



The Honorable Sam Johnson
United States House of Representatives

July 16, 2015

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I write to you today to thank you for introducing HR 3086. The bill would stop the IRS from collecting taxes on money given to individuals who have been wrongfully incarcerated. It is inevitable that our justice system will imprison innocent individuals in rare instances; in these cases, these persons have the right to be made whole without the tax man getting a cut. I encourage your colleagues to back your proposal in the strongest terms.

As forensic technology develops, more and more individuals are being found innocent who would otherwise live behind bars for crimes they did not commit. Since 2000, 263 people have been found innocent using new DNA techniques. Though they were already made to pay a price regardless of their innocence, they are made to pay an additional price on the reparations they receive to the same government that locked them away by mistake.

This issue has a broad base of support for its common-sense approach to an important matter. Over half of all states now offer some sort of compensation or restitution for the wrongfully convicted. States as diverse as Texas and New York, as well as the federal government have compensation in some form.

Moreover, the proposed reforms bolster the credibility of our justice system. If wrongful convictions can be expected to happen, then subsequent recompense should also be expected. The nation does itself no favors by this tax penalty in the court of public opinion.

Closing the recompense tax problem should be at the forefront of all legislators concerned with fair taxation and legal justice. No innocent person should have to spend time in prison only to find a tax bill in the mail for their rightful compensation. I ask that your colleagues in the House and Senate take up this essential legislation.

Sincerely,

Grover G. Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform

722 12th Street N.W.

Fourth Floor

Washington, D.C.

20005

T: (202) 785-0266

F: (202) 785-0261

www.atr.org