July 27, 2021

The Honorable J. Russell George
Inspector General for Tax Administration
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1401 H Street NW, Suite 469
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. George:

On June 8, 2021, ProPublica began publishing a series of articles after “obtain[ing] a vast trove of Internal Revenue Service data on the tax returns of thousands of the nation’s wealthiest people, covering more than 15 years.”\(^1\) Because tax returns are filled with personal and sensitive information, federal law requires that tax “[r]eturns and return information shall be confidential.”\(^2\) Congress has also made the unlawful disclosure of tax return information a felony.\(^3\) Despite these safeguards, an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) employee or employees—or someone with access to the returns—disclosed this confidential information to ProPublica in violation of the law.

IRS Commissioner Rettig has stated that an investigation by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) is underway.\(^4\) The Committee is also conducting an investigation of the release of taxpayer information to ProPublica. To assist the Committee in conducting oversight of this incident, we request that you provide a staff-level briefing on TIGTA’s investigation to date. Please provide the requested briefing as soon as possible but not later than 5:00 p.m. on August 10, 2021.

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\(^3\) See 26 U.S.C. § 7213(a).
If you have any questions about this request, please contact Judiciary Committee staff at (202) 225-6906. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jim Jordan
Ranking Member

Darrell Issa
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet

cc: The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler, Chairman
The Honorable Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Chairman
Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet