Scandal Is 'Like Watergate, A Pesky Problem... That Won't Go Away'

By Lauretta Brown
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Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) compared the ongoing IRS scandal to Watergate, calling it a “pesky problem” for the Obama administration that “won’t go away” until “all the facts are known.”

“Do you think you’ll be able to hold the IRS accountable for their [allegedly] criminal behavior and if so, how will their actions be brought to light given their evasion and the mainstream media’s attitude towards the scandal?” CNSNews.com asked Issa, who is chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. which is investigating the scandal.

“The IRS scandal, like Watergate, is a pesky problem for the administration that won’t go away,” he replied. “They’re going to have to deal with it until all the facts are known and as long as we continue having additional documents and additional recognition come out, they’re going to deal with it.”

“We’re on our third commissioner since the scandal broke,” Issa pointed out. “He’s [John Koskinen] going to be in front of our committee on Wednesday and again, he’s not going to like the questions that are asked ‘cause he doesn’t have good answers for them and we have some additional information about ongoing lack of tracing of abuses that may be at the IRS.”

The IRS’s Office of Exempt Organizations Unit is under investigation by the committee for delaying approval of the tax-exemption applications of Tea Party and other conservative groups in 2010 and 2011.

The Oversight Committee has been requesting for the last year that the IRS turn over e-mails and other documents and communications related to the investigation. But the IRS claims that emails sent by Lois Lerner, the former director of the Office of Exempt Organizations Unit, between January 2009 and April 2011 were lost when her computer crashed in early 2011.

Rep. Issa spoke to CNSNews.com on the IRS scandal following his remarks at the Cato Institute, where he expressed concern about the Department of Justice's Operation

Choke Point, an effort by DOJ and federal bank regulators to "limit access to the bank payments system by various businesses."

The operation was initially targeted at small-dollar non-bank lenders, but was expanded to include legal businesses such as "gun dealers and porn stars."

Issa told those at the event that Operation Choke Point sets a troubling precedent. "Where do you stop?" he asked. "If you empower the government to pick winners and losers within lawful enterprise, there is no place for you to stop."