

# 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  
*President, National Taxpayers Union*

Karen Kerrigan  
*President & CEO, Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council*

David Williams  
*President, Taxpayers Protection Alliance*

Berin Szoka  
*President, Tech Freedom*

