

Trump's Federal Reserve pick owes \$75,000 in taxes, US government alleges

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Stephen Moore disputes the IRS claim and says he is 'eager to reach an agreement' but has been frustrated by bureaucracy

Stephen Moore, the conservative economics commentator chosen by Donald Trump for a seat on the Federal Reserve board, is being pursued by the US government for \$75,000 in taxes that it alleges he owes.

A claim for the debt was filed against Moore by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in January last year at the circuit court in Montgomery county, Maryland, where Moore has a home.

Court records state that Moore, a former Trump presidential campaign adviser, owes the US \$75,328 for taxes incurred in 2014. A court clerk confirmed the claim filed by the IRS had not yet been satisfied by Moore.

In a statement, Moore said he disputed the IRS claim. He said he was "eager to reach an agreement" with authorities but had been frustrated by bureaucracy at the revenue service.

"For several years I have been working through a dispute with the IRS, attempting to be returned what my attorneys and accountant believe were tax overpayments of tens of thousands of dollars," Moore said.

Trump's selection of Moore for an influential role at the world's most powerful central bank has attracted sharp criticism. The president has said Moore, who must be confirmed by the US Senate, is "a very respected economist".

But Greg Mankiw, an economics professor at Harvard University who was a senior economic adviser to former president George W Bush, has said Moore "does not have the intellectual gravitas" for the job and urged senators to reject him.

He has been defended by Republicans including Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska, who on Monday dismissed Moore's critics as "card-carrying members of the Beltway establishment".

Moore, 59, is a fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a prominent conservative thinktank in Washington. He was formerly an adviser to the joint economic committee of the US Congress and to former president Ronald Reagan's privatization commission. He previously worked for other Washington thinktanks such as the Club For Growth and the Cato Institute, and was a writer on economics at the Wall Street Journal.

Moore has long been a strident advocate for reducing taxes and in 2017 hailed Trump's tax cut as "death to Democrats".

Trump is said to value Moore's championing of his policies on television news channels. Moore last year published a celebratory book, *Trumponomics*, with the veteran economist Arthur Laffer, a former adviser to Reagan.

The Guardian reported last week that Moore created a controversial political group during the 2008 presidential election campaign with his friend Paul Erickson, a veteran Republican operative. Erickson has been indicted on federal charges of money laundering and tax fraud and his girlfriend, Maria Butina, pleaded guilty to working as a Russian agent.

Moore said in his statement on Wednesday: "It is an honor to have the opportunity to serve my country with distinction by being nominated for the Federal Reserve board and I am ready to move forward with confirmation."