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Audit the IRS

Washington, D.C. – Today, **Jenny Beth Martin, Co-Founder and CEO of Tea Party Patriots**, the nation's largest tea party organization, was joined by 20 tea party groups from around America who have been targeted by the IRS as well as more than a dozen Members of Congress at a press conference on Capitol Hill. Martin issued the following statement at the press conference:

"The IRS' veneer of impartiality is shattered and the IRS must be audited. Tea Party Patriots insists on an independent, transparent, outside, and thorough investigation because the IRS cannot be trusted to self-police and the Justice Department is also suffering from extreme lack of credibility at this moment.

"Tea Party groups have been waiting for years for the IRS to treat us fairly and equally. Instead, they have singled us out for discrimination and persecution. Government agents have used the IRS as a weapon to silence speech, harass innocent Americans, and perhaps sway elections. It took over a year to get answers from the Inspector General's investigation, which was sparked when Landmark Legal Foundation asked questions in March of 2012.

"The answers in this week's report only serve to raise even more questions. For instance, who at the IRS began targeting groups? Why were we targeted but groups with "progress" in their name were not? When did this discrimination begin? We still do not have the answers to these most basic questions. All Tea Party Patriots groups have seen from the IRS for the last year and a half are corrosive and deceitful cover ups and contradictions. In the past week, those lies are coming out for the media and the public to see.

"The damage the IRS caused may be immeasurable. There are concrete monetary damages. There are individuals like Justin Binik-Thomas who the IRS targeted by name. There are groups of volunteers who gave up on collectively petitioning their government and others who never attempted to apply to tax exempt status because they saw what other citizens endured. There are groups like Tea Party Patriots who to this day the IRS is still stringing along.

"And, how do we measure the impact of a public who is rapidly losing faith in the IRS and its ability to impartially apply the law in a fair and equal manner to all citizens?

"It is easy to dismiss theoretical, faceless groups. The pain and suffering that government agents inflicted upon our fellow citizens is real and profound. These are Americans who simply care enough about our country to become actively engaged in our representative democracy.

"Tea Party Patriots brought as many of these groups to DC as time would allow. Today, we stand with patriots like Joe Dugan and Gerri McDaniel from Myrtle Beach Tea Party. They believe they lost 100 members as a result of the overbearing nature of the IRS' inquisition. They still have not received final word from the IRS.

"Julia Hodges from Mississippi Tea Party withdrew their group's application after months of delay tactics designed to intimidate Americans.

“The IRS questioned Marion Bower and her group Americans Patriots Against Government Excess asking for a list of every book their book club read and a book report on each of these books. A government this intrusive is clearly excessive.

“We also join all those across the country who have felt abused or threatened by the IRS. Tea Party Patriots has not backed down and will continue to fight. If you want start a tea party, join us and we will help you and fight with you. We started our organization to fight an out of control government who is addicted to power. We will not allow the IRS or any branch or agency of the government to take away our First Amendment rights or any of our Constitutional rights.

“The IRS’ thuggish, discriminatory, abusive schemes and tactics perfectly illustrate why we must have a government that is constitutionally limited - meaning - we must have a government small enough to manage and execute its duties competently and with integrity, and most importantly, a government we the people can trust. That is how a constitutionally limited government operates, and it’s what Tea Party Patriots has fought for over the last four years.”

Tea Party Patriots *is a national grassroots coalition with more than 3,400 locally organized chapters and more than 15 million supporters nationwide. Tea Party Patriots is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting the principles of fiscal responsibility, constitutionally limited government, and free markets. Visit Tea Party Patriots online at www.TeaPartyPatriots.org.*

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