

19 Conservative Groups Support H.R. 3641, the “Free File Permanency Act of 2017”

September 8, 2017

The Honorable Peter Roskam
United States House of Representatives
2246 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Roskam:

On behalf of the undersigned conservative, free market organizations we write in support of H.R. 3641, the “Free File Permanency Act of 2017.”

By making the Free File tax preparation program permanent, this legislation guarantees that millions of taxpayers across the country will continue to have access to quality, free, and efficient online tax preparation and electronic filing services.

Since its inception in 2008, Free File – which was created as a public-private partnership between software companies and the IRS – has served more than 50 million taxpayers and saved \$1.3 billion in preparation costs.

Today, the tax code is more than 75,000 pages long and contains more than 2.4 million words. This complexity forces American families and businesses to spend more than 8.9 billion hours and \$400 billion complying with the code every year. Against this complexity, it is difficult or impossible for most taxpayers to file a tax return without assistance.

For many individuals and families, Free File is the solution to navigating tax complexity. The program offers roughly 70 percent of taxpayer’s access to electronic filing software provided by leading private companies free of charge. In 2016, any taxpayer with less than \$64,000 in adjusted gross income qualified for the program.

The IRS estimates that electronically filing tax returns through the Free File program saves the federal government approximately \$13 Million each year. In addition, the program ensures that taxpayers are protected with the right to privacy and access to strict cybersecurity measures to prevent fraud.

Free File is a proven success in addressing tax complexity, and it is a vastly superior alternative to government controlled tax preparation, such as the system proposed by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) in S. 912, the misnamed Tax Filing Simplification Act of 2017.

Giving the federal government control over tax preparation would be a disaster. This would involve giving the IRS more taxpayer dollars and new responsibilities at a time when the agency already struggles to complete



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existing responsibilities and has misused finite resources on numerous occasions.

Government-run tax preparation would also represent a conflict of interest and could undermine the rights of taxpayers. Under a system of government-run tax preparation, the IRS would have an incentive to overcharge or withhold information from taxpayers, while few taxpayers would know whether they were paying the correct amount of taxes.

Given the success of the Free File program and the failure of the IRS to manage its own responsibilities, the best path forward should be making Free File permanent. Since its inception, Free File has been a proven success story in helping American families comply with the absurdly complex tax code. As such, we urge all members of Congress to support your important legislation.

Sincerely,

Grover Norquist
President, Americans for Tax Reform

Phil Kerpen
President, American Commitment

Daniel Schnieder
Executive Director, American Conservative Union

Dan Weber
CEO, Association of Mature American Citizens

Norm Singleton
President, Campaign for Liberty

Bob Carlstrom
President, The Carlstrom Group

Jeffrey Mazzella
President, Center for Individual Freedom

Tom Schatz
President, Council for Citizens Against Government Waste

Katie McAuliffe
Executive Director, Digital Liberty

George Landrith
President, Frontiers of Freedom



Andrew Langer
President, Institute for Liberty

Tom Giovanetti
President, Institute for Policy Innovation

Seton Motley
President, Less Government

Colin Hanna
President, Let Freedom Ring

Charles Sauer
President, Market Institute

Pete Sepp
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Karen Kerrigan
President & CEO, Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council

David Williams
President, Taxpayers Protection Alliance

Berin Szoka
President, Tech Freedom

